

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 04 DECEMBER 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 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.

5 - 16

4 **MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting held on 23 October 2024.

17 - 28

5 **ACTION TRACKER**

To review and note the actions from previous Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

29 - 78

6 **PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS (10.05 – 11.00)**

Cllr Mick Brown, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families, Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director for Children and Families, Razia Butt, Director, Thriving Children and Families, Steve Kay, Director, Schools and Employability, Waqar Ahmed, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Resilience, City Operations, and Lisa Harris, Director Help and Protection (on behalf of James Thomas, Chief Executive, Birmingham Children's Trust) in attendance.

79 - 120

7 **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) UPDATE (11.00 – 12.00)**

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director for Children and Families, and Fayth Skeete, Head of Strategic, Governance and Planning in attendance.

121 - 152

8 **SEND COMMISSIONER (12.00 – 13.00)**

Mr John Coughlan CBE the SEND Commissioner for Birmingham and Helen Ellis, Director of SEND and Inclusion in attendance.

153 - 178

9 **WORK PROGRAMME**

To consider the report on the Scrutiny Work Programme.

10 **REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

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

11 **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

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.

12 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

To note the date of the next meeting is 22 January 2025 at 10am in committee rooms 3 & 4.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 23rd October 2024 at 1000 hours
in Committee Rooms 3&4, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham**

Present:

Councillor Kerry Jenkins (Chair)

Councillors Debbie Clancy, Adam Higgs, Zafar Iqbal, Narinder Kaur Kooner, and Shehla Moledina

Other Representatives: Osamugi Ogbe - Parent Governor, and Sarah Smith - Church of England Diocese (until 1230 hours)

Also Present:

Cllr Mick Brown, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families (left at 1100 hours and returned at 1204 hours)

Steve Kay, Director, Schools and Employability

Tracy Shaw, Finance Business Partner Children and Families (online)

David Stringfellow, Director, Commissioning and Specialist Services, Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT)

James Thomas, Chief Executive, BCT (left at 1100 hours)

Dave Webb, Interim Head of Service for Youth Offending Service, BCT

Ade Weissenbruch, Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance

Spencer Wilson, Interim Head of Service for Employment and Skills

Lee Yale-Helms, Director, Finance & Resources, BCT,

Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

- 30 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.

APOLOGIES

- 31 Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Steve Bell – Roman Catholic Diocese and Rabia Shami - Parent Governor.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- 32 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 Unite the Union in a national role supporting the community, youth and not for profit sector across the UK.

MINUTES

33 **RESOLVED:**

- i) That the minutes for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on the 17th July 2024 and 11th October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ACTION TRACKER

- 34 The Chair advised there were a number of outstanding actions that should be picked up during the meeting and indicated that the recommendations from the pre-decision scrutiny exercise were reported to Cabinet, that Cabinet had acknowledged the Committees' involvement in ongoing monitoring, and these actions have been added to the action tracker.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the actions from previous Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings was reviewed and noted.

ORDER OF AGENDA

- 35 The Chair proposed that the agenda items were reordered to accommodate the Strategic Director having to leave at 1100 hours. This was agreed and the savings item became item 6, the IRP Priority Programme Progress Report became item 7, the update on the Birmingham Strategic Youth Justice Plan became item 8, and the Children and Young People's Travel Service became item 9.

A Member highlighted the issues with re-ordering the agenda, the papers having to be republished to accommodate the late paper, and the volume of paperwork for the Birmingham Strategic Youth Justice Service Plan item. These were noted and the Chair requested Officers provided the Committee with a summary for lengthy and detailed reports.

RESOLVED:

That:

- i) The agenda items were reordered.
- ii) Officers to provide the Committee with a summary for lengthy and detailed reports.

SAVINGS 2024/25 – PROGRESS REPORT

- 36 Cllr Mick Brown, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families, Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families, James Thomas, Chief Executive, BCT, Lee Yale-Helms, Director, Finance & Resources, BCT, Ade Weissenbruch, Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance, Tracy Shaw, Finance Business Partner Children and Families (online), Steve Kay, Director, Schools and Employability, and Spencer Wilson, Interim Head of Service for Employment and Skills were in attendance.

The Chair set the context for the item, highlighted the Commissioner's comments in paragraph 2.1 in the report, and that the actions from the Task & Finish (T&F) meeting in July in relation to the budget savings were contained in the action tracker.

The Cabinet Member commented there were 19 specific savings totalling £52.228m in 2024/25 that fall within the remit of the Committee and there were mitigations for the slippages in delivering these. The Strategic Director of Children and Families highlighted that the savings were being delivered within the context of the Children First principle.

