

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 15 MAY 2024 AT 10:00 HOURS
IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA
SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB

A G E N D A

1 NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair to advise/meeting to note that this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite ([please click this link](#)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies.

3 NEW APPOINTMENT

To note Councillor Kath Scott replaces Councillor Des Hughes to serve on the Committee until the Annual General Meeting.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members are reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting.

If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared a Member must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.

If other registerable interests are declared a Member may speak on the matter only if members of the public are allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', Members do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that they have an interest.

Information on the Local Government Association's Model Councillor Code of Conduct is set out via <http://bit.ly/3WtGQnN>. This includes, at Appendix 1, an interests flowchart which provides a simple guide to declaring interests at meetings.

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| <u>5 - 10</u> | 5 <u>MINUTES</u>

To confirm the minutes for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 April 2024. |
| <u>11 - 20</u> | 6 <u>ACTION TRACKER</u>

To note the action tracker.

7 <u>COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA</u>

To note that no comments have been received from the Commissioner on this agenda. |
| <u>21 - 78</u> | 8 <u>IMPROVING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PLAN UPDATE (10.05 – 11.00)</u>

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director of Children and Families, and Fayth Skeete, Head of Strategic, Governance & Planning in attendance. |
| <u>79 - 84</u> | 9 <u>SHORT BREAKS REVIEW (11.00 – 11.50)</u>

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director of Children and Families, James Thomas, Chief Executive, Children's Trust, and David Stringfellow, Interim Director of Practice, Birmingham Children's Trust in attendance. |
| <u>85 - 94</u> | 10 <u>WORK PROGRAMME (11.50 – 12.00)</u>

Members to note the report and agree subject to further input from the Committee after the City Council's Annual General Meeting, the issues the Committee may consider at the June 2024 meeting and as part of its wider 2024/25 work programme, together with the proposed aims and objectives of the items, and the preferred method of scrutiny.

11 <u>REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)</u>

To consider any request for call in/councillor call for action/petitions (if received).

12 <u>OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</u>

To consider any items of business by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) that in the opinion of the Chair are matters of urgency. |

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Wednesday, 10 April 2024, Committee Rooms 3 & 4,

Council House

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Kerry Jenkins - Chair

Councillors: Jilly Bermingham, Debbie Clancy, Jane Jones, and Shehla Moledina

Other Representatives: Ted Hammond – Roman Catholic Diocese, Osamugi Ogbe - Parent Governor, and Sarah Smith - Church of England Diocese

Also Present:

Cllr Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families

Tim Boyes, Chief Executive, Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP)

David Fallows, Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance

Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families

Lisa Smith, School Improvement – Strategic Development and Headteacher of Virtual School

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Lindsey Trivett, Head of Early Years and Childcare

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that the meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Cllr Adam Higgs, Cllr Des Hughes, and Rabia Shami - Parent Governor.

3. NEW APPOINTMENT

RESOLVED:

Noted Ted Hammond replaces Justine Lomas to serve on the Committee as the Roman Catholic diocese representative co-opted member.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting, and the Chair – Cllr Kerry Jenkins declared an interest as she was employed by the Unite union in a national role and had no direct involvement in local or Birmingham City Council industrial relations or other matters concerning employees of the Council.

Cllr Shehla Moledina declared that she works for a charity organisation whereby there was engagement with schools, but they were not engaged with the council or employees.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. ACTION TRACKER

The Chair requested the Strategic Director chase up the response to the outstanding actions / questions for the SEND Sufficiency Strategy before it was presented to Cabinet on 23 April 2024. The Strategic Director committed to chasing up the response.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The action tracker be noted.
- The Strategic Director to chase up a response to the outstanding actions / questions for the SEND Sufficiency Strategy prior to presentation to Cabinet on 23 April 2024.

7. COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted that no comments had been received from the Commissioner on this agenda.

8. SCHOOL ATTAINMENT

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families, Lisa Smith, Head of Virtual School, Tim Boyes, Chief Executive, Birmingham Education Partnership, David Fallows, Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance, and Lindsey Trivett, Head of Early Years and Childcare, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair welcomed the attendees and the work undertaken for this item but requested that future reports and presentations achieved the right balance of information for members to navigate and absorb that provided headlines and key information that members need, which was backed up by the data.

The Strategic Director confirmed that in future officers will ensure that headlines were highlighted for the key stages - what was going well, areas of concern, and what was being done to improve attainment. Introducing the report, the Strategic Director highlighted that the pandemic was still having an impact on attainment, and some groups were not achieving as well as their peers. The Directorate was working with head teachers to better understand the challenges and there were also some achievements in the data to be celebrated.

The Head of Virtual School gave the presentation and highlighted attainment, comparisons with national, core cities and statistical neighbours rates and actions and support provided for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage One, Key Stage Two, Key Stage Four, 16 – 18, post 16 – 18, and Children Looked After (CLA) to raise attainment.

During the debate, the following points were addressed:

Attendance and Exclusions

Responding to the questions regarding attendance and exclusions, the Strategic Director commented that they were working on the Attendance Strategy and a draft would be brought to the committee and highlighted that the measles epidemic had impacted school attendance. The Exclusions Strategy would also be brought to the committee.

In addition, officers were working with schools as part of the Inclusive City work which the Director, SEND and Inclusion was leading on, and there was a meeting with head teachers on 25 April 2024 to share the 'Balanced Education System' thinking and new arrangements to ensure the local authority could deliver its statutory duties relating to schools causing concern, from September 2024.

In relation to children with SEND needing support and causal factors on behaviour, the School Improvement – Strategic Development and Headteacher of Virtual School explained the work to support schools through the Developing Learning Project (DLP). This year's school collaborative projects included three KPIs, one related to behaviour

and how children were supported with emotional and self-regulation, along with reducing suspension rates, and one related to improving the achievement of children with SEND.

BEP and School Improvement

The Director of BEP suggested the challenge for the committee was what “lens the Committee wanted to look at attainment,” as this has been shaped by their contract with the Council, which was to provide support for the priority schools identified and a focus for key underachieving groups for every Key Stage. The meeting was informed that the contract for schools causing concern was ending and key outcomes were provided.

The Strategic Director highlighted the timetable for the new relationship with schools, developing alongside the ‘Balanced Education System’. An update on this, together with the school improvement and school achievement strategies, would be brought to the Committee.

Key Stage 1 (KS1)

The Head of Early Years and Childcare confirmed that the level of take-up of the early years education entitlement offer was a causal factor for KS1 attainment levels and highlighted these children were the initial cohort effected by the pandemic.

Surplus Capacity, Social Mobility and KS4

It was confirmed that achievement was depicted where the schools were located rather than where pupils live, and there was surplus capacity in some areas. The Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance made reference to an interactive dashboard being developed, and the Strategic Director suggested the committee may want to do a deep dive due to the complexity involved.

The Chair summed up the discussion and welcomed the use of the dashboard to assist Members in the future, and noted the Attendance, Exclusions, Attainment and Achievement strategies will be brought to the Committee. The Chair also informed Members that they could e-mail the Scrutiny Officers if they have any unanswered questions.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The Committee noted and commented on the School Attainment report and presentation.
- The Attendance, Exclusions, Attainment and Achievement strategies to be provided to the Committee in the future.
- Members to e-mail the Scrutiny Officers if they have any unanswered questions.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair commented that there were currently two items for the 15 May 2024 committee meeting and suggested that the update on the short breaks review be a separate item on the agenda rather than part of the Refreshed Improving Services for Children and Families Plan item. The Committee agreed to this.

The Chair highlighted that the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry would be presented at City Council on 16 April 2024 and thanked the Members who took part in the Inquiry, which was a really useful piece of work that would support the Council and Partners to protect as many children and young people as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme was agreed and subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, be submitted to Co-ordinating O&S Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting be held on 15 May 2024 at 10am.

11. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

The meeting ended at 11.02 hours.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Update / Notes
22 Feb 2023	School Attainment and School Improvement	The recruitment and retention rates of teachers in the city in comparison to other areas.	This requires Oracle to be run and Schools HR advise this is currently not possible.
19 Jul 2023	Performance Update	The draft attendance strategy to be brought to the committee meeting in September when discussing the Hidden Children item, and the relevant officers to be in attendance for this.	Hidden Children was an item at the October committee meeting and the Committee are awaiting the draft attendance strategy.
18 Oct 2023	Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings and Update on the Council's Response to S114 Notice and Financial Recovery Plan	The Director, Children and Families, to bring work at early stages of planning for input by the Committee.	Ongoing.
		Future agenda items to include a snapshot of their associated spend/budget and impact.	Ongoing.
29 Nov 2023	School Improvement – The New Relationship with Schools	Details of the feedback from the consultation for the new policy to be provided.	Ongoing and will be shared late April 2024.
29 Nov 2023	School Improvement – The New Relationship with Schools	The timeline for the attendance strategy presentation to Cabinet to be e-mailed to the Committee.	
17 Jan 2024	Improving Services for Children and Families Plan Update	Sally Rowe, independent chair of the Improving Services for Children and Families Board to be invited to a future meeting.	The Independent Chair cannot attend the 15 May 2024 committee meeting and will therefore be invited to a future meeting.
		The Director, Children and Families to discuss with the independent chair of the Improving Services for Children and Families Board arrangements for sharing action points from the Board's meetings with the Committee.	This will be shared with the Committee in the future.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Update / Notes
		The Committee to discuss the draft Attendance Strategy in April 2024.	This will not be ready for the 10 April 2024 committee meeting and will need to be programmed for a later committee meeting.
		An update on the finalised data and digital road map to be provided alongside future improvement and performance updates to the Committee.	The final Data/Digital Road Map will be produced by April 2024, to allow time to confirm 1) recruitment levels/timelines for the redesigned Digital Evidence and Performance team and 2) establish impacts of cost saving on central IT support available.
		<p>The following to be provided by the Directorate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diagram of the transformation to include services that have been lost, timelines for the different areas, and staffing information. • Membership details, Terms of Reference (TOR), and frequency of meetings of the Improving Services for Children and Families Board. 	E-mailed information on 31 January 2024.
10 April 2024	School Attainment	The Attendance, Exclusions, Attainment and Achievement Strategies to be provided to the Committee in the future.	
		Members to e-mail the Scrutiny Officers if they have any unanswered questions.	No e-mails have been received.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

Date	Agenda Item	Completed Actions	Update / Notes
5 April 2023	Children's Trust	The Children's Trust to attend a future committee meeting to discuss the review of short breaks.	An interim update was e-mailed on the 21 November 2023 and the Children's Trust is programmed to attend the 15 May 2024 committee meeting.
17 May 2023	Young People's Substance Use Service	Aquarius to provide the timeline for the Manchester Met University project.	Aquarius have met with the researchers, and they are preparing a slide deck of their initial findings. They are expecting the project to conclude by the end of the year.
17 May 2023	SEND	<p>The following to be provided via e-mail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The spend information for staffing within the SEND and Inclusion Service. Information on the indicators in the APP on the Council's website that state, 'requires baseline.' 	<p>E-mailed the information on 25 August 2023.</p> <p>E-mailed the response on 12 June 2023.</p>
		The Committee to provide further questions in writing for officers to provide a written response.	None were received.
17 May 2023	Action Tracker	The timeline for when the SEND Sufficiency Report would be available to be provided.	The draft strategy was discussed at the 28 February 2024 committee meeting.
14 Jun 2023	Developing the Education, Children and Young People O&S Committee's Work Programme 2023/24	Members of the Task and Finish Group for the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry and the Children and Young People's Mental Health Inquiry will be followed up.	Cllr. Debbie Clancy replaced Cllr. Simon Morrall on the CCE Inquiry T&F Group, and the Young People's Mental Health Inquiry T&F Group.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

Date	Agenda Item	Completed Actions	Update / Notes
19 July 2023	Children and Young People's Travel Service	A workshop for cultural change and the statutory guidance for the Children's and Young People's Travel Service to be arranged.	The all Councillor workshop was arranged for Thursday, 16 November 2023 and the presentation slides were circulated to the Committee on 4 December 2023.
		A breakdown of discretionary and statutory spend to be provided.	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
		More information on Personal Transport Budgets to be provided.	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
		More information on the new Application and Eligibility Review Panel to be provided.	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
19 July 2023	SEND Tribunals	<p>Information on the programme of training/briefings being developed regarding SEND for all Members to be provided. If the following is not covered within this, then a workshop to be organised for the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regular update from families going through the Tribunal process to understand the family experience and highlight any issues that may inform service improvement. • A briefing note outlining how high quality decisions are made when developing Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), including how learning from Tribunals is shared to improve services. 	<p>Workshops/Sessions for all Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND (this will include Tribunals). • Schools (how Councillors can support local schools, e.g., admissions). • Safeguarding (the Chair requested whether there could be a workshop for corporate parenting, and the Cabinet Member agreed to check whether the safeguarding workshop/session could include corporate parenting).

