

Birmingham City Council

Report to Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 04 December 2024



Title:	THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) UPDATE
Lead Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Mick Brown, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Education, Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report Author:	Fayth Skeete, Head of Strategic Governance, Planning and Improvement Children and Families Directorate
Authorised by:	Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director of Children's Services (DCS) Children and Families Directorate
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If not eligible, please provide reason(s):	Not Applicable
Wards:	All

Does this report contain exempt or confidential information? No

Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private? Not Applicable

Reasons why not included on the Notification: Not Applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Members on progress made since May 2024 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting regarding the development of the Children and Families Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 No observations.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 3.1 Note the contents of this report and the three appendices to this report.
- 3.2 Agree for the Directorate to continue to provide quarterly updates on the progress of the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3 Agree with the Directorate's proposal to provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a copy of the Directorate Improvement Board Meeting Highlight Reports following each Board meeting.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan was launched in November 2022 to align within one plan, all City Council improvement and transformation activity that impacts children, young people, and their families.
- 4.2 The objectives of the plan and associated activity sought to compliment and reinforce those set out within the City Council's Corporate Plan and improvement and transformation activity, our partnership Change for Children and Young People Plan 2023-2028 and across the UNICEF Child Friendly City commitments.
- 4.3 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan was first presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2023 and again in April 2023.
- 4.4 The plan centred on 5 overarching workstreams made up of 34 projects and 230 actions

The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan Refresh

- 4.5 Through extensive improvement activity, the Directorate is in a markedly improved position than it was in November 2022.
- 4.6 The Directorate has secured continued growth, recruited to key roles, and continues to draw on the experience, skills, and knowledge of existing and incoming staff to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

- 4.7 The Directorate remains focussed on ensuring that Children, Young People and Families remain at the heart of what we do and are supported to thrive.
- 4.8 Activity to review and refresh the Improving Services for Children and Families Plan, commenced in August 2023.
- 4.9 Phase 1, Research: Between August 2023 and January 2024, key stakeholders from across the Directorate were consulted and supported an initial audit and review of the plan and associated arrangements.
- 4.10 Phase 2, Design: Throughout February and March 2024, the new continuous improvement system was designed alongside a Directorate wide governance cycle and assurance seeking arrangements. The proposed new model was shared with the Children's Senior Leadership Team.
- 4.11 Phase 3, Ratification: The draft continuous improvement system, was presented to the Improving Services for Children and Young People Board and the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.12 Phase 4, Delivery: We have now reached the delivery phase, the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is carefully and incrementally being launched to ensure that the Directorate workforce is able to access the right information at the right time and are supported to engage with this new way of working.

The Continuous Improvement Plan 2024 (CIP)

- 4.13 The objectives of the plan remain, the plan actively seeks to compliment and reinforce those set out within the City Council's Corporate Plan, Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP), our partnership Change for Children and Young People Plan 2023-2028 and across the UNICEF Child Friendly City commitments and our partnership transformation ambitions.
- 4.14 Our approach to improvement is a continuous improvement model, by creating conditions for success, by building our plan on our core improvement principles we aim to guarantee that our approach is always transparent, honest, restorative, inclusive, visionary and evidence based.
- 4.15 The CIP workstreams are identified through four priority areas with financial sustainability as the cross-cutting theme across all Directorate service design and provision.



- 4.16 The CIP is formed in two parts, there is an internal and external facing summary of improvement focus and activities and an internal greater detailed mapping of the Directorate project pipeline that is used to coordinate day to day project management.
- 4.17 The more detailed version of the CIP explicitly outlines all activity required to reach project milestones and achieve overarching outcomes alongside action owners, timelines and a comprehensive risk log.
- 4.18 Given the revised improvement approach we anticipate that the CIP will continuously evolve to reflect emerging service requirements and areas of focus under the 4 fixed areas of priority.
- 4.19 The Directorate Continuous Improvement Project Pipeline encompasses:
- ✓ Council's Improvement Recovery Plan (IRP) Children and Families specific activity
 - ✓ Governance Board associated programmes (TBC)
 - ✓ Delivery of Saving Programmes
 - ✓ Directorate Priority Projects (Fluid)
 - ✓ Remaining objectives from the 2022/24 Improving Services for Children and Young People Plan
 - ✓ Emerging Transformation Saving Opportunities (Fluid)

Governance, Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting

- 4.20 The strategic accountability for the delivery of the Plan is managed through the Improving Services for Children and Families Board. The Board consists of senior leaders from across the Council, with representation from Birmingham Children's Trust, to ensure a whole system focus is maintained.

- 4.21 The Board is co-chaired by John Coughlan, Commissioner alongside an independent Chair, a credible expert and experienced DCS, well positioned to provide continued challenge and oversight.
- 4.22 The Board meets on a bi-monthly basis. Reporting activity focuses on impact, opportunity and removing any potential barriers to success – what difference are we making to the lived experience of children, young people and families across Birmingham, what emerging opportunities are we able to identify and maximise to support continued improved outcomes and what do we need to do to alleviate any barriers to achieving outcomes.
- 4.23 Continued progress of the CIP is a Directorate wide responsibility. The CIP is a live evolving document, and the design and continuous profiling of CIP activity interlinks with service design and planning activity across each Directorate Division.
- 4.24 All activity contributes to the Directorate’s ability to improve, test our outputs and evaluate our position. All staff will contribute and inform all that we do, the engagement and participation of staff is essential, and the Directorate’s ‘New Ways of Working’ will support staff to confidently contribute and drive our improvement.

5 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Legal

- 5.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Equalities

- 5.3 There are no specific equalities impacts arising from this report. There are no specific equalities impacts arising from this report. When exercising its functions, including its scrutiny functions, the Council is required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality duty, i.e. the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Procurement

5.4 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

People Services

5.5 There are no staffing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

5.6 There are no climate change, nature and net zero carbon implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Corporate Parenting

5.7 There are no implications or opportunities in relation to the Corporate Parenting responsibility arising from the recommendations in this report.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix One – Children and Families Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan

6.2 Appendix Two – Children and Families Improving Services for Children and Families Board Highlight Reports, as presented to the Improving Services for Children and Families Board, 24 October 2024

6.3 Appendix Three - Improving Services for Children and Families IRP Report, as presented to the Delivery Board, 13 November 2024.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.