During the debate, the following points were addressed:

Red Rated Savings:

Saving 150 – Review of non-statutory transport Packages (post-16): The Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance informed the meeting that due to the revised offer only coming into effect for the new academic year there was a more accurate savings target, and this target was on track. He assured the Committee that mitigations for the shortfall would be achieved through other savings, the review of travel arrangements - for example, sole occupancy and procurement, and across the wider Children and Families Directorate. However, he commented that there was a growth pressure due to a substantial spike in demand.

Saving 151 – Passenger Assistance Service Re-design: The Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance explained that Passenger Assistants supported SEND pupils on transport and this was about increasing the Council's workforce rather than outsourcing. Also, Officers needed to ensure Passenger Assistants were supported throughout the process, and they were working closely with colleagues in HR and legal services.

Clarification was sought on whether the budget took into account last year's overspend and the Finance Business Partner confirmed this was the case.

Amber Rated Savings:

Saving 89 - Services for young people (including Careers, NEET and Youth Services including work focussed on preventing knife crime): The Director, Schools and Employability stated that the model for the Careers and NEET Services had been developed, was out for consultation, and subject to minor changes. The Strategic Director highlighted that the voluntary redundancy trawl had been successful and agreed to provide a paper on what had been proposed and decided.

The Director, Schools and Employability explained that there was a separate business case for Youth Services, and this had been presented to the Trade Unions at the end of September.

It was confirmed that no decisions have been made as it was currently out for consultation and highlighted that the Cabinet Member and Officers would be going out as part of the consultation. They needed to get the right model that offered the best possible service for children, and it was highly likely the saving would be met.

A discussion ensued regarding the Young People's Service Review, and the Committee possibly wanting to undertake a focused piece of work – Task and Finish (T&F). This would fit with the Directorate's timetable but would start before the end of year. The Strategic Director and Director, Schools and Employability, welcomed the Committee's input as they would like to have a youth strategy across sectors and the Young People's Service Review would be provided.

Saving 219 – Children's Services efficiencies: The Strategic Director explained that this was across the whole system, had six workstreams, and was about transformation. There was a framework for the transformation partner to assist with efficiencies in 2025-26 and for a transformation partner to assist for the next couple of years.

In response to the question regarding the 0-19 Transformation/Efficiencies, the Committee was informed that the procurement process was through a framework, and the procurement was currently being finalised. It was confirmed that the successful transformation partner would work with everyone working with children, including the voluntary sector.

The Strategic Director informed the Committee that the Council had allocated a central budget of £10m over the next two years for transformation. The decision had been made at Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and had been approved by the Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer and all Strategic Directors.

Other Savings/Costs

The Chair informed the meeting that there was insufficient time to discuss a number of savings/cost issues, and requested an update/briefing was e-mailed to the Committee regarding the following:

- The work being undertaken to address Local Authority Schools deficits and the cost to the council if they become academies (contained within the action tracker for the 17th July 2024 T&F meeting).
- The issues of full cost recovery for asylum seeking children.

The Chair summed up the discussion and confirmed the Committee would explore undertaking a focused piece of work (T&F) regarding the future model and what young people would like to see in relation to youth services, after the requested information was shared with the Committee. The Strategic Director welcomed the offer of support and help, and the Cabinet Member endorsed this approach.

RESOLVED:

That:

- i) The Committee noted the contents of the appendix to the report and the progress to date with delivering the savings for 2024/25.
- ii) The Director, Schools and Employability provide a paper explaining to Members what was proposed and decided for the Careers and NEET Services.
- iii) The Strategic Director, Children and Families provide the Young People's Service Review to enable the Committee to explore before the new year undertaking a focussed piece of work (Task & Finish) regarding the future model and what young people would like to see in relation to youth services.

IRP PRIORITY PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT – JULY DATA

- 37 Cllr Mick Brown, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families, Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families, Ade Weissenbruch, Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance were in attendance.

The Chair set the context for the item, highlighted the Commissioner's comments in relation to the IRP Programmes, and that the Improving Services for Children and Families programme was rated Green.

- . The Strategic Director assured the Committee that the Directorate had a rigorous process, worked at pace, mitigations were put in place for slippages, and reference was made to the external improvement board, chaired by an independent Chair.

The Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance indicated that it was important to be aware that some of the savings' targets and ambitions were unprecedented and substantial. The Directorate was doing things differently, were improving services where they could, and the importance of having wraparound support from the Council.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Committee noted the contents of the appendix to this report relevant to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference and the progress to date for the IRP Priority Programme – Improving Services for Children and Families.