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE

ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

19 July 2023	SEND Tribunals	The draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy to be added to the Committee's Work Programme.	The draft strategy was discussed at the 28 February 2024 committee meeting.
19 Jul 2023	Work Programme	Cllr. Debbie Clancy to be sent the dates of the evidence gathering sessions for the CCE Inquiry.	Dates were forwarded to Cllr. Debbie Clancy.
		Members to e-mail details of items they wish to be added to the menu of topics/issues.	None were received.
		There were potentially three workshops to be arranged: Children and Young People's Travel Service, SEND Tribunals, and the Data Workshop.	The Children's and Young People's Travel Service Workshop took place on 16 November 2023. The SEND Tribunals Workshop for the Committee will not be needed as it will be covered in the workshop/sessions arranged for all Members.
		Further discussions relating to the focus and format of performance data presented to the Committee be considered at the Member Data Workshop.	The Data Workshop for the Committee took place on 6 November 2023.
		Information on mental health element of Employment Support Programme be provided to Members.	E-mailed to Members on 9 October 2023.
		An explanation be given to Members as to whether the percentage figures for the most common reason for staff sickness absence related to days lost to sickness, or the percentage of people sick for each reason.	E-mailed to Members on 9 October 2023.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

6 Sep 2023	Financial Challenges – Scrutiny Contribution to the Budget Savings and Recovery Plan	A copy of Director’s communication to headteachers and staff following the announcement of the S114 notice be sent to Members for information.	E-mailed to Members on 20 September 2023.
6 Sep 2023	Work Programme	That subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the SEND Sufficiently Strategy and the Early Years Education Entitlement Deep Dive items be added to work programme for January 2024.	The work programme has been updated accordingly.
18 Oct 2023	Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings and Update on the Council’s Response to S114 Notice and Financial Recovery Plan	The Chair to update the Committee on the work of the Finance and Resources T&F Group in relation to the Committee’s remit.	Update provided at the January committee meeting.
18 Oct 2023	Hidden Children	The planning for further development of the governance around school exclusions and part time timetables to be brought to a future committee meeting for comment.	Added to the work programme under menu of issues for consideration.
		The Headteacher to provide the data on length of stay of students at City of Birmingham School (COBS).	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
		A visit of the Committee to COBS to be arranged.	Work programme updated accordingly.
		The Committee to forward any further questions to the Scrutiny Office.	None were received.
		The increase in behavioural problems and speech and language being less developed when children start primary	Work Programme updated accordingly.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE

ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

		schools to be included in the Early Years Education Entitlement item being discussed at the 17 January 2024 committee meeting.	
		Further focused work on Elective Home Education (EHE) and part time timetables to be considered after the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry had finished in the new year.	Work Programme updated accordingly.
18 Oct 2023	Work Programme	The review of short breaks item programmed for the November committee meeting will be deferred to a future committee meeting and subject to an interim written update to be circulated to the Committee, which will include a commitment and timescale for when the review will be completed, and a report can be presented to Committee.	An interim update was e-mailed on the 21 November 2023, and this item can be discussed when the Children's Trust attend the May committee meeting. The work programme has been updated accordingly.
		The SEND Commissioner to be invited to attend the November committee meeting.	Attended the November 2023 committee meeting.
		The school improvement re-design item (school improvement – the new relationship with schools) to be added to the work programme for November committee meeting.	The item was discussed at the November 2023 committee meeting.
29 Nov 2023	Action Tracker	The presentation slides used at the Children and Young People's Travel Service Workshop held for all Councillors on 16 November 2023 to be provided.	E-mailed to the Committee on 4 December 2023.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE

ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

		A written update on the outstanding actions for the Children and Young People's Travel Service to be provided by the Directorate via e-mail.	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
29 Nov 2023	School Improvement – The New Relationship with Schools	The new Ofsted Inspection Framework (including timelines for inspections) to be e-mailed to the Committee.	E-mailed on 4 December 2023.
		Timescales for the development of the new policy for school improvement and schools causing concern, which included the consultation and presentation to Cabinet.	E-mailed the timeline for the School Improvement – New Relationship piece on 15 December 2023. The timelines on the school causing concern policy will be forwarded shortly.
29 Nov 2023	Work Programme	The Committee to have a meeting on Teams in December to provide input and make recommendations to the Budget T&F Group.	Work Programme updated accordingly.
28 Feb 2024	Early Years Education Entitlement	Send information on early years entitlement and signposting to Councillors and the Committee for dissemination in local communities.	E-mailed information on 28 March 2024.
		Keep the local Councillors updated in the nine wards where it was believed there could be specific pressures due to current sufficiency gaps which were currently being covered by parents accessing places in surrounding ward (Garretts Green, Handsworth Wood, Highters Heath, Holyhead, Kingstanding, Perry Common, Quinton, Stockland Green, and Yardley East).	E-mailed information on 28 March 2024.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

		Provide the Committee with the contact details for the two safeguarding officers.	E-mailed information on 28 March 2024.
		Provide the Committee with research findings into statistical neighbours on how they were addressing issues with early years education.	E-mailed information on 28 March 2024 and officers will report back to the Committee once completed.
		Provide the Committee with figures where only percentages had been used in the report and presentation.	E-mailed information on 30 April 2024.
28 Feb 2024	SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2030	The cost for appeals and challenges in relation to EHCPs	E-mailed information on 7 May 2024.
		The Head of SEND Commissioning to clarify within the Strategy that the data applied to different cohorts and the movements within these.	The discrepancy in the data identified by the committee was rectified via an amendment to the table. It now fully aligns in the version of the strategy approved by Cabinet in April 2024.
		Further updates to the Committee on the SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2030 to be programmed.	Updated the work programme accordingly.
10 April 2024	Action Tracker	The Strategic Director to chase up a response to the outstanding actions / questions for the SEND Sufficiency Strategy prior to presentation to Cabinet on 23 April 2024.	E-mailed information on 7 May 2024.

Birmingham City Council

Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 15 May 2024



Subject: The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan Update

Report of: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services

Report author: Fayth Skeete, Head of Strategic Governance and Planning

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update to Members on progress made since January 2024 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting regarding the Improving Services for Children and Families Plan.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the attached report, agree any comments and/or recommendations.
- 2.2 To continue to return on a quarterly basis to provide regular updates on progress to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3 To provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee a copy of the Directorate Improvement Board meeting highlights following each Board meeting.

3 Background

- 3.1 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 on children, young people, and their families.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 In July 2023, a progress update was provided to the Committee and offered an overview of progress to date illustrated through a review of project and action BRAG status.
- 3.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested for further progress updates to be provided on a quarterly basis.
- 3.6 A further update was provided to the Committee in January 2024 detailing the most recent improvement activity progress report for reporting period September (end)/October 2023, and outlined the Directorates intention to refresh the Improvement plan.
- 3.7 The Committee requested a further update on the progress of the Directorate's review of improvement arrangements ahead of the launch of a revised plan at the June 2024 Directorate Improvement Board meeting.

4 Directorate Continuous Improvement Review

- 4.1 The January 2024 Improving Services for Children and Families Board was held in person. This proved successful in facilitating discussion regarding the rationale for next steps and allowed members to come together to reflect, recalibrate and inform the direction of our 2024 improvement ambitions.
- 4.2 The existing improvement plan was an extensive plan that reflected the breadth of work required to stabilise the Directorate.
- 4.3 The plan centred on 5 overarching workstreams, 34 projects and 230 actions.

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 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

- 4.4 It is important to note that review activity did not seek to include SEND or the Children and Young People Travel Service activity.
- 4.5 Progress reporting across SEND Improvement will continue to be reported in detail through respective Programme Leads and overseen by the SEND Improvement Board, Chaired by Commissioner, John Coughlan.
- 4.6 A quarterly update is provided to the Improving Services for Children and Families Board to ensure there is continued line of sight and triangulation across interdependencies.
- 4.7 Revisions to future Directorate improvement arrangements will see the Children and Young People Travel Service Improvement, reporting to the Improvement Board alongside all other profiled projects.
- 4.8 To support the recalibration of the Directorate Improvement Plan, 'Improvement Refresh Meetings' were held with Project Leads and members of the senior leadership team to evaluate the Improvement plan and agree appropriate steps.
- 4.9 As part of the process the Directorate Risk Register was also reviewed.
- 4.10 It was imperative for robust evaluation to take place to ensure that the Directorate was able to demonstrate that the process was evidence based and sufficient assurance was considered in terms of the outcome reached for each action within the existing plan.
- 4.11 Each of the 34 projects and 230 actions held within the plan was assessed to test:
 - ✓ Whether the project desired outcome remained relevant and/or achievable
 - ✓ If the project actions were still applicable in current form
 - ✓ If the correct Blue, Red, Amber, or Green (BRAG) rating had been applied
 - ✓ For all blue rated actions (action delivered and performance embedded and sustained for over 3 months and meeting/exceeding targets, where the action is measurable), if we were able to evidence that it was effectively embedded as day to day practice - business as usual (BAU) and therefore justifiably able to closure
 - ✓ If activity still required Directorate Improvement Board oversight
 - ✓ Whether projects and actions could be effectively progressed as business as usual by the respective Division ~ if robust alternative assurance seeking mechanism were in place
 - ✓ Whether the desired outcome would be more appropriately addressed through a service outside of the Directorate
 - ✓ Where projects and activity remained appropriate, and still required Improvement Board oversight, if any revision were needed to the associated milestones, did we need to consider changing how we planned to deliver.

4.12 Where actions are assessed to be completed and embedded, associated activity is to continue and will remain open to 'spotlight reporting', requests from the Improvement Board for the respective service lead to provide an update.

4.13 Headline Improvement Refresh, examples of outcome:

Project/Actions	Refresh Assessment	Refresh Outcome
<p>A2.3 Develop and implement a fit for purpose operating model for the Children and Families Directorate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the new Children and Families Directorate Senior Leadership Team structure. ▪ Role design and completion of JDs and PS ▪ Recruitment process ▪ Appointment and onboarding of permanent posts. 	<p>The action remains relevant and has been correctly rated.</p> <p>Remaining recruitment monitored through an overarching redesign Improvement Plan action. Dedicated Redesign team overseeing effective roll out and management.</p> <p>The design and management of the Directorate onboarding process is under review and will feature as a standard element of day to day business for the strategy, governance, and planning team.</p> <p>The activity was mapped out when the Directorate did not have permanent arrangements in place. This no longer requires Improvement Board oversight.</p>	<p>Reprofiled as BAU</p>
<p>B4.1 Ensure robust arrangements are in place for children and young people who are Electively Home Educated</p> <p>Ensure arrangements for reporting, monitoring, and supporting Elective Home Education are robust, including ensuring there is sufficient capacity, to enable timeline of visits and reviews of EHE in line with statutory duties and best practice and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Robust safeguarding/information sharing is in place with clear pathways into advice and 	<p>The action remains relevant and has been correctly rated.</p> <p>Birmingham Audit is currently reviewing EHE. There is a robust process in place, but this is impacted by the ability to retain agency staff. The redesign increases the capacity in team to enable permanent recruitment and raises the grades from Gr3 to Gr4 to ensure that right level of support and scrutiny is in place</p> <p>Director of Thriving Children and Families provided assurances that progress continues, and close service area monitoring oversight is in place.</p>	<p>Reprofiled as BAU</p>

<p>support for practitioners (multi-agency).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Robust system in place to monitor children EHE in particular children with a child protection plan, children in need, children in care or EHCP. ▪ Report ran initially weekly to ensure tracking takes place and appropriate partnership response. 		
<p>A12.12 Ensure there is an effective strategic partnership for children and young people in Birmingham that is ambitious for our children with a shared vision, purpose, and plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen the Council's arrangements regarding school improvement and schools causing concern, in partnership with stakeholders ▪ Robust school improvement conversations with partners ▪ Forum up and running bringing together intelligence and providing high support and high challenge (e.g. attendance, suspensions, exclusions, achievement etc.) ▪ Develop a school performance dashboard ▪ Continue to develop reliable data sets for the directorate and schools to utilise 	<p>The action remains relevant and has been correctly rated.</p> <p>The Directorate is leading on a dedicated School Improvement Agenda. This work is in collaboration with schools and the wider partnership and will be supported by new governance arrangements, this to include an Education Board.</p> <p>The Board will gain a city-wide view of our successes and challenges, through robust data analysis informing our collective decision-making and actions</p> <p>The Board's key focus will be achievement, inclusion, and attendance.</p>	<p>Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity</p>
<p>A11.4 Implement and embed a co-ordinated, planned, and strategic approach to Directorate communications</p> <p>Identify permanent capacity and resource to support the Directorate with effective internal and external communication/promotion of</p>	<p>Both actions remain relevant and has been correctly rated.</p> <p>Whilst the Directorate has a communication cycle in place and arrangements to manage to prioritise communication demands, communication capacity does not fully fulfil the communication, engagement, and</p>	<p>Remain open - profiled on the Directorate Improvement Plan</p>

<p>services, delivering statutory duties and improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<p>participation planning/ambitions of the Directorate. The redesign and increased capacity will help to address this.</p>	
<p>A11.4 Implement and embed a co-ordinated, planned, and strategic approach to Directorate communications</p> <p>Develop and implement a co-ordinated and strategic approach to communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communications plan in place and reviewed regularly by the Directorate's senior leadership team. ▪ Transferred into business as usual 	<p>The Improvement Board to monitor this activity to ensure that any potential impact can be discussed and mitigated.</p>	

4.14 The table below captured a summary of the result of the review of the existing Improvement Plan.

No of Projects		No of Actions		% of Blue Rated Actions		% of Red Rated Actions		% of Amber Rated Actions		% of Green Rated Actions		% of Grey Rated Actions	
Jan 2024	34	Jan 2024	230	Jan 2024	21.30	Jan 2024	0.87	Jan 2024	49.57	Jan 2024	20.87	Jan 2024	7.39
April 2024	N/A	April 2024	26	April 2024	26.9	April 2024	0	April 2024	57.6	April 2024	15.3	April 2024	0

4.15 The outcome summary captures that the Directorate has made significant process, maintaining a 90% and above of in flight actions across the last 3 reporting periods.

5 Current Context

5.1 In response to the Section 114, and as part of the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan, Children and Families are required to make a total savings of £51.518m for 2024/25 and forecast savings of £63.231m for 2025/26.

