

# Birmingham City Council

## Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023



---

**Subject:** Improving Services for Children and Families Improvement Programme Progress Update

**Report of:** Sue Harrison, Director of Children and Families

**Report author:** Helen Price, Director of Strategy, Commissioning, and Transformation

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress made since the April 2023 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting regarding the Improving Services for Children and Families Programme.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee note this report.
- 2.2 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee advise if they would like a follow up workshop to be arranged to focus on data.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 In April 2023 a progress update on the Improving Services for Children and Families Programme was provided to the Committee.
- 3.2 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan was launched in 2022 to bring together into one plan all City Council improvement and transformation activity that impacts on children, young people, and their families. The aim of this plan is to drive forward the short and medium-term work to strengthen and improve services for children across the Council.
- 3.3 The work in this plan sits alongside work to deliver our longer-term vision for children and young people in Birmingham through our partnership Change for Children and Young People Plan 2023-2028.
- 3.4 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan sets out the activity that will support the Directorate, alongside colleagues from across Council, to deliver the vision for children and young people:

Our vision is that Birmingham Children Thrive, all children and young people are safe, healthy, included, confident and achieving.

Our children and families will be supported by a Children and Families Directorate that has strong governance and management and a strong front line working with our partner organisations across the city as one system putting children and families at the heart of everything they do.

3.5 The projects and actions within the plan align to the City Council’s Corporate Plan.

3.6 There are five workstreams in the plan:

- Workstream A: Implement a strong and effective Children and Families Directorate to deliver best in class services for children, young people, families, and communities
- Workstream B: Strengthen approaches to identify, recognise and respond to the vulnerability of specific groups of children and young people
- Workstream C: Transform and improve services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in line with statutory requirements and to deliver sustainable, well performing services with inclusion of children and young people at the heart
- Workstream D: Transform and improve the Children and Young People’s Travel Service to deliver a sustainable well performing service with outcomes for children and young people at its heart
- Workstream E: Ensure services are sustainable, compliant, and designed to deliver best outcomes for children, young people, families, and communities.

3.7 The Committee has requested, through its work plan, to undertake a ‘Spotlight’ of a particular project within the Improving Services for Children and Families Plan at each meeting. The ‘Spotlight’ agreed for the July 2023 meeting is regarding the Children and Young People’s Travel Service. A detailed update regarding the ‘Spotlight’ is to be presented by the Assistant Director, Children and Young People’s Travel Service.

3.8 This report provides an overview of headline progress for the wider improvement programme and focuses on progress made towards actions within Workstreams A, B and E.

3.9 Headline progress reported May/June 2023:

| Workstream  | Headline progress since April 2023   | Corporate Plan Ambition            |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| A: Implement a strong and effective Children and Families Directorate to deliver best in class services for children, young people, families, and communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Director for Thriving Children and Families has commenced in post.</li> <li>• Significant work has taken place on preparation and mobilisation of the Directorate re-design.</li> <li>• Children and Young People’s Travel Service – consultation has closed and the redesign is now in implementation stage, vacant posts are currently out to advert.</li> <li>• SENAR redesign – pre-consultation engagement has taken place, Trade Union and staff consultation is anticipated to take place in July and August.</li> </ul> | <b>A BOLD INCLUSIVE BIRMINGHAM</b> |