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families and James Thomas, Chief Executive, BCT left the meeting at 1100 hours.

UPDATE ON BIRMINGHAM STRATEGIC YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023-2028

- 38 Cllr Mick Brown, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families, David Stringfellow, Director, Commissioning and Specialist Services, BCT, Dave Webb, Interim Head of Service for Youth Offending Service, BCT, and Steve Kay, Director, Schools and Employability were in attendance.

The Chair highlighted that the draft Strategic Youth Justice Plan had been discussed jointly by the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this Committee in August 2023, before being debated at City Council. This plan was back under the Committee's remit.

The Chair commented that the update was extensive (appendix 2), and queried the possibility of a summary, and/or shorter updates throughout the year. In response, the Director, Commissioning and Specialist Services explained that as this was the first update they had done so they had stuck close to the Youth Justice Board's (YJB) requirements. He assured the Committee that the next iteration would be succinct.

The Committee was provided with more information on the service, including the new name – the Birmingham Youth Justice Service, the five year plan, and key headlines including, the number of children in custody had increased, there had been a reduction in first time entrants due to them having been successfully diverted, there was a programme of work to having new fit for purpose premises, and there was a need to mitigate funding pressures. He acknowledged there was more to do but good progress had been made.

During the debate, the following points were addressed:

Full Council

In response to the question as to whether the update needed to be debated at full council, the Committee was informed that there was no requirement for annual updates to be signed off by full council unless the update proposed significant changes to the plan, such as a change to the priorities or governance. The Cabinet Member offered to take a view as to whether the update report needed to go to full council.

The Five Year Plan

The Chair highlighted that at the meeting in August 2023, the committee requested that the five year plan was updated to clarify the figures for 2022/23 as it stated 'we worked with a total of 977 children' and it should also have stated that '332 of these children had not offended in 2022/23, but their involvement either continued into 2022/23, or they received an intervention through a preventative or Think Family Intervention, neither of which are offence driven'. Officers confirmed they would look into this and clarified that it was a co-incidence that the service had worked with the same number of children in 2023/24.

HM Inspectorate of Probation

In response to the question regarding the service being assessed as 'Requires Improvement' and what was needed to ensure the improvement journey succeeded, the Committee was informed that they reported their self-assessment quarterly to the YJB. The service was not ready to be rated as Good as there were risks and challenges that need to be addressed, such as, moving to the new case management system in February 2025, the new premises, the need for experienced staff, and managing improvement of practice and support.

Funding

In response to questions regarding the funding streams and funding pressures stated in the report, the Committee was informed that at the time of writing, the update

report the YJB grant was unclear. However, they have had confirmation that the grant and funding had increased.

It was highlighted that there were pressures with possible funding increases - such as the increased pay award for staff, and this would be mitigated through vacant posts savings. In addition, there was uncertainty around the YJB funding in 2025/26, and other pressures included BCT's funding and the Councils Section 114 notice.

First Time Entrants

The Committee was informed that the first time entrant figures could increase due to the change of approach from West Midlands Police, especially in relation to youths carrying knives. It was highlighted that this goes against the Child First principle. The Chair commented that the findings from the Committee's Scrutiny Inquiry for Child Criminal Exploitation included the issue of adultification of young people.

Raising Awareness of Youth Services for Young People

In response to questions regarding raising awareness of youth services available for young people, the Committee was informed that the remit of the Youth Justice Service was clearly defined and was a more targeted service rather than a universal one. Therefore, the Youth Justice Service got referrals where there were issues of offending.

It was explained that they were tentatively moving towards using social media, but they did not have huge capacity due to having a small team. However, it was confirmed that they worked collectively and collaboratively to market the total offer.

Prevention - Turnaround Programme and Youth Services

The Interim Head of Service for Youth Offending Service highlighted and expanded that the grant for the Turnaround Programme would cease in March 2025 and there would be a pressure on the service if it wanted to continue with their preventative and earlier engagement work. Those staff currently on fixed term contracts would end, and those on a secondment would return to their substantive posts. Nationally, the valuation of the Turnaround Programme was showing they were effecting change. In addition, the budget cuts to Birmingham Youth Service and challenges faced by the voluntary youth sector could have an impact on providing preventative work.

The Committee was concerned about the risk of reducing preventive work and the impact of reducing the youth service budget, especially when you took into account what was happening in the youth justice system and other services. It was stressed that there was a need for everyone delivering this, including voluntary organisations, to be joined up.

The Director, Commissioning and Specialist Services, confirmed that they were "around the table" regarding the youth review and this was a partnership approach, including schools etc., as prevention was a collective responsibility and commented that partnership discussions took place.