5.2 The Councils' financial position and subsequent necessary changes have called for the Directorate to test our arrangements and all previously agreed schemes of work to ensure that we make honest and realistic decisions and commitments, and we are able to deliver everything we promise to deliver and on time.

- 5.3 Through extensive improvement activity, the Directorate is in a markedly improved position than it was in November 2022.
- 5.4 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 and families.
- 5.5 The increased workforce and defined structure have allowed the directorate to better adapt the chosen implementation of and approach to project management
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 The Board has an independent Chair, a credible expert and experienced DCS, well positioned to provide continued challenge and oversight.

6 Securing Continued Improvement – Building on Progress

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Our approach to continuous improvement is to create conditions for success, by building our plan on our core improvement principles we aim to guarantee that our approach is always:



- 6.3 We seek to design services inclusively and creatively for Children, Young People and Families, this approach is also fundamental to the management of continuous improvement. We value the opportunity to consult with families and our partners to make sure we get things right.
- 6.4 Prioritising is based on evidence, we carefully assess what will be the most suitable methodology to deliver outcomes in the most efficient and effective way.
- 6.5 The refreshed Directorate Improvement Project Pipeline will encompass:
- ✓ Delivery of Savings Proposals
 - ✓ IRP Programmes of work
 - ✓ Governance associated Programmes
 - ✓ Directorate Priority Projects
 - ✓ Remaining workstreams from the 2022-24 Improvement Plan
 - ✓ Emerging Transformation Saving Opportunities
 - ✓ Children and Young People Partnership related activity
- 6.6 Alignment of all Directorate workstreams and reporting schedules will ensure that we are actively triangulating activity and seeking to join our approach where possible.
- 6.7 The existing Directorate Governance and Improvement arrangements have supported a seamless transition into a framework that is able to continue to serve the Directorate's continuous improvement ways of working whilst satisfying the corporate reporting requirements linked to the Councils Improvement Recovery Plan and Board.
- 6.8 The Directorate reporting cycle reflects arrangements built in, aligned with corporate reporting cycles and governance, and reporting to the IRB

7 Next Steps

- 7.1 The Draft refreshed Directorate Improvement plan will be ratified through the Directorate's governance process and presented at the June 25th Directorate Improvement Board Meeting.
- 7.2 The Directorate would welcome the opportunity to share the refreshed plan with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 7.3 The plan will be monitored through the Directorate Improvement Board on a bi-monthly basis. Reporting activity will focus on impact.
- 7.4 Through Improvement Board activity and wider partnership schemes of work, we are able to ensure continuous alignment of Directorate priorities and the project pipeline, with interdependent workstreams.

8 Any Finance Implications

- 8.1 As captured within section 5 of this report.

9 Any Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan will support the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children and Families Services to fulfil the functions and discharge duties as set out in Sections 18 and 19 of the Children Act 2004, associated statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities Directors of children's services: roles and responsibilities and in the Council's Constitution.

10 Any Equalities Implications

- 10.1 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan supports the Council's Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business ambitions.

11 Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix One: Children and Families Directorate Improvement Plan Project Review Summary
- 11.2 Appendix Two: Children and Families Directorate Improvement Plan Project Action Review Summary

Appendix One

Children and Families Directorate Improvement Plan Project Review Summary

RAG	Description
Grey	Not yet due to start
Red	Significant delay in implementation/still a worry
Amber	Action started and progress being made
Green	Action completed but continue to monitor closely to ensure it has embedded
Blue	Action delivered and performance embedded and sustained for over 3 months and meeting/exceeding targets (where the action is measurable)

Project Ref	No. of Actions	Project Title	Project Lead (Role)	Previous BRAG Status Jan 2024	Current BRAG Status April 2024	Refresh Outcome Status	Comments
A1	4	Develop and implement the high-level strategic vision for the Directorate underpinned by values and behaviours	Director of Children and Families	Green	Blue	Closed	All Actions – Blue, no outstanding activity
A2	19	Develop and implement a fit for purpose operating model for the Children and Families Directorate	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation	Amber	Blue	Closed	5 Actions – Reprofiled, all rated amber 3 Actions - Removed
A3	8	Implement a robust evidenced based practice approach across the Children and Families Directorate that supports the Directorate to successfully implement its vision and values working alongside the partnership	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation	Amber	Blue	Closed	2 Actions – Reprofiled, both rated amber 2 Actions Removed
A4	6	Establish a performance culture that uses performance as a tool for continuous improvement and ensures operational, senior managers and Elected Members are able to have a firm grip on performance	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation	Green	Blue	Closed	1 Action Reprofiled, rated green

Project Ref	No. of Actions	Project Title	Project Lead (Role)	Previous BRAG Status Jan 2024	Current BRAG Status April 2024	Refresh Outcome Status	Comments
A5	10	Ensure effective digital systems and technology are in place to support the Directorate to deliver good services and support IT enabled change	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Open	1 Action – Removed 2 Actions – Remain and will be reflected within the refreshed Improvement Plan. Both actions rated amber
A6	13	Recruit, retain and develop a high-quality permanent and stable workforce that represents the community - making Birmingham City Council the employer of choice for children and families professionals	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Closed (in current form)	This existing Project has clear alignment with the new IRP. The project milestones will be assessed and updated 2 Actions - Removed 5 Actions - Blue 7 Actions – Amber 1 Action - Grey
A7	6	Ensure there is effective professional development that is accessible to the Children and Families Directorate workforce	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Closed, transferred to BAU	Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual.
A8	5	Establish and embed a learning culture across the Children and Families Directorate so that learning systematically informs the way we work and service development	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Closed, transfer to BAU	Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual. 2 Action – Green 2 Actions – Amber 2 Actions - Grey
A9	23	Establish robust operating and governance arrangements that enable senior leaders and elected members to maintain a line of sight to services	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Closed, transfer to BAU	Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual. 11 Actions - Blue 6 Actions – Green 4 Actions – Amber 2 Actions - Grey
A10	5	Ensure staff have opportunities to shape and influence continuous improvement with the Directorate	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Closed	4 Actions – Blue 1 Action – Green The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual.
A11	10	Implement and embed a co-ordinated, planned, and strategic approach to Directorate communications	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Open	4 Actions - Blue 6 Actions – Amber

Project Ref	No. of Actions	Project Title	Project Lead (Role)	Previous BRAG Status Jan 2024	Current BRAG Status April 2024	Refresh Outcome Status	Comments
A12	13	Ensure there is an effective strategic partnership for children and young people in Birmingham that is ambitious for our children with a shared vision, purpose, and plan	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Closed (in current form)	This existing Project has clear alignment with the Birmingham Children and Young People Partnership priorities and workstreams and the New Relationship with Schools agenda. The project milestones will be assessed and updated accordingly. This will include reprofiling some activity as BAU. 5 Actions - Blue 1 Action – Green 7 Actions – Amber
A13	7	Ensure financial processes are embedded so that budget resources available to the directorate are allocated and used most effectively	Director of Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation			Open	2 Actions – Removed 1 Action – Blue 1 Action – Amber 2 Actions - Grey
B1	12	Embed Children Missing out on Education systems to ensure there is robust oversight, tracking and a partnership approach to supporting children, young people, and families and securing a rapid response	Director of Thriving Children and Families			Open	2 Actions - Removed 1 Action - Blue 4 Actions – Green 5 Actions – Amber
B2	3	Ensure robust arrangements are in place to respond to safeguarding issues in schools	Director of Thriving Children and Families			Closed	Project to be closed, remaining action reprofiled as BAU 2 Actions – Green 1 Action - Amber
B3	1	Ensure robust Early Help services are in place	Director of Thriving Children and Families			Closed	Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual
B4	3	Ensure robust arrangements are in place for children and young people who are Electively Home Educated	Director of Thriving Children and Families			Closed	Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business
B5	10	Ensure there are robust systems and processes in place regarding children attending residential/alternative/school based resourced provision /out of school settings and post 16 settings	Director of Thriving Children and Families			Closed	Project to be closed, remaining action reprofiled as BAU 8 Actions – Removed 1 Action – Blue 1 Action – Amber
B6	31	Ensure robust Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people are in place across the Council and the Directorate (including commissioned services)	Director of Children and Families			Revision	Project under review. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council

Project Ref	No. of Actions	Project Title	Project Lead (Role)	Previous BRAG Status Jan 2024	Current BRAG Status April 2024	Refresh Outcome Status	Comments
							1 Action – Removed 11 Actions - Blue 6 Actions – Green 13 Actions – Amber
B7	11	Continue to strengthen the support for learning and education provision for children ever known to a social worker	Director of Thriving Children and Families			Closed	Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual, this to include respective improvement arrangements across the Schools and Employability Division 1 Action – Removed 4 Actions - Blue 4 Actions – Green 2 Actions – Amber
C1	N/A	SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Priority one - System Leadership (SEND Strategy, Inter-agency Working, Local Offer)	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
C2	N/A	SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Priority two - Getting the basics right – identifying and assessing need (Coordination of Assessments, Quality of EHC Plans, Waiting Times)	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
C3	N/A	SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Priority three - Working Together Well (coproduction, parental engagement, parental satisfaction)	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
C4	N/A	SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Priority four - Pathways – meeting need and improving outcomes (academic progress, attendance and exclusions, employment)	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
C5	N/A	Building on the SEND Improvement Journey, continue to strengthen the system and capacity to promote inclusion of children and young people	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
D1	N/A	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Strategy, Policy, and Service Planning and Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A			Reportable Quarterly

Project Ref	No. of Actions	Project Title	Project Lead (Role)	Previous BRAG Status Jan 2024	Current BRAG Status April 2024	Refresh Outcome Status	Comments
D2	N/A	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service People and Organisation Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
D3	N/A	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Customer, Channels and Communications Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
D4	N/A	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Transformation and Route Optimisation Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
D5	N/A	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service IT and Digital Infrastructure Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
D6	N/A	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Data and Performance Management Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
D7	N/A	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Contracts and Commercial Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A			Reportable Quarterly
E1	4	Strengthen services and partnership approach to support improving outcomes for children and young people	Various			Open	2 Actions – Blue 2 Actions - Amber
E2	4	Deliver Directorate transformation projects to inform and deliver a sustainable service	Various			Closed	All Actions closed – activity no longer relevant to the Directorate as responsibility of

Project Ref	No. of Actions	Project Title	Project Lead (Role)	Previous BRAG Status Jan 2024	Current BRAG Status April 2024	Refresh Outcome Status	Comments
							associated areas of work have been transferred outside of remit

Appendix Two

Children and Families Directorate Improvement Plan Actions Review Summary

RAG	Description
Grey	Not yet due to start
Red	Significant delay in implementation/still a worry
Amber	Action started and progress being made
Green	Action completed but continue to monitor closely to ensure it has embedded
Blue	Action delivered and performance embedded and sustained for over 3 months and meeting/exceeding targets (where the action is measurable)

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
Develop and implement the high-level strategic vision for the Directorate underpinned by values and behaviours				

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A1.1	Develop a high-level vision informed by best practice, evidence base, and voice of children and young people.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A1.2	Consult on the emerging vision and high-level improvement plan with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Elected members • CLT • Birmingham Children's Partnership • Head Teachers • Parent Carer Forum 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A1.3	Describe the culture and behaviours that illustrate how the Directorate will deliver the vision in practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSLT Away Days undertaken to develop initial thinking. • Draft behaviours shared with staff, elected members, partners and wider stakeholders. 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A1.4	Ensure there is clear information available to stakeholders regarding the Directorate's identity including role and functions, vision, values, behaviours, and current operating model. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce document: Children and Families Directorate, Who we are, what we do and how to access • Ensure web information regarding the Directorate's role is refreshed (including on intranet and the distinction between BCC Children and Families Directorate and BCT is clear) 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
Develop and implement a fit for purpose operating model for the Children and Families Directorate				
A2.1	Develop the High-Level Directorate Target Operating Model for Directorate. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director and Assistant Director level 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A2.2	<p>Seek support and approval for High-Level Target Operating Model (Phase two Cabinet Report – 7th June 2022)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLT engagement • Union engagement • Cabinet approval • Staff engagement • Partner engagement 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A2.3	<p>Implement the new Children and Families Directorate Senior Leadership Team structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role design and completion of JDs and PS • Recruitment process. • Appointment and onboarding of permanent posts. 			Reprofiled as BAU - Remaining recruitment monitored through an overarching redesign Improvement Plan action
A2.4	Recruit to senior and transformation posts/additional interim capacity needed to ensure the Directorate is supported through the period of transition towards the implementation of the permanent structure.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A2.5	Undertake Directorate Baseline Project to gain a thorough and shared understanding of services, their performance, and resources to inform next steps and opportunities.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A2.6	Report on the findings from the Baseline Project in order to inform the long-term requirements for the Directorate.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A2.7	<p>Scope the requirements of reviews and identify and agree the appropriate methodology/tool/framework for the range of reviews/development of services required</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See section E2. 1. Including digital review. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A2.8	<p>Establish the resource and capacity needed to support the range of reviews/development of services required.</p> <p>2. See section E2. 3. Including digital review.</p>			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A2.9	Identify dedicated HR capacity and support to work with the Directorate to successfully implement changes to structure and services (both recruitment and service redesign).			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A2.10	Seek support and approval for next steps to implement the Directorate Operating Model in line with Baselineing (Phase three – via MTFP process).			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A2.11	<p>Develop detailed plan for each service, following baselineing and confirmation of gaps and services/functions required and services in need of review/redesign (in three categories*),</p> <p>1. Immediate action: current to March 2023 2. Requires in depth review: by March 2024 3. Requires review: by March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan developed including scope of change/review and approvals/governance Including any role design and drafting of JDs and PS and any other enabling workstreams Union/staff/stakeholder consultation <p>*see transformation projects in Section E of this plan.</p>			Closed no longer relevant
A2.12	<p>Establish if there is an appetite to engage an external sector leader academic partner to support evaluation of the Birmingham Children Thrive operating model at an appropriate time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach to evaluation confirmed and programmed into Transformation. 			Remove – picked up via wider Thriving Families workstreams - BAU