| Workstream  | Headline progress since April 2023  | Corporate Plan Ambition  |
|---|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation redesign – proposed future operating model has been finalised and all documentation required is now being prepared in readiness for the consultation process.</li> <li>• Thriving Children and Families – proposed operating model is at the design stage and progressing well, in readiness for pre-consultation activities.</li> <li>• N.B. the pace of the redesign is dependent on Trade Union consultation and the availability and capacity of wider council services to support implementation.</li> <li>• The new reconfigured post of Director Schools and Employability has been agreed and is proceeding to advert.</li> <li>• In the meantime, act up arrangements are now in place through internal appointments covering Schools and Employability service areas. These appointments are providing additional leadership capacity pending permanent appointments and finalisation of the new structure.</li> <li>• As a result of the redesign, permanent Heads of Service are beginning to start their new roles working for the City Council.</li> </ul> <p><b>Performance and Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Directorate is beginning to see an increase in representation of colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds in grades 4 and above: for grades 4-5 this increased from 26% in December 2022 to 33% in April 2023 for grades 6-7 this increased from 18% in December 2022 to 25% in April 2023.</li> <li>• The % agency workers of the Directorate workforce is steadily declining month on month, from 20% in December 2022 to 17% in April 2023. We expect this to continue to decline in the coming months as the Directorate’s permanent structure is implemented and permanent staff commence their roles.</li> <li>• The % of agency/interim workers in the SENAR service continued to steadily decline from 90% in December 2022 to 87% April 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b>Change for Children and Young People Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Birmingham Children Partnership Change for Children and Young People’s Plan 2023 to 2028 has been launched and adopted by the Council in April 2023.</li> <li>• UNICEF have agreed for Birmingham to join the Child Friendly City programme.</li> <li>• The 100 Brilliant Days Campaign is underway to kick start the Change for Children and Young People 2023-28 and UNICEF work.</li> </ul> |  |
| <p>B: Strengthen approaches to identify, recognise and respond to the vulnerability of specific groups of children and young people</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Corporate Safeguarding Network is embedded and leading the Council’s response to Working Together to Safeguard Children, and safeguarding adults through Section 11 Audit and supporting action plans.</li> <li>• The Birmingham Virtual School Annual Conference took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023 for Designated Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads and schools’ leaders with 150 delegates attending from across the City representing primary, secondary and special schools.</li> <li>• The Educational Psychology team and two further training providers are delivering a 3-year training programme for all schools and settings in Birmingham 0-19 years to become Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware. There are currently 100 5-16 schools, 70 early years settings and two Further Education Colleges trained in Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware (TIAAS). A further 14 schools have signed up for the Autumn Term.</li> <li>• A Deputy Head from a Birmingham school who have received a national award for their work in attachment aware and trauma informed practice has been appointed to work with the City Council</li> </ul>   | <p><b>A BOLD SAFE BIRMINGHAM</b></p> <p><b>A BOLD INCLUSIVE BIRMINGHAM</b></p> |

| Workstream   | Headline progress since April 2023  | Corporate Plan Ambition  |
|--|---|--|
|  | to develop a Trauma Informed Lead Practitioner model for school-to-school improvement from 2024.  |  |
| E: Ensure services are sustainable, compliant, and designed to deliver best outcomes for children, young people, families, and communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Birmingham Adult Education Service redesign phases one and two have been completed and phase three is on track for completion by August 2023.</li> <li>Good progress has been reported regarding the Developing Local Provision Programme (DLP). The aim of the programme is to enable and empower mainstream school leaders to work together in localities to identify needs and resources needed for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and to access the necessary provision easier and quicker to support early intervention to improve outcomes.</li> <li>Phase one of the Developing Local Provision (DLP) programme has been evaluated and the programme has now moved to Phase two – commencing in September 2023.</li> <li>This work will be progressed via the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan and monitored via the SEND Board.</li> <li>Since 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 to date SENDIASS have provided nearly 1500 parents and young people, with impartial and accurate, information advice and support, through a dedicated helpline and email address. The team are responding to most concerns and queries on the day or within 5 days of contact.</li> <li>In addition, a new standalone SENDIASS website is under development which will provide a wealth of advice and information.</li> </ul> | <p><b>A BOLD PROSPEROUS BIRMINGHAM</b></p> <p><b>A BOLD INCLUSIVE BIRMINGHAM</b></p> |

### 3.10 Progress overall

Latest progress regarding projects and actions, reported to the Improving Services for Children and Families Board on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 is as follows:

Of the 34 projects:

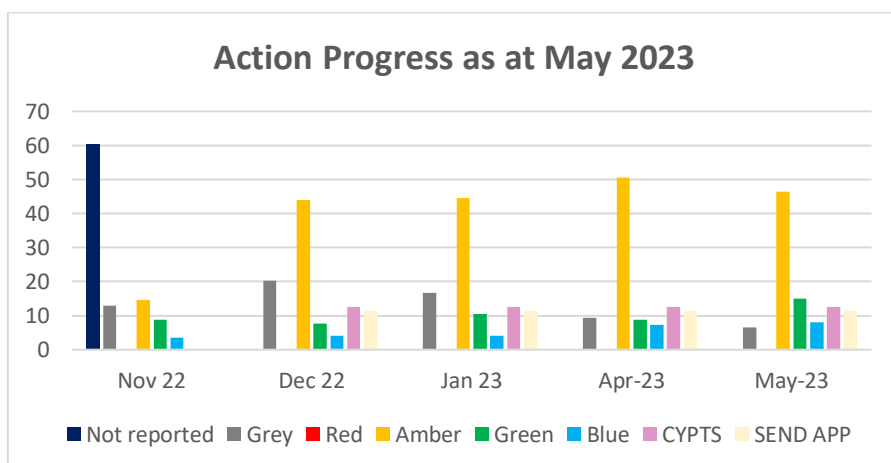
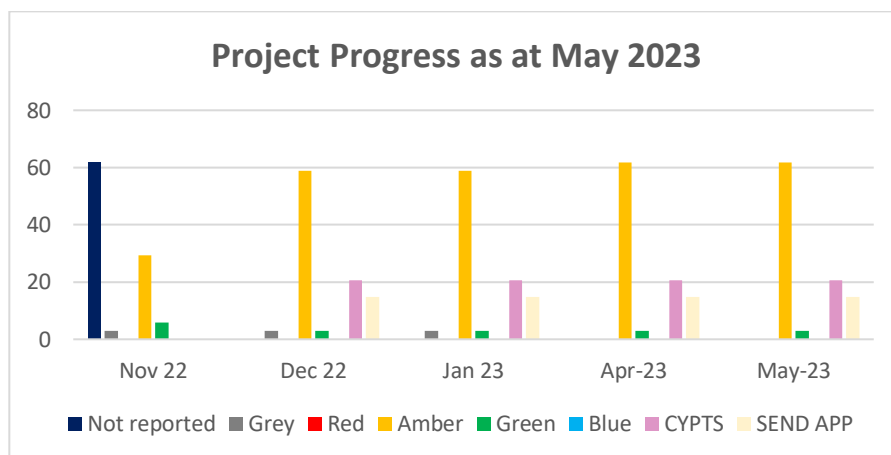
- All Projects are now up and running.
- 21 are RAG rated as Amber (project started and progress is being made)
- 1 is RAG rated Green (project completed but continues to be monitored to ensure it embeds)
- 7 projects are led by the Children and Young People’s Travel Service programme and 5 projects are from the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan and led by the SEND Improvement Board. Updates regarding these projects are provided to the Committee in line with the Forward Plan.

Of the 287 actions:

- 23 are RAG rated as Blue, up from 12 reported in the April 2023 (Blue = action delivered, embedded, and sustained)
- 43 are RAG rated as Green, an increase of 13 from April 2023 as more actions progressed to Blue (Green = action completed but continues to be monitored to ensure it embeds)
- 133 are RAG rated as Amber, an increase of 5 from April 2023 (Amber = action has started, and progress is being made)
- 19 are now RAG rated as Grey, a reduction from the 48 reported in April 2023, as more actions have now started (Grey = action not yet started/due to start)
- 36 actions are led by the Children and Young People’s Travel Service programme and 33 actions are from the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan

and led by the SEND Improvement Board. As above, updates regarding these projects/actions are provided to the Committee in line with the Forward Plan.

The following graphs provide an overview of progress:



**3.11 Corporate oversight of Children and Families Directorate Performance:**

Appendix one sets out the agreed measures the Council has in place to hold the Children and Families Directorate to account: Key Performance Indicators progress reporting for 2022/23 Quarter 4. Headlines from Children and Families Directorate Workforce measures are also provided.

3.12 At the April meeting of this Committee, the potential to hold a workshop to discuss data in more depth was discussed. This workshop can be arranged by officers in Children and Families Directorate if it is something that the Committee would find helpful.

**3.13 Strategic Risks and Challenges**

| Risk/challenge                                       | Mitigation  |
|--|---|
| Changes to leadership at Birmingham Children's Trust | Director of Children's Services working closely with BCT and supporting recruitment |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Scale and pace of recruitment and the supply of potential candidates to apply for the volume of jobs | Plan in place to support recruitment which includes timescales and targeted recruitment campaigns<br><br>Additional capacity in partnership with HR has been secured to support the recruitment and onboarding of new staff<br><br>Directorate Redesign and Corporate HR teams working closely together |
| Access to data and information   | As systems develop, we will be able to report in more detail<br><br>Focused work is being undertaken to develop reporting meanwhile existing reporting mechanisms are being maintained  |

#### **4 Any Finance Implications**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications with this progress update report.

#### **5 Any Legal Implications**

5.1 The Improvement Plan will support the Director of Children’s Services and Lead Member for Children’s Services to fulfil the functions set out in Sections 18 and 19 of the Children Act 2004, in the associated statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities Directors of children’s services: roles and responsibilities - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) and in the Council’s Constitution.

5.2 The improvement will support the Council to fulfil many of its statutory duties. In particular, the Council must ensure that its relevant education and training functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training, and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person under the age of 20 and person aged 20 or over for whom an EHC plan is maintained, by virtue of section 13A of the Education Act 1996.

#### **6 Any Equalities Implications**

6.1 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan supports the Council’s Everyone’s Battle, Everyone’s Business ambitions.

#### **7 Appendices**

7.1 Appendix one: Children and Families Directorate Key Performance Indicators