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A2.13	Undertake staff consultation, respond, and address feedback. (Subject to Cabinet approval and in line with Baseline priority categories).			Duplication, aligns with A2.11
A2.14	Undertake a review of Children and Families Directorate staff accommodation working in line with the vision and principles of the service and to ensure access to appropriate workspace for roles and teams.			Remove -progressing via leadership discussions
A2.15	Undertake a review of services requirements for phone lines and access to equipment in line with service purpose and requirements.			Closed no longer relevant
A2.16	<p>Finalise structure and undertake change and planning to support implementation (NB Implementation plan to be developed in line with Baseline Priority categories)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realigning of services to new AD areas • Establishment of new services/functions • Finance/budget realignment/establishment • HR/staff establishment realignment/set up • Ensuring that each AD/Director service area has in place: • Staff and Team development and induction into roles • Transition arrangements • Review policies, procedures, and pathways – including ensuring compliance with statutory duties (and regular review thereafter) • Updating governance arrangements as appropriate • Review/reaffirm outcome measures for services and update Performance Management Framework accordingly. 			Closed no longer requires Improvement Board oversight
A2.17	<p>Celebrate the Birmingham Children Thrive Directorate Operating Model.</p> <p>Comms plan to be developed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on new model at Annual Staff Recognition Event, including Market Place • Confirm model with Elected Members and partners • Publish updated document Children and Families Directorate, Who we are, what we do and how to access • Social media and web presence 			Remove – picked up via wider Thriving Families workstreams - BAU

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A2.18	<p>Develop and implement a Birmingham Children Thrive Induction Programme for all managers within the Directorate to support the successful implementation of the new structure and operating model.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure link up to Corporate and Mandatory training. 2. Including focus on: Statutory duties – governance and compliance, quality, performance and benchmarking against good and outstanding practice. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A2.19	<p>In line with Birmingham Children Thrive vision and values and agreed practice model, review and strengthen operational services ways of working, access points and pathways resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated locality working • Services that wrap around children and families • Reducing 'hand offs' between services • Warm handovers 			Remove – picked up via wider Thriving Families workstreams - BAU
<p>Implement a robust evidenced based practice approach across the Children and Families Directorate that supports the Directorate to successfully implement its vision and values</p>				
A3.1	<p>Undertake initial scoping regarding the implementation of Restorative and Relationship Based Practice in line with the Directorate's vision and values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned to Corporate and partnership ways of working. 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A3.2	<p>Work with the Directorate Leadership Forum to roll out relationship-based practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'Introductory Conversation' with Leadership Forum 2. Sessions (series of 5 Action Learning Set sessions planned for 3 cohorts over 5 months) 3. Cohorts agreed 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A3.3	<p>Develop and agree an Outcomes Framework to support the roll out of Restorative Practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the success measures that the Directorate will use to understand the impact of Restorative Practice action learning sets. 			Action Closed - Action was withdrawn from the plan, taken as a Board decision. Financial pressures – activity to be reviewed April 2025

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A3.4	Agree the plan and approach for the roll out of Restorative Practice to all staff and teams across the Directorate.			Action Closed- Action was withdrawn from the plan, taken as a Board decision. Financial pressures – activity to be reviewed later April 2025
A3.5	Define the wider Practice model for staff and teams working directly with children and families ensuring synergy with the established Birmingham Children's Trust model, and alignment with the emerging Birmingham Children's Partnership approach and the work being undertaken to embed co-production by default in the SEND Improvement Programme.			Reprofiled
A3.6	Restorative Practice approach shared with school and setting leaders at mini-inclusion conferences (Summer 2022).			Financial pressures – further associated activity to be reviewed later April 2025
A3.7	Work with schools and setting leaders to develop an approach to promoting the principles of Restorative Practice as part of the delivery of the partnership's Inclusion Strategy.			Financial pressures – further associated activity to be reviewed later April 2025
A3.8	Implement a Directorate wide Supervision Policy and Framework promoting relationship-based practice (with supporting tools) supplementing corporate guidance but tailored to the needs of the service.			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
Establish a performance culture that uses performance as a tool for continuous improvement and ensures operational, senior managers and Elected Members are able to have a firm grip on performance				
A4.1	Establish a Directorate Business Intelligence and Performance Lead supported by Business intelligence and performance analysts to ensure the Directorate is supported to implement robust monitoring and analysis and reporting of performance.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A4.2	<p>Develop, implement and embed a Performance Management Framework for the Directorate (aligning to Corporate frameworks) to ensure there is an accurate and systematic understanding of performance and impact of services as 'business as usual'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Management Framework is produced, approved by CSLT and launched Performance conversations launched across services focusing on: What's going well? What are we worried about? And What are we doing about it? Monthly Performance Board in place Birmingham Children Thrive Quarterly and Performance and Quality Conference launched (all managers) Headline monthly performance report provided to Cabinet Member 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A4.3	<p>Develop a suite of Key Performance Indicators and Performance Report for each service area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target KPI Report in place Incorporating national KPIs and agreed local and other best practice KPIs (including national, statistical neighbour and regional comparator data) and monthly line of sight, monitoring and analysis of Annex A/other data information required by Ofsted to inform inspection. Monthly KPI Report in place to inform performance conversations. 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A4.4	Undertake data quality work to ensure accuracy, quality and confidence in all KPIs – prioritising statutory measures.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A4.5	<p>Support and develop all managers to increase their use of performance information to drive and sustain improvement.</p> <p>2. In addition to service performance monitoring, include HR and finance and budget monitoring (inc. agency spend)</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A4.6	Strengthen reporting on SEND performance through 'business as usual' arrangements (CLT and Cabinet)			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
Ensure effective digital systems and technology are in place to support the Directorate to deliver good services and support IT enabled change				
A5.1	<p>Agree governance and delivery arrangements (including BAU arrangements to manage ongoing system development) to support this Project.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IT Governance Group 2. Staff User Group 3. Establish Terms of Reference and Governance document - including 'scheme of delegation' for sign off on system changes 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A5.2	<p>Establish an overview of 'as is' software systems in place supporting the Directorate to deliver services.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Including system access needs by teams that are not already in place 2. Including contract status and re-procurement timelines 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A5.3	<p>Establish an overview of services using spreadsheets to record service information.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To inform data mapping 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A5.4	<p>Confirm Directorate strategic vision and intentions regarding key systems to be used in the medium to longer term.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Including appetite for systems to talk to each other/feed into a single portal through automation 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A5.5	Identify a Business Systems Owner for each software system used by the Directorate.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A5.6	Identify system technical expert users from within the Directorate for each software system.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A5.7	Support managers in the development of Digital Leadership, through: 2. Learning and development 3. Incorporating opportunities for implementing digital solutions to increase efficiency as part of service reviews 4. Expert support from Digital team to work alongside the service			Duplication picked up as part of A5.8 and 5.10
A5.8	Develop a single Directorate Digital and Customer Transformation Action Plan, and secure resource required, to support the Directorate to implement digital and customer improvements and transformation in support of the Directorate's vision (and aligned to corporate strategy). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing together all requirements of developing systems into one plan Child and family systems – to enable effective operational recording and tracking of support, reporting, and monitoring Data mapping exercise Effective access to and interaction with services. Workflow planning with teams. Training and development needs/user support – aligned to system development/improvement. 			Remain Open
A5.9	Implement the Directorate's Digital and Customer Transformation Action Plan. 1. With incremental milestones			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A5.10 NEW	Support the implementation of the internal Impulse - IT Audit recommendations.			Remain Open
Recruit, retain and develop a high-quality permanent and stable workforce that represents the community - making Birmingham City Council the employer of choice for children and families professionals				
A6.1	Implement a Children and Families Directorate Working Group to co-produce a comprehensive			Remain Open

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<p>Directorate action plan to respond to the findings and recommendations from Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business report. *Including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of the new EDI Accountability Inclusive Leadership Assessment 2. EDI Train the Trainers 3. Review of JDs and Person specs 4. Links with Universities and future talent management – working with graduates 5. Promoting anti-oppressive practice and approaches 			
A6.2	<p>Streamline recruitment processes to support the effective, efficient, and timely implementation of the Birmingham Children Thrive vision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid review of recruitment pathways, and support aligned to them. • Recruitment pathways reset to enable recruitment and onboarding to move at pace - reducing the burden on officer time and resource. 			Remove – Corporate Responsibility supported by Directorate activity
A6.3	<p>Develop and implement a Directorate Recruitment and Retention Strategy setting out the organisation's commitment and plans to recruit and retain staff, mapping out career pathways and opportunities for development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking to the work already commenced for SEND services. • Supporting the principles of Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A6.4	<p>Produce and implement communications aligned to the Recruitment and Retention Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro-site utilised • Use of sector specialist press and national opportunities to promote Birmingham Children and Families Directorate • Social media campaigns 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A6.5	<p>Produce targeted recruitment materials for agency staff covering positions that are fixed term or permanent promoting Birmingham City Council as an employer of choice.</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A6.6	Implement a monthly Meet the Leadership Team Induction Event – enabling all new staff to understand the context of the Directorate, within the Council and partnership, and understand how they contribute to the Improvement Journey and the vision of the Directorate.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A6.7	Embed Exit Interviews to understand the reasons for when staff decide to leave the organisation ensuring that learning is fed back into service and workforce development.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A6.8	<p>Implement robust workforce sufficiency planning and performance monitoring that informs the Directorate's Recruitment and Retention Strategy and focuses on ensuring the workforce is representative of the community we serve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce planning and profile data routinely monitored through Performance Management Framework by service, including Workforce profile, sickness, turnover, agency/perm workforce, exit interviews - so we are able to address any dips in performance and ensure appropriate support in place. • In line with recommendations of the Everybody's Battle, Everybody's Business Report. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A6.9	<p>Work with a Learning and Development partner to strengthen capacity within the Directorate to promote and implement Inclusive Leadership:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intervention designed and proposal presented to CSLT. 2. Staff identified as leaders to drive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion accountability across the Directorate 3. Implement Train the Trainer model 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A6.10	Support line managers to provide a consistent approach including corporate appraisal process, best practice and high quality 121 meetings and team support to ensure that all staff receive high quality support that enables them to deliver the best services.			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A6.11	<p>Implement the Annual <i>Birmingham Children Thrive Staff Awards Event</i> to provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate staff and the impact they have.</p> <p>1. Link with Corporate and other Council staff award events to ensure join up</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A6.12	Take all legitimate steps to regularise the roles of all relevant staff and managers, moving from interim to permanent appointments wherever and as quickly as possible in the interest of stable SEND and children's services.			Reprofiled as BAU. Picked up as part of the Directorate Redesign workstream
A6.13	<p>Undertake a Task and Finish exercise to explore opportunities to incentivise retention of key staff whose roles are business critical to the successful delivery of SEND improvement.</p> <p>1. Research successful approaches implemented in other areas. 2. Findings fed into Recruitment and Retention Strategy</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
Ensure there is effective professional development that is accessible to the Children and Families Directorate workforce				
A7.1	Identify leadership and co-ordination capacity required to support the roll out and embedding of workforce development and learning culture within the Directorate.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A7.2	Identify sufficient budget and resource to support the implementation of workforce development within the Directorate.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A7.3	<p>Develop a Workforce Development Strategy – with core competencies and support for Children and Families Directorate staff to deliver best practice in their respective disciplines and in Directorate wide approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligned to statutory duties and directorate priorities. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A7.4	<p>Establish Children and Families Services Professionals Career Pathways (underpinned by Learning and Development and aligned to appraisal) to support Birmingham City Council to nurture talent and 'grow its own'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking with the Recruitment and Retention Strategy and overall aim to reduce the dependency on agency staff. Implementing pathways (underpinned by support) Linking with Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A7.5	<p>Implement a Workforce Development Plan and offer for staff aligned to the Directorate's priorities, professional disciplines, core competencies (supplementary to mandatory Corporate and Safeguarding partnership learning and development) and informed by national evidence based best practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking to the work already commenced for SEND services. Using a blend of approaches including Action Learning Sets, access to sector specialist learning, joint learning with partners, 'Learning bites' etc. Establish mechanism for cascade to staff including identify platform for learning and development resources. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A7.6	<p>Optimise the use of Research in Practice and other evidence-based resources to inform practice, learning and development.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> With regular access to and cascade of learning opportunities and resources to front line staff. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
<p>Establish and embed a learning culture across the Children and Families Directorate so that learning systematically informs the way we work and service development</p>				

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A8.1	<p>Identify leadership and co-ordination capacity required to support the roll out of quality assurance development within the Directorate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and coordination in place QA leads identified to drive QA across professional disciplines (including leading moderation) 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A8.2	Identify sufficient budget and resource to support the implementation of quality assurance within the Directorate.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A8.3	<p>Develop and implement a robust Quality Assurance Framework and learning loop across the Children and Families Directorate. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular audit and dip sampling (including triangulating with voice of the child, parents and carers, other users of our services and partners) Moderation arrangements in place with clear guidance/standards on 'what good looks like' Bringing together learning from quality assurance to inform learning and development and feed into continuous improvement. Including building in Peer Review as a tool to support continuous improvement 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A8.4	Implement a robust approach to managing, monitoring, and learning from complaints and compliments - linking to the Directorate's learning and development offer and embedding within the Performance Management Framework.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A8.5	Building on work from SEND Programme, implement a co-ordinated strategic approach to engagement, participation and co-production of children and young people across the Directorate and alongside colleagues from the Council and partnership.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roles with specialist skills supporting participation mapped out and aligned. 2. Lead identified. 3. Listening and involving children and young people strategy in place. 4. Strategy lead – Strategic Governance and Planning 5. Operational lead – Head of Youth Service 			
Establish robust operating and governance arrangements that enable senior leaders and elected members to maintain a line of sight to services				
A9.1	<p>Establish the permanent capacity to support the Director of Children's Services to lead a well-run Directorate including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance, inspection and self-assessment 2. Continuous improvement 3. Staff and stakeholder engagement 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.2	Implement a Governance and Meetings Framework for the Directorate setting out the Directorates arrangements for line of sight to services across the Directorate.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.3	Implement a Scheme of Delegation for the Directorate that sets out the levels of decision making and delegated responsibility (including practice) across services within the Directorate.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A9.4	<p>Map out, review and confirm the Directorate's engagement with key strategic partnership and corporate meetings - ensuring engagement at the appropriate level and arrangements in place to cascade information effectively and escalate as necessary.</p> <p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Children Partnership meetings and sub-groups • Birmingham Education Partnership meetings • Engagement with school forums • Parent Carer Forum engagement • Community Safety Partnership Forum 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combined Authority meetings 			
A9.5	<p>Develop a document and narrative that explains the Directorate's role and relationships with key partnerships and organisations across the City, including the relationship with Birmingham Children's Trust and Birmingham Education Partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document/narrative produced and published to confirm the landscape of partner organisations and their relationships. 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A9.6	<p>Implement a Senior Leadership Visit Programme to ensure that senior leaders (Officer and Political) have a line of sight to front line services for children and young people, ensuring that learning from visits informs continuous improvement.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To include schools and settings – early years and post 16 and children and families Directorate services Briefings prepared for senior leaders ahead of visits to schools System to record feedback from visits in place 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.7	<p>Establish a robust approach to the development, implementation, maintenance, and review of policy and procedures for the Directorate in line with statutory duties and national best practice to ensure that all staff and managers have a clear framework to work to. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear linkages to agreed partnership safeguarding policies and procedures. Particular focus on operational practice policies and procedures. Implementing governance system and arrangements to monitor and review. Linking to learning from quality assurance (implementing any required changes as a result). 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.8	<p>Implement arrangements to ensure that an Annual Test of Assurance takes place (in line with the Statutory Guidance for the roles of the Directorate of Children's Service and Lead Member for Children's</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	Services) and informs the Directorate's Self-Assessment and continuous improvement.			
A9.9	Implement an annual Children and Families Directorate Self-Assessment to inform the Directorate's annual strategic planning cycle and continuous improvement and in line with the Annual Conversation with Ofsted (see Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services guidance).			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.10	<p>Ensure Elected Members are well supported by implementing an Elected Member Development Programme to provide access for elected members to high quality learning, development and information to support them in their roles as committee members and ward councillors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including access to LGA peer support and resources. • Programme developed. • Programme launched. • Programme operational as business as usual and Elected Members having regular access to briefings and information 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.11	<p>Strengthen the Directorate's presence on the intranet to provide information for staff and elected members regarding the Directorate, how it works, policies and procedures.</p> <p>1. Development and maintenance of staff intranet content transferred into business as usual.</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.12	Develop and implement a ' <i>Working Together for our Children, Young People, Families and Communities Protocol</i> ' between the Directorate and Cabinet Member, informed by best practice.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A9.13	Establish robust arrangements to support the tracking and timely implementation of agreed Internal Audit recommendations.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.14	Establish robust arrangements to support the monitoring and review of Directorate Business Continuity and Risk Register.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.15	Implement robust arrangements to monitor and track notifications from Department for Education, Ofsted, National Children's Commissioner and MPs ensuring any actions are addressed and responded to appropriately and in a timely manner.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.16	Strengthen the approach to responding to Directorate Freedom of Information Requests.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.17	Promote vigilance to fraud and scams to staff and schools. 1. Message to schools via notice board 2. Raise with Head Teacher fora			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A9.18	Take immediate and long-term steps to re-establish the City Council as a "children's services authority" in line with Children Act 2004. 3. Re-creating a "children's department" in some form and name and including the explicit title and role of the DCS; Ensuring that the various leadership roles, politicians and officers, are consistent with statutory guidance. 4. Promoting a children's partnership with a clearly stated vision and plan for the city's children with the DCS leading that work.			Remove
A9.19	Undertake a business process review to ensure corporate business process and governance			Remove

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<p>arrangements and systems are fit for purpose and efficient.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring processes are supportive and do not hinder service delivery: E.g. HR, finance, governance and decision making. Comparing to other LAs judged to be good and outstanding 			
A9.20	<p>Implement improvements to Corporate Services and systems arising from the review.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Action plan put into place to support roll out and implementation of recommended improvements. Staff and stakeholders supported to embed changes. Action plan fully delivered, and changes embedded across services. 			Closed
A9.21	<p>Conduct an exercise with external support to review and refresh the member-officer culture to ensure it is fit for purpose especially but not only in the support of children's service improvement.</p>			Remove
A9.22	<p>Strengthen the Local Authority's role as Commissioner of Birmingham Children's Trust.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangements clearly defined in appropriate Governance documents. 			Remove
A9.23 NEW	<p>Ensure appropriate security measures and management procedures in place for processing of data and the assessment of information risk in line with GDPR.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver audit recommendations. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
Ensure staff have opportunities to shape and influence continuous improvement with the Directorate				

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A10.1	<p>Implement Termly All Staff Roadshows to keep staff updated on Directorate developments and hear their views.</p> <p>2. Transferred into 'business as usual' arrangements</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A10.2	<p>Implement the Children and Families Directorate Staff Reference Group, with representation from across the Directorate, to ensure staff voice is central to the Directorate's Improvement Journey.</p> <p>3. Linking Directorate approach to Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business listening circles</p> <p>4. Inviting the group to co-produce the solutions to Improvement Programme priorities</p> <p>5. Nominate/seek volunteers to act as inclusion leads and champions to support above</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A10.3	<p>Implement Staff Pulse Survey to 'temperature' check how staff feel throughout the Improvement Journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Staff Pulse Survey designed and launched. Findings analysed and reported to Senior Managers, Staff Reference Group and all staff Learning inform Directorate and service improvement. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A10.4	<p>Strengthen the Directorate information for staff on the Council's Intranet site including 'how to have your say and get involved' section.</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
A10.5	<p>Implement Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business updates into Staff Engagement events.</p> <p>1. Termly Staff Webinars</p> <p>2. Staff Reference Group</p> <p>3. Leadership Forum</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
Implement and embed a co-ordinated, planned, and strategic approach to Directorate communications				

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A11.1	Review staff outlook groups and agree arrangements to review and maintain as business as usual. 1. Implement robust process for review and updating.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A11.2	Implement Fortnightly Staff Communications embedding into 'business as usual'. • Staff comms transferred into permanent team as business as usual.			
A11.3	Review and develop the Directorate's web presence in line with service developments, statutory requirements and best practice. 1. Baseline of existing content mapped 2. Developments/improvements to content scheduled and aligned to/prioritised with other key plans			Open
A11.4	Identify permanent capacity and resource to support the Directorate with effective internal and external communication/promotion of services, delivering statutory duties and improvement.			Open
A11.5	Develop and implement a co-ordinated and strategic approach to communications. • Communications plan in place and reviewed regularly by the Directorate's senior leadership team. • Transferred into business as usual			Open
A11.6	Establish a resourced SEND Communications Strategy to establish more fluent, frequent and effective communications with parents and carers. 1. Focussing on both the communications of the improvement work and ensuring effective case work communication. 2. Communications transfer into 'business as usual' arrangements.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A11.7	<p>Work with the Corporate Design Team to position children and young people within agreed corporate branding and identity products. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A4 and A3 templates Powerpoint slide deck Banners for documents Teams background. 			Open
A11.8	<p>Ensure a robust approach is implemented across the Directorate (along with resources, support and guidance) to fully understand the composition of audience cohorts and their communication needs and therefore the effectiveness of comms campaigns/solutions e.g.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessibility 2. Easy read 3. English as a second language 			Open
A11.9	Implement a strategy, guidance and support for managers and staff to optimise social media in delivering the Directorate's priorities and improvement.			Open
A11.10	Develop and maintain a system for telephone and digital access for parents to SENAR information to improve communication and reduce queries by September 2022.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
Ensure there is an effective strategic partnership for children and young people in Birmingham that is ambitious for our children with a shared vision, purpose, and plan				
A12.1	<p>Strengthen the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care System (along with City Board and Community Safety Partnership) as champions to improve outcomes for children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear Governance arrangements in place 			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish close working relationships between Boards through common membership and agenda/forward planning and joint working on priorities. Ensure golden thread with priorities. 			
A12.2	Work together with the Integrated Care Board and system to strengthen their role as a partner in improving outcomes for children and young people.			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A12.3	<p>Working with Birmingham Children's Partnership, develop a new 5 year Children and Young People's Plan to improve the long-term outcomes for children and young people in the City.</p> <p>1. Including Child Friendly City and Year of Change for Children</p>			Completed and Embedded – Action Closed
A12.4	<p>Implement a BCP Children and Young People's Plan Performance Management Framework to enable the partnership is able to effectively monitor and track progress towards delivering the plan. Including:</p> <p>2. Quarterly Reporting to the Birmingham Children's Partnership Board</p> <p>3. Annual Report of progress</p> <p>4. Six monthly line of sight reporting to Health and Wellbeing Board and ICS</p> <p>5. Six monthly progress updates to Council governance and partner organisation's governance.</p>			This activity has clear alignment with the Birmingham Children and Young People Partnership priorities and workstreams and the New Relationship with Schools agenda. The project milestones will be assessed and updated accordingly. This will include reprofiling some activity as BAU.
A12.5	Strengthen the Birmingham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to include greater emphasis and focus on children, young people, and families including children with SEND.			This activity has clear alignment with the Birmingham Children and Young People Partnership priorities and workstreams and the New Relationship with Schools agenda. The project milestones will be assessed and updated accordingly. This will include reprofiling some activity as BAU.
A12.6	Develop and implement a plan of Council and partnership activities and commitments to kick start <i>Change for Children and Young People 2023-2027</i> programme and UNICEF Child Friendly City, placing			This activity has clear alignment with the Birmingham Children and Young People Partnership priorities and workstreams and the New Relationship with Schools agenda. The project milestones will be assessed and

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<p>children and young people firmly at the heart of Birmingham.</p> <p>6. Including how BCC's Corporate Parent plans to strengthen offer for children in care and care leavers.</p>			updated accordingly. This will include reprofiling some activity as BAU.
A12.7	Implement a Memorandum of Understanding to outline the commitment of partnership organisations in delivering the Children and Young People's Plan.			This activity has clear alignment with the Birmingham Children and Young People Partnership priorities and workstreams and the New Relationship with Schools agenda. The project milestones will be assessed and updated accordingly. This will include reprofiling some activity as BAU.
A12.8	<p>Ensure the Council is positioned to provide leadership, support, and facilitation to galvanise the energy and commitment of partners towards a shared vision for all children and young people in Birmingham and to secure their firm support in working together to deliver this for the long term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish robust interim arrangements to support the Birmingham Children's Partnership Secure support and resources to implement proportionate permanent capacity and arrangements to support the Board in the long term to maintain the effectiveness of the partnership. 			This activity has clear alignment with the Birmingham Children and Young People Partnership priorities and workstreams and the New Relationship with Schools agenda. The project milestones will be assessed and updated accordingly. This will include reprofiling some activity as BAU.
A12.9	<p>Develop a <i>Birmingham Children Thrive Engagement with Settings Framework</i> to set out and inform a shared understanding of how early years, schools, and post 16 providers collaborate.</p> <p>1. Resulting in improved co-ordination and wider representation of schools in Birmingham policy development and strategic planning.</p>			This activity has clear alignment with the Birmingham Children and Young People Partnership priorities and workstreams and the New Relationship with Schools agenda. The project milestones will be assessed and updated accordingly. This will include reprofiling some activity as BAU.
A12.10	Establish a Head Teacher Reference Group to sense check and advise the LA and partners on approaches to engaging schools and to temperature check the impact of improvement activity.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A12.11	Plan and lead a collaborative process with schools to re-set the wider relationship between schools and the LA, including in relation to SEND, taking the opportunity of the appointment of the DCS and SEND Commissioner's report.			Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity
A12.12	<p>Strengthen the Council's arrangements regarding school improvement and schools causing concern, in partnership with stakeholders</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Robust school improvement conversations with partners 3. Forum up and running bringing together intelligence and providing high support and high challenge (e.g. attendance, suspensions, exclusions, achievement etc.) 4. Develop a school performance dashboard 5. Continue to develop reliable data sets for the directorate and schools to utilise 			Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity
A12.13	<p>Strengthen the Directorate's support to schools following Ofsted Inspection:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Senior leadership have a shared and up to date understanding of school Ofsted judgements 2. Clear understanding of the Directorate and partnership support provided to schools in need 3. Letter/email from Director to be sent to all schools following inspection outcome 			Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity
Ensure financial processes are embedded so that budget resources available to the directorate are allocated and used most effectively				
A13.1	<p>Embed budget accountability and responsibility by ensuring budget managers are appropriately skilled and trained, and budget is discussed within line management arrangements, specific finance support meetings, and in team meetings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Resulting in the directorate and its supporting finance teams in producing accurate and timely financial reporting. 			Reprofile – Corporate

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
A13.2	Introduce Head of Service budget accountability letters alongside the existing budget accountability letters for Directors and AD's.			Reprofile – Corporate
A13.3	Ensure the Children and Families Directorate is proactively contributing to the MTFP process, including developing detailed demand profiling, projections and planning, particularly in demand led services such as the Children and Young People's Travel Service.			Open
A13.4	Over time begin to address overall budget sufficiency by initially seeking mitigations and virements within the Children and Families Directorate to address budget pressures before seeking funding from across wider BCC resources. 5. Enable reinvestment to take place where required.			Open
A13.5	Consider a review of the Birmingham High Needs Block top up fund.			Open
A13.6	Continue work to review and address off-contract spend, implementing robust systems and controls to prevent off-contract arrangements.			Open
A13.7	Implement robust financial controls and monitoring, in line with reviewed Scheme of Delegation, Directorate line management structure, and supported by Corporate Finance Team and systems.			Open
Embed Children Missing out on Education systems to ensure there is robust oversight, tracking and a partnership approach to supporting children, young people, and families and securing a rapid response				
B1.1	Review systems in place to record, track and respond to all children who are missing from full time education and ensure capacity is in place to provide a robust response, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who do not have a school place Children who are not in full time education Children who have moved into the area without a school place 			Remain Open – Requires Improvement Board oversight Progress dependent on completion of redesign. Developing COOS is firming foundations for this element.

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children receiving interim learning from home bridging or other part-time alternative provision/unregistered provision Children who are excluded/suspended Children at risk of exclusion/suspension Children who are absent from school Young people who are NEET Young people who are known to the Youth Offending Service 			Missing children, a triage process is activated across the directorate to ensure that children's education and safeguarding journey is understood, and any actions brokered.
B1.2	<p>Implement strengthened Children Missing Out on Education systems, processes, support, and pathways to ensure children who are missing education receive a planned and co-ordinated rapid response and return to full time education.</p> <p>In line with statutory guidance: Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fortnightly tracking and monitoring in place with tenacious partnership activity to support children back into full time education and keep them safe. Including focus on children at risk of exclusion/suspension 			Remain Open – Requires Improvement Board oversight. Progress dependent on completion of redesign.
B1.3	Work with colleagues within Birmingham Children's Trust to ensure practitioners across the partnership social workers/family support workers are supported in ensuring that children attend school/and where children are not in school, they are able to access support and interventions for their children, to recognise children not attending school and are able to tailor interventions appropriately.			Remain Open – Requires Improvement Board oversight.
B1.4	<p>Ensure that arrangements are in place and embedded to identify the number of children not in full time school education/post 16 provision and to respond if there are concerns about their welfare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children missing education systems and practitioners are working together with children's social care and partners to ensure children are protected and to reduce the risk of harm or further harm. Information incorporated into 'business as usual' performance monitoring arrangements 			<p>Remain Open – Requires Improvement Board oversight.</p> <p>There are now robust arrangements developing across the partnership with collaboration between teams to improve awareness of DfE guidance and best practice in relation to children in EHE. There is emerging good</p>

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
				practice with other areas of children out of sight, with Education Safeguarding teams working more responsively with BCT to ensure respective skills sets are blended to support children back into school
B1.5	Urgently review the need for Safe and Well checks for children out of school, in line with statutory and best practice guidance, implementing any changes to practice/procedures identified as required.			Remain Open – Requires Improvement Board oversight.
B1.6	<p>Work together with our partners to strengthen joint working and communication between education (including attendance teams), schools, children's social care to ensure robust practice regarding children who are not attending school and keeping them safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resulting in robust practice and systems ensuring professionals are sighted on the lived experience of children and have clear plan to ensure children are safe and in full time education Early help, multi-agency approaches to improve school attendance are supported by associated strategies such as the Early Help and Inclusion strategies 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
B1.7	Ensure sufficient capacity is in place to deliver statutory duties and practice expectations regarding school attendance and children not in school.			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
B1.8 (Links to E1.7)	<p>Develop an attendance strategy with key stakeholders that includes emphasis on the primary phase and ensuring early help is in place to support children and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with statutory guidance and best practice. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Activity is supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign
B1.9	Embed school attendance in school improvement strategies, ensuring the systematic use of attendance data to highlight schools of concern where there are high levels of persistent and/or severe absence,			Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	ensuring those schools are supported to improve attendance.			
B1.10	Ensure robust arrangements and pathways are in place in Birmingham to prevent suspension and exclusions.			Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity
B1.11	Establish robust links and increased joint working with housing services and providers to increase awareness of: children not in full time education, children in temporary accommodation and how housing partners can support.			Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity
B1.12	Work with schools to increase their understanding of the School Admissions Code.			Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity
Ensure robust arrangements are in place to respond to safeguarding issues in schools				
B2.1	Embed an agreed and shared protocol for addressing <i>school related safeguarding concerns/notifications regarding individual children</i> from DfE and Ofsted ensuring a robust response and shared understanding of processes is in place across the Directorate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including roles and responsibilities and named staff. • Working with Birmingham Children's Trust. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure
B2.2	Develop and implement an agreed and shared protocol for addressing <i>school related organisation safeguarding concerns/notifications</i> from DfE and Ofsted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including roles and responsibilities and named staff. • Working with Birmingham Children's Trust. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
B2.3	Implement supporting system to ensure concerns are tracked and responded to.			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure
Ensure robust Early Help services are in place				
B3.1	Secure the continuity of Early Help services within localities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear relationship between BCC vulnerable children services and Early Help system in place through pathways and joint working approaches. • Warm handovers and close working, place based relationships with BCC practitioners and partners in localities 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure
Ensure robust arrangements are in place for children and young people who are Electively Home Educated				
B4.1	Ensure arrangements for reporting, monitoring, and supporting Elective Home Education are robust, including ensuring there is sufficient capacity, to enable timeline of visits and reviews of EHE in line with statutory duties and best practice and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust safeguarding/information sharing is in place with clear pathways into advice and support for practitioners (multi-agency). • Robust system in place to monitor children EHE in particular children with a child protection plan, children in need, children in care or EHCP. • Report ran initially weekly to ensure tracking takes place and appropriate partnership response. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure
B4.2	Ensure the Birmingham Elective Home Education Policy is up to date (reviewed), aligned to the latest statutory guidance and co-produced with children, young people, and parents.			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
B4.3	<p>Ensure every EHE child, young person and family are systematically linked to Local Offer, in line with best practice.</p> <p>e.g. Things to do, places to go, co-production and voice of the child and young person opportunities, age related information to families, universal offer and offer signposting to networks and support that may enable their important role of educating their child.</p>			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure
Ensure there are robust systems and processes in place regarding children attending residential/alternative/school based resourced provision /out of school settings and post 16 settings				
B5.1	<p>Undertake a review to confirm current arrangements in place to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of placement Ensure compliance with relevant legislation Joined up partnership response to supporting child and family. 			No Longer Relevant
B5.2	Implement recommendations from review ensuring robust systems are in place as required.			No Longer Relevant
B5.3	<p>Ensure robust arrangements are in place to commission, monitor and quality assure Alternative Provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative Provision is suitable, good quality, registered. 			No Longer Relevant - There is a S19 working group putting in place a S19 strategy. This responsibility is across SEND
B5.4	Develop an approach for the independent school sector to ensure that pupils in these schools are safe.			No Longer Relevant - This is a universal offer through Education Safeguarding
B5.5	Work with the range of partners to develop systems to enhance the safeguarding of pupils in Out of School Settings in line with DfE guidance: <i>Keeping Children Safe in out of school settings: Code of practice.</i>			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
B5.6	Strengthen cross council working with teams who work with community and faith settings regarding safeguarding children. E.g. Links with Community Safety and Prevent team.			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure
B5.7	Work with partners to ensure systems are in place to keep children who are out of school, including those who are electively home educated, missing education and who may have been permanently excluded, safe.			Duplicated across wider actions
B5.8	Ensure robust, best practice, systems are in place for Chaperone Licensing and Children in Employment functions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity and leadership to support and embed system improvement Including process map and options for implementing digital solutions Ensuring children are safe. 			Reprofiled as BAU. Any such activity will be supported by dedicated Directorate team, achieved through the redesign/restructure there have been no external complaints since the improvement plan was implemented which shows significant progress in the approach
B5.9	Ensure robust systems and arrangements are in place regarding quality of post 16 provision.			Reprofile to align with New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Activity
B5.10	Review the response to children with medical needs and strengthen processes in line with recommendations of review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 19 Policy completed and published. 			Duplicated across wider actions
Ensure robust Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people are in place across the Council and the Directorate (including commissioned services)				
B6.1 (Directorate)	Ensure sufficient capacity is in place to deliver statutory education safeguarding and pupil safeguarding duties.			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing education perspective at the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Providing education perspective at Empower U Hub Conferences (Contextual Safeguarding) Providing education perspective to MARAC meetings Leadership, governance, and support to Operation Encompass Facilitating participation of school and settings participation in multi-agency safeguarding meetings and contributing to subsequent safety planning as appropriate e.g. Case Conferences, Strategy Meetings, Core Groups, Contextual Safeguarding Meetings, Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences. 			relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.2 (Council wide)	<p>Ensure the City Council (and all Directorates within it) has robust working practices, policies and procedures in place in line with statutory safeguarding guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Section 11 Children Act 2004.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid self-assessment against section 11 audit standards undertaken Action plan developed setting out action required Actions completed and arrangements confirmed in place Quality assurance arrangements in place as business as usual Quality assurance and measures reporting to Corporate Safeguarding Network. 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled or removed. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.3 (Council wide)	<p>Implement robust Council governance, accountability, leadership structure and arrangements for Safeguarding children, across Council services (in-house and commissioned).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all Directorate's nominate a named officer with clear safeguarding lead responsibility Establish Corporate Safeguarding Network Terms of Reference in place and Network meeting as business as usual on a regular basis (in line with TOR) Document outlining role of Directorate Safeguarding leads confirmed. Develop mechanisms for reflective practice and learning from critical incidents. Ensure that Safeguarding Leads have sufficient time and support to carry out responsibilities and that this is reviewed as part of their annual appraisal. 			

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
B6.4 (Council wide)	<p>Develop and implement a Corporate Safeguarding Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy developed, consultation undertaken, approved and published (at Cabinet) Policy cascaded to all managers and staff across the Council with clear guidance. Appropriate level of Safeguarding training undertaken by relevant staff. 			
B6.5 (Council wide)	<p>Review City Council Mandatory Safeguarding Training and specific individual service safeguarding training in line with the new policy, statutory guidance and work to strengthen safeguarding processes set out within this plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarification on expectations Including frequency of training (and refresher training) Maximise the use of technology. Ref: WTSG 2018, Safeguarding practitioners information sharing guidance, Contextual Safeguarding, Section 11 etc. Re-launch of training via Corporate Safeguarding Network Performance against KPIs added to Corporate Safeguarding Network monthly reporting. 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.6 (Council wide)	<p>Ensure there is a robust mandatory induction process for City Council staff and volunteers in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as outlined in Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction process and materials produced with clear expectations and timescale for completion. Maximise the use of technology to reach Re-launch of training via Corporate Safeguarding Network 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.7 (Council wide)	<p>Undertake Section 11 Audit in line with the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed timeline for reporting, then incorporating audit findings/recommendations into the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Network action plan.</p>			

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
B6.8 (Council wide)	<p>Ensure robust links between the Corporate Safeguarding Network and the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement in BSCP sub-groups Dissemination of learning across the council Access to BSCP training and learning events. 			
B6.9 (Directorate)	<p>Review Children and Families Directorate Safeguarding procedures and recording in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Keeping Children Safe in Education and sector best practice, ensuring robust implementation of any required changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope to include: Children and young people receiving services from the Directorate and children that move into the local authority from another area but do not have a school place. Service Safeguarding Leads identified with clarification on role in place. Practice guidance/policies reviewed. Recording method and system agreed (for recording concerns). Training for staff rolled out across the Directorate including Professional Curiosity for front line practitioners Establish and embed Directorate mechanism for reflective practice/learning from critical incidents (Case studies, Rapid Reviews, CSPRs) Review supervision guidance for managers to ensure that safeguarding is routinely discussed. 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.10 (Directorate)	Ensure best practice support and training is in place for Schools Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs).			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.11 (Council wide and Directorate)	Implement robust and appropriate systems for recording safeguarding concerns in line with best practice, statutory guidance/duties and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed processes:			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	Safeguarding concerns relating to children.			relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.12 (Council wide)	Identify a HR Safeguarding Lead regarding allegations against staff/volunteers.			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.13 (Council wide)	Implement robust and appropriate systems for recording safeguarding concerns in line with best practice, statutory guidance/duties and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed processes: Safeguarding concerns raised regarding staff (LADO)			
B6.14 (Directorate)	Implement robust and appropriate systems for recording safeguarding concerns in line with best practice, statutory guidance/duties and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed processes: Safeguarding concerns about providers.			
B6.15 (Council wide)	Ensure children and young people and parents are aware of where they can go to for help in relation to maltreatment and abuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership materials Website Posters – prominent display Code of conduct 			
B6.16	Identify a HR Safer Recruitment Lead Officer for the Council.			

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
(Council wide)				
B6.17 (Council wide)	<p>Ensure the City Council has robust processes, procedures and guidance in relation to Safer Recruitment (in line with statutory guidance and the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed policy and procedures) easily accessible to managers and embedded across the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National 'Best in class' practice partner identified Clear process in place for both permanent and fixed term (council employees) – JEQ process reviewed Clear process in place for engaging agency and interim staff Clear process in place for engaging volunteers/secondees into the organisation Clear process for Elected Members roles. Methods of recorded Safer recruitment agreed and incorporated into processes Robust decision-making regarding DBS with Positive disclosures Policies and procedures easily accessible (e.g. via the Intranet) Mandatory training for managers in place to confirm processes Regular Quality Assurance in place to test robustness of implementation 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.18 (Council wide and Directorate)	<p>Review corporate policy relating to DBS checks to establish whether there should be a requirement for staff working in the Directorate to be DBS re-checked regularly (e.g. every 3 years - TBC) or be registered for the update service, to allow on-going checks to be undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring agreed way forward is clearly set out in Policy and manager are made aware of any changes. Audit system implemented to ensure compliance (lead for audit identified, schedule set) 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.19 (Council wide and Directorate)	<p>Implement a Single Central Record (in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education) ensure regular management information is reportable/available to monitor and confirm Safer Recruitment checks have been undertaken.</p>			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
B6.20 (Council wide)	Establish a clear process to ensure that for roles/staff deemed to require a DBS check, these are registered with the "update service" to allow on-going checks to be undertaken as required.			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.21 (Council wide and Directorate)	Ensure robust application of Lone Working Policy in the Children and Families Directorate in line with Corporate guidance.			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.22 (Council wide and Directorate)	<p>Ensure robust safeguarding children standards, in line with statutory duties and best practice, are in place for all commissioned services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer recruitment including DBS • Mandatory safeguarding children training (inc. ref to Keeping children safe in out of school settings code of practice) • Safeguarding Policy – including reference to Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed policies • Safeguarding practice audits included in contract monitoring arrangements • Clear guidance and expectations issued to all providers as part of commissioning process/SLA/contract • Agree approach to providers causing concern 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.23	Review room hire rooms in Community Libraries when staff are not present and the library is closed, to determine whether this is safe, appropriate and does not place service users at risk.			Closed
B6.24	Review practice of hiring out rooms at Youth Centres to external users without requiring users to be DBS checked to ensure it meets safeguarding good practice.			

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
B6.25	Ensure computers in Community Libraries have internet security software that is suitable for children's usage (e.g. Policy Central as used by BCC schools).			
B6.26	Ensure robust approach to safeguarding children through licensing services is in place.			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.27	<p>Ensure quality assurance and due diligence checks are undertaken on Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) providers (who provide tuition to children with autism).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify national/regional approach to quality assurance for providers. (i.e.in person visits to providers) Implement agreed process for quality assurance, monitoring and due diligence checks for ABA providers identified on EHCP plans Due diligence includes focus on de-escalation, restraint and monitoring through quality assurance processes 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.28	<p>Strengthen information sharing regarding domestic abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information available to schools through Operation Encompass Information regarding young people Post 16 (where young people are victims or may have been the perpetrator) 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.29	Strengthen the partnership response to Domestic Abuse including access to perpetrator interventions.			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
B6.30	<p>Ensure robust partnership decision making regarding children who experience incidents of domestic abuse through parental conflict. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full consideration of partners' information at triage • Assurance that the needs and risks for children experiencing domestic abuse are fully understood. 			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
B6.31	Strengthen joint working with Adults Services regarding safeguarding transitions at Post 16 (Integrated Front Door).			Entire B6 Project to be reprofiled. Several actions are not Directorate specific and/or rely on associated progress across other Directorates and the Council. Several actions relevant to alternative workstreams and arrangements and governance
Continue to strengthen the support for learning and education provision for children ever known to a social worker				
B7.1	Work together with schools to increase school attendance of children ever known to a social worker, including Birmingham children in care whose home is in another local authority area.			
B7.2	Work together with schools and partners to reduce suspensions for children ever known to a social worker.			Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual, this to include respective improvement arrangements across the Schools and Employability Division
B7.3	Review Virtual School services in light of changes to expanding statutory duties, resulting in recommendations regarding future service model and structure.			Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual, this to include respective improvement arrangements across the Schools and Employability Division
B7.4	Respond to new guidance <i>Promoting the education</i>			Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<p><i>of children with a social worker - Virtual School Head role extension, establishing changes to the work of the Virtual School in line with best practice and the agreed BCC approach.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance interpreted into local offer. Funding for role extension secured from DfE. Capacity, resources, ways of working required to implement offer clarified. Arrangements in place. 			as usual, this to include respective improvement arrangements across the Schools and Employability Division
B7.5	<p>Develop commissioning and brokerage to purchase the right high-quality education provision for our children in care with the most complex need including those returning from secure accommodation or remand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of overall Sufficiency of SEND Schools Places Strategy. 			Closed
B7.6	<p>Expand the Early Years offer for children in care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all early years settings receive a visit from the virtual school around practice delivery. To sign post early years settings to early years resources and interventions that will support good levels of development. 			Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual, this to include respective improvement arrangements across the Schools and Employability Division
B7.7	Develop a strategy with partners to better understand barriers to children ever known to a social worker engagement and achievement in education.			
B7.8	Develop mechanisms to capture and respond to views and voices of parents and carers to inform the work of the Virtual School as educational champions.			
B7.9	Strengthen the Virtual School role in ensuring that Care Leavers are progressing well and have good education and employment opportunities and			Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual, this to include respective

Ref	Projects and Actions	Previous BRAG JAN 2024	Current BRAG April 2024	Refresh Activity Outcome
	<p>pathways to education and training (including for Care Leavers those aged 21-24 years).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 plus PEP and supporting processes implemented. Strengthening approaches regarding Care Leavers Apprenticeships (including with the Council) Strengthen reporting regarding impact and outcome Care Leaver apprenticeships 			improvement arrangements across the Schools and Employability Division
B7.10	Ensure robust information and systems are in place to enable the Head Teacher of the Virtual School to monitor the attainment, progress, attendance, exclusion, employment, and training of children in care and care leavers to enable completion of the directorate data dashboard and Corporate Parenting Board.			Project to be reprofiled - The Directorate restructure will support this activity as business as usual, this to include respective improvement arrangements across the Schools and Employability Division
B7.11	Ensure the Directorate Virtual School data dashboard reports into the City's Corporate Parenting Board education reports.			
Strengthen services and partnership approach to support improving outcomes for children and young people				
E1.3	<p>Work with our partners and wider city council team to promote the recommendations of the Breaking Down Barriers Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete impact assessment and develop response to report outlining the partnership approach going forward (December 22) Scope programme of work and begin to implement agreed actions by the end of year 1 (March 23) 			Open
E1.4	<p>Implement the city-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the underpinning action plan to delivery strategy, including clear milestones and deliverables (September 2022). Implement the action plan. (December 22) Confirm transition arrangements to Director of Digital and IT (Peter Bishop) (from January 2023) 			Open
E1.5	Pilot for Improve employment pathways for Young People in East Birmingham, to be delivered in financial year 2022/23 (Partnerships for People and Place).			Open

Birmingham City Council

Education, Children and Young People

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 May 2024



Subject: Short Breaks Review

Report of: Sue Harrison Strategic Director Children and Families (DCS), Birmingham City Council

Report author: Lisa Jamieson Director of Placements and Commissioning Birmingham Children's Trust

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Following a request from the committee, this report provides an update on the progress of the short breaks review, including an update on the children with disabilities policy and the recommissioning of the short break offer.
- 1.2 The report includes:
- Whether the review has been concluded, and if not, why not.
 - What the plan / policy is now.
 - Whether short breaks have or will be affected by the budget savings.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The committee is asked to note the contents of this report and provide any comments or feedback.

3 Update – Children with Disabilities Policy

- 3.1 In May and July of 2023, the Trust received Letters before Action threatening judicial review proceedings on behalf of two children whose support had been reduced or ceased following a review of services being provided to the child and family.
- 3.2 The Letters before Action challenged the lawfulness of the Children with Disabilities Service's policy and eligibility criteria, the application of the Right Help Right Time policy in relation to children with disabilities, the review process for the community resource panel, as well as the lawfulness of the Short Breaks Statement insofar as this applied to eligibility and thresholds for services.
- 3.3 The immediate response was to reinstate support to the families concerned and for those children and young people for which support had been withdrawn, as the Trust accepted the review process was flawed. The Trust agreed to withdraw and review all the impugned policies and to continue with current support and short breaks.

- 3.4 In undertaking these reviews, the Trust took independent legal advice, as the legal framework surrounding the Trust's statutory duties towards disabled children, young people and their families is a complex one, encompassing more than just our duties relating to short breaks and it was crucially important that we understood and considered the interdependencies of policy and legislation within the development of the new children with disabilities policy.
- 3.5 The initial view was that these changes could be made within a short period of time however it has taken longer due to complexity and the need to carefully consult.
- 3.6 The Trust commissioned the Council for Disabled Children to work with parents and carers of disabled children and young people, as well as professionals working with disabled children to review our current short breaks review and community resource panel process and to make recommendations to improve it. Their final report and recommendations were received on 26th March 2024 and has been incorporated into this work.
- 3.7 The new policy including eligibility criteria was endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team within the Trust when it was presented to them on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 and agreement was given for the withdrawal of superseded policies. Pending further decision following consultation, the policy insofar as it relates to short breaks is not yet adopted as this requires some further consultation.
- 3.8 The new policy along with all of the interdependent policies including an interim Short Breaks Statement amended to meet the requirements of lawfulness is due to be published by 3rd May 2024. Alongside this we have updated the link to Right Help Right Time, the community resource panel process and the direct payment policy. All superseded policies have now been withdrawn.
- 3.9 Birmingham Parent Carer Forum and other parental groups have received the policy as part of our consultation and will also receive the interim Short Breaks Statement. Whilst it has been published, it is important to state that we are not predetermining the outcome of that consultation and will consider further amendments in line with the feedback received from parent carers.
- 3.10 Additional engagement with parent carers is also being undertaken with the development and coproduction of our new short breaks commission which is due to be completed before March 2025.

4 Update of the commissioning review of the universal short break offer

- 4.1 This update follows up on the November 2023 report regarding challenges with short breaks provision within Birmingham.
- 4.2 It aims to address outstanding questions and provide an update on the collaborative project between the Council and the Trust for reviewing and recommissioning of universal and targeted short breaks services in their entirety.
- 4.3 Background

4.3.1 BCT currently discharges the short breaks duty on behalf of BCC. When BCT was established in 2018, the short breaks contracts were transferred in their entirety. This meant that in effect, the Trust commissions the entire short breaks offer on behalf of the Council.

4.3.2 This includes some services that are outside the broader scope and remit of the Trust's obligation to provide children's statutory social care.

4.4 Challenges

4.4.1 Demand for short breaks services is high in Birmingham and the number of children with SEND is increasing.

4.4.2 The budget that is available for short breaks in Birmingham (£1,632,000 p/a overall) isn't changing, although we recognise that the demand for short breaks is increasing, compounding the challenge in meeting future need, and providing services within the resources that are available.

4.4.3 This challenge is not going to get easier with the financial constraints on the City Council, Birmingham Children's Trust, schools, and health partners, and will necessitate an increasing emphasis on embedding social value within a revised local offer of short breaks.

4.4.4 Existing contractual arrangements for the provision of short breaks in Birmingham will expire in March 2025. New arrangements must be in place prior to that date.

5 Commissioning Strategy Update

5.1 The decision has now been made to conduct a joint commissioning exercise between the Council and the Trust to ensure that future arrangements align to the SEND strategy.

5.2 To effectively discharge statutory duties, the joint commissioning approach seeks to further strengthen the graduated model of universal to targeted and specialist support, offering diversity, flexibility, and a range of options available in Birmingham.

5.3 An agreement is in place for the Trust to retain commissioning responsibility for specialist services that require an assessment to access, and the Council will commission universal and targeted provision that can be accessed without a formal social care assessment.

5.4 This agreement reflects the wider duties of the respective organisations and represents a logical division of responsibility and expertise. The bifurcation of commissioning responsibilities will not create a separation at point of access and the entire short breaks offer will continue to remain available and accessible to the entire cohort of children and families in need of the service.

5.5 The Council and the Trust are working jointly, and in collaboration with the Parent Carer Forum, on reviewing existing provision with the aim of improving inclusion and identifying the wider role of schools and community groups in delivering the opportunities needed by families.

- 5.6 This commissioning review of short breaks in Birmingham is an opportunity for us to understand how we may make better use of the available budget to ensure that suitable opportunities are available for as many families as possible.

6 Re-Commissioning Update:

- 6.1 Significant progress has recently been made through a collaborative approach. Key elements include:

6.1.1 **Dedicated Capacity:** The Council has established dedicated capacity for short breaks commissioning.

6.1.2 **Needs analysis:** The Council and the Trust have completed a detailed service mapping and needs analysis. Key findings have informed service planning and commissioning intentions.

6.1.3 **Co-production:** This project is being managed using the approach described in the Birmingham Co-production Framework and Charter, with a particular focus on the 4 Co's:

1. Co-commissioning
2. Co-design
3. Co-delivery
4. Co-assessment

6.1.4 **Joint Project Plan:** A comprehensive project plan is in place that addresses critical commissioning activities to be delivered within the required timescale. The project team comprises key stakeholders from the Council, the Trust, and the Parent Carer Forum. Planned activities include:

1. **Co-production:** Working with partners through all stages of the project, including the provider market.
2. **Analysis:** Understanding current need and gaps in local short breaks offer.
3. **Service development:** design services that better meet current need based on analysis.
4. **Approvals:** Ensure formal ratification of proposed service models.
5. **Procurement:** Identify and implement most suitable route to market.
6. **Short Breaks Statement:** Single point of information for families detailing what options are available and how they can be accessed.
7. **Local Offer website:** Ensure that information of the revised short breaks offer is available and accessible via the local offer.
8. **Review – 'So What?':** Ensure ongoing suitability of the revised offer post-implementation.

7 Reinforcing the Partnership

- 7.1 This project prioritises a strong partnership between the Council, the Trust, and its partners. This is essential to address historic challenges to and ensure successful service delivery.

8 Next Steps

- 8.1 Engagement activities are planned during May 2024 to involve stakeholders in shaping the new offer. These include:
- a. In-person engagement sessions across the city
 - b. Online engagement sessions
 - c. Online surveys for parent carers and providers
- 8.2 During May 2024 we will identify and implement appropriate methods to facilitate children and young person engagement, potentially using emerging innovative technology solutions.
- 8.3 In June 2024 we will create service specifications based on analysis of feedback via engagement activities and agree the most efficient procurement solutions.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 This report highlights the positive progress made towards a more fit-for-purpose short break offer in Birmingham.
- 9.2 Continued collaboration between the Council and the Trust, alongside meaningful stakeholder engagement, is crucial for success.
- 9.3 At the time of writing, the project is on target and on time. The Committee will be updated on further developments in due course as required.

10 Any Finance Implications

- 10.1 The current budget for both the Targeted and Universal offer to families of disabled children is in the region of £4.5 million.
- 10.2 No additional funding has been made available for this year, so the offer will need to be delivered in the current financial envelop.
- 10.3 In undertaking this review we have sought independent legal advice, as the legal framework surrounding the Trust's statutory duties towards disabled children, young people and their families is a complex one, the policy has been written following significant legal input and challenge.

11 Any Equalities Implications

- 11.1 The children with disabilities offer has relevance to around 11,000 children and their families across Birmingham.
- 11.2 We have consulted with children and families using a variety of communication techniques.

- 11.3 The completed offer will be shared using a variety of mediums, including written and verbal in a variety of languages.

Birmingham City Council

Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 May 2024



Subject: Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme

Report of: Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of work undertaken by the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) during 2023/24 and invites the Committee to review its current 'menu' of issues and suggest any topics that could be considered by the new committee in June or added to the 2024/25 work programme.
- 1.2 Members are reminded that any future work will need to consider how it contributes towards the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan and Governance Stabilisation Plan.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee:
 1. Notes the report.
 2. Agrees, subject to further input from the Committee after the City Council's Annual General Meeting, the issues the Committee may consider at the June 2024 meeting and as part of its wider 2024/25 work programme, together with the proposed aims and objectives of the items, and the preferred method of scrutiny.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Committee's **Terms of Reference** is to fulfil its functions as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning:
 - Education and children's social care.
 - The safety and wellbeing of children, including safeguarding with statutory partners.

- The needs of all children and young people, families and carers (children's services).
- Oversight of the Children's Trust.
- Early years health and wellbeing.
- Looked after children, corporate parenting.
- Special Education Needs and Disability.
- School improvement, school places and travel to and from school.
- Youth engagement and youth services.
- Development of 14-19 career pathways, enterprise and entrepreneurship in Birmingham schools.

3.2 **Committee membership** is determined by the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012 that require the Council to have a Church of England and a Roman Catholic Church representative coopted on its overview and scrutiny committee.

3.3 The Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001 requires the appointment of at least two but not more than five parent governor representatives to each of their education overview and scrutiny committees and subcommittees.

3.4 These members are entitled to vote at a meeting of the committee or sub-committee on any question which relates to any education functions which are the responsibility of the authority concerned executive, and which falls to be decided at the meeting.¹

3.5 Therefore, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee dealing with education matters shall include in its membership the following voting representatives:

- a) Church of England diocese representative (one).
- b) Roman Catholic diocese representative (one).
- c) Parent Governor representatives (two).

3.6 The Committee is chaired by Cllr Kerry Jenkins, and its membership comprises Cllrs: Jilly Bermingham, Debbie Clancy, Adam Higgs, Morriam Jan, Jane Jones, Shehla Moledina, and Kath Scott, and statutory co-optees: Sarah Smith - Church of England diocese representative, Ted Hammond – Roman Catholic diocese representative, Osamugi Ogbe – parent governor representative and Rabia Shami – parent governor representative.

3.7 **The role and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees** are outlined in [The City Council's Constitution | Birmingham City Council](#) They will:

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/schedule/1/crossheading/overview-and-scrutiny-committees-education-functions/enacted>

- Make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council, the Executive and/or other organisations in connection with the discharge of the functions specified in their terms of reference.
- Consider any matter covered in their terms of reference that may affect or be likely to have an effect on the citizens of Birmingham; relevant to the Council's strategic objectives; relevant to major issues faced by officers in managing a function of the Council; and likely to make contribution to moving the Council forward and achieving key performance targets.

3.8 The [statutory guidance for local government overview and scrutiny](#) sets out the role it can play in holding an authority's decision makers to account. This makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy. Effective Overview and Scrutiny should:

- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge.
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public.
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role.
- Drive improvements in public services.

3.9 A well planned and timely **work programme** enables Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be involved at the right time and in the right way, and ensure their involvement is meaningful and can influence the outcome. Effective scrutiny needs to add value.

3.10 Members often have a number of topics suggested to them and are therefore required to prioritise matters for consideration. **The Scrutiny Framework** sets out the following factors to be considered.:

- Public interest: concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen.
- Ability to change: priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence.
- Performance: priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well.
- Extent: priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the city.
- Replication: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication.

3.11 Additional criteria were applied to work programme priorities in December following the adoption of the Governance Stabilisation Plan (referred to in paragraph 4.2) requiring committees to demonstrate where they could best add value aligning to the Council's priorities and improvement journey through the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

- 3.12 During the course of the year the Committee identified a **‘menu’ of issues** (including policy development, policy review, issues of accountability and statutory functions). The Committee has regularly reviewed its ‘menu’ and decided which issues required further examination, and how that work would be undertaken.
- 3.13 There are a range of ways to undertake scrutiny. In line with statutory guidance from 2019, the approach for 2023/24 has enabled a more flexible scrutiny and outlines a shift from monthly formal meetings to a combination of approaches. The Committee has chosen the most effective scrutiny method to achieve the desired aims and objectives for each topic.

4 Outcomes from 2023-24

- 4.1 During June 2023 – February 2024, the Committee considered the following topics:
- 4.1.1 Children and Young People’s Travel Service (CYPTS) – the Committee received an update and assurance on the preparation for the CYPTS for the start of the 2023/24 academic year and a service user and their relative shared their experience of the independent travel training provided. It was agreed that an information workshop would be held for all councillors, and this has since taken place.
- 4.1.2 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Tribunals – the Committee sought assurances on the process, and it was agreed that the Directorate would hold a workshop for all councillors on the SEND Tribunals process.
- 4.1.3 SEND Commissioner – Mr John Coughlan CBE provided the Committee with an update on SEND improvement, setting out his recommendations in his [second report to the Secretary of State for Education](#). The committee discussed the progress made against the recommendations and the council’s action plan for improvement.
- 4.1.4 Children and Families Improvement Plan – the Committee received quarterly updates in July 2023 and January 2024 and provided scrutiny, oversight and productive challenge on the plan. A refreshed improvement plan will be discussed at this committee meeting.
- 4.1.5 Performance – the Committee was updated on performance reporting and management across the Directorate. Examination of the data provided informed the committee decision to ‘deep dive’ into early years education entitlement take up (January 2024) and school attendance data (hidden children – October 2023). In November 2023, the Committee held a data workshop to build Members’ knowledge of the key sources of data and how data was used across the portfolio and how it can be incorporated into future committee reports.
- 4.1.6 Hidden children - the Committee undertook a deep dive session with key officers into the work being undertaken for hidden children (this included exclusions, suspensions, part time timetables, and elective home education). The committee agreed that development of the governance around school

exclusions and part time timetables would be brought to a future committee meeting for discussion and to feed in recommendations.

4.1.7 Financial Challenges and Budget Savings – in September 2023 the Committee received reports on the s114 notice, the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the context for services falling under the remit of this Committee including performance on current savings. In October 2023 the Committee was informed of the Q2 budget savings position 2023/24 and the Chair updated the Committee on the work of the Budget T&F Group.

4.1.8 School improvement support - The Committee also provided feedback on proposals to establish a new model for the relationship with schools for school improvement support in the City. New policies and strategies being developed will be brought to future committee meetings.

4.2 The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 December 2023 acknowledged the recommendations in the **Governance Review of Birmingham City Council** agreed by Cabinet on 12 December 2023. The full report is available from [CMIS > Meetings](#). Recommendation 5 stated the need to reframe scrutiny work programmes on the Council's improvement and recovery priorities, and that alignment of work programmes should focus on:

- a) Having an active part in the 2024/25 budget development process.
- b) The safe and effective delivery of key services supporting vulnerable people.
- c) Critical performance issues emerging "by exception".
- d) Equality and equity issues arising from the development of the 24/25 Budget, the Emergency Budget (to be identified by exception), and other priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget.
- e) Culture, behaviour change and organisational development.

4.3 On 17 January 2024, the Committee met informally to consider the developing Improvement and Recovery Plan and the findings and recommendations of the Governance Review. The committee reviewed its work programme for February – May and reframed it to ensure it aligned with Recommendation 5 as set out above.

4.4 Following the reframing of the work programme the Committee considered the following topics in February, April and May 2024:

4.4.1 The draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2024 - 2030 – the Committee fed into the consultation on the draft strategy, and the strategy was agreed at Cabinet on 23 April 2024.

4.4.2 Early Years Education Entitlement – the Committee examined how best the council can increase the take up of Early Years entitlement for children in the city and the benefits it provides children and examined the plans for delivering the new and expanding responsibilities for early years.

4.4.3 School Attainment – the Committee examined school attainment and what is being done to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.

4.4.4 Budget Savings Delivery – Following the agreement of the 2024-25 budget at City Council on 5 March the Overview and Scrutiny Committees continue to monitor the delivery of the savings identified in the budget. All the Overview and Scrutiny Committees held a Task and Finish Group meeting in April to consider the delivery plans for the relevant savings for 2023-24. The notes from these meeting will be discussed at the Co-ordinating O&S Committee meeting on 17 May 2024.

4.4.5 In May the Committee will consider the refreshed Children and Families Improvement Plan and receive an update on the short breaks review.

5 Inquiry – Child Criminal Exploitation

5.1 In 2022 the committee decided to undertake an Inquiry into Child Criminal Exploitation and established a Task and Finish Group. The key question asked was ‘How are the council and partners working together to reduce the risks of criminal exploitation for young people?’

5.2 Evidence gathering commenced for this Inquiry in November 2022 and concluded in November 2023. Evidence was received from the Birmingham Children’s Trust – Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub, Young People’s Substance Misuse Service, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), West Midlands Police, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT), Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP), Children and Families Directorate – Youth Service, and Thriving Children and Families Service, and third sector organisations.

5.3 The Inquiry report together with the 15 recommendations was agreed at City Council on 16 April 2024. The recommendations related to the definition and scale of child criminal exploitation, early intervention and resilience, supporting young people to exit exploitation, enforcement, governance and strategy. Progress towards achievement of these recommendations will be discussed six months after publication at the October 2024 committee meeting.

6 Looking Ahead to 2024/25

6.1 All Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s will be expected to discuss the delivery of the budget savings relevant to their remit on a regular basis.

6.2 Any future work will also need to consider how it contributes towards the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan and Governance Stabilisation Plan.

6.3 During 2023/24 several topics were identified for future examination. The current ‘menu’ of issues is set out in section 6.4 below. The Committee is invited to highlight any to bring forward to the 2024/25 Municipal Year (subject to approval of the new committee and committee chair) identifying how items will contribute towards the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan and Governance Stabilisation Plan.

6.4 Menu of Issues 2023/24

Topic	Notes including any suggested dates, method of scrutiny
Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership's (BSCP) Annual Report.	Awaiting confirmation that this is available for June 2024 committee meeting.
Birmingham Children's Trust (Children's Services).	The Committee has previously received an annual update.
Strategic Youth Justice Plan.	Suggested committee date: July 2024 This will be an update on the performance and progress of the five-year plan published in 2023.
SEND.	Committee requested regular updates on SEND, including the next joint local area SEND inspection, and an update on the improvement plan to meet the statutory compliance of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).
School Attendance and Draft Attendance Strategy.	Draft to come to OSC to provide an opportunity to comment on proposals.
Visits to schools – City of Birmingham School (COBS) and Adderley Primary School.	To inform the work programme.
Developing the governance around school exclusions, Elective Home Education (EHE) and part time timetables.	Draft to come to OSC to provide an opportunity to comment on proposals.
CYPTS – Impact of policy changes and budget savings.	
Review of the careers 16 – 19, youth service and NEET – impact of changes and budget savings.	
UNICEF Child Friendly City.	Suggested update on work towards UNICEF Child Friendly recognition.
Child Poverty.	
Post 16.	This could be a joint piece of work with the Economy and Skills O&S Committee.

6.5 The Council's latest [Forward Plan](#) may assist Members in identifying further areas for the Committee to explore.

7 Any Finance Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

8 Any Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

9 Any Equalities Implications

- 9.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 9.2 The protected characteristics and groups outlined in the Equality Act are Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation.
- 9.3 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering how policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; and whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.
- 9.4 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments, and any recommendations, are based on evidence. This should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

10 Appendices

- 10.1 There are no appendices.

11 Background Papers

- 11.1 [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#)
- 11.2 Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Framework April 2021

11.3 [Independent Governance Review of Birmingham City Council, Cabinet 12 December 2023](#)