The Director, Schools and Employability explained they worked closely and collaboratively with BCT, and the Youth Service was an important part, as was the voluntary sector, schools, youth hubs and the Careers Service. A broader youth offer

was needed that had a blended menu of provision and took into account what it looked like for young people.

The Chair summed up the discussion and requested an executive summary be provided for future reports, and quarterly briefing papers be provided, especially where there were no substantial changes and therefore no legal requirement for the report to go to Full Council. It was highlighted that these briefings needed to include information on the journey for the service to be rated Good, the risks identified and the impact they were having.

Raising the awareness of the service and the difference it made was important and the capacity and resources to do this was acknowledged. In addition, there needed to be a more joined up holistic approach with other organisations to make people aware of what was and was not available, and the impact it was having for young people.

The Chair suggested that the Committee seek assurances from the Cabinet Member that he would keep a watching brief alongside the Strategic Director regarding the improvement journey to being rated Good so the Committee could provide assistance and support for this.

RESOLVED:

That:

- i) The 2024-2025 update to the Strategic Youth Justice Plan 2023-2028 (Appendix 2) was noted.
- ii) The Committee provided feedback on the update and requested:
 - a. Future updates to be succinct or have a summary provided.
 - b. Officers to explore updating the five year plan and after 'we worked with a total of 977 children' add '332 of these children had not offended in 2022/23, but their involvement either continued into 2022/23, or they received an intervention through a preventative or Think Family Intervention, neither of which are offence driven'.
- iii) The Committee be provided with quarterly briefing notes to explain what was happening in relation to the improvement journey being rated Good, the risks identified and the impact they were having.
- iv) The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to take a view as to whether the update report went to Full Council.

Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service - September Mobilisation Report for the Post-16 Service

- 39 Ade Weissenbruch, Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance introduced the report and highlighted that the September mobilisation had been successful, the service continued to learn lessons, one of the more substantial changes was the move away from dynamic purchasing system for contracts through to the procurement framework which allowed a good level of consistency and avoided the need for late bidding, the use of SharePoint so tasks could be closely monitored, and the service continued to receive a substantial amount of late transport applications.

In addition, the substantial change to the post-16 transport policy this year had resulted in higher pressure on the application, eligibility and review element of the

service. The service had increased the number of children receiving independent travel training and there has been a substantial increase of service capacity to support this.

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families returned to the committee meeting at 1205 hours.

During the debate, the following points were addressed:

Legality of Policy

Assurance was given to the Committee on the legality of the policy and that the policy was similar to other policies nationally. It was explained that there were usually deadlines set within the legal challenges and these were prioritised so this could be responded to within their legal timelines. It was confirmed that they do take a child centred approach, legal advice was sought, and they exhausted all possible solutions to avoid cases going to judicial review.

The Committee was informed that the decisions have not necessarily been overturned but they have sought to find resolution and mediation, so the Council was not necessarily agreeing an entitlement, but could offer additional support, such as a spare seat, and they have robustly challenged any claim that this policy was not legal.

It was explained that applicants for post-16 transport had sought entitlement through the 'exceptional circumstances' element and as part of this discretion c40 students have been offered additional levels of support either through spare seats or where there was an additional level of support needed.

It was clarified that the offer of an empty seat was only given to those with exceptional circumstances. The Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance explained that this would be further explored, and he was undertaking co-production work with a special school to support the most vulnerable children.

In response to a question as to whether the Cabinet Member and Strategic Director were in discussions with Central Government on the legislation and ring-fencing funding for post-16 transport to ease pressure on the Council, the Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance responded that he was also a Member of Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO), and they met regular with the DfE in relation to the challenges and any potential changes to legislation needed to take into account barriers - the councils financial and resource ability to deliver it.

Appeals

In response to the request for clarification on the figures in the report, the Committee was informed that the 960 that were not offered transport were a combination of students that did not reapply and students that were given Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) or bus passes.

The Committee was informed that the total number of appeals for statutory and post-16 students had substantially increased since the publication of the update report and they were higher than the previous year. Temporary resources had been put in, and it was a challenge to meet the deadline. In addition, they supported parents who want to present in person, but this has increased the time it takes to process the appeals. The Committee requested officers to provide more up-to-date appeal figures.

It was confirmed there was guidance they followed on timescales for appeals, and this was published as part of the policy.

In response to the comment regarding the perception that officers involved in the appeals were not objective, the Committee was informed that the appeals structure was legally compliant, and the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review (SENAR) was another team and participated in all the appeals, so it was not just the transport service involved. They have also been well supported by legal services in training officers to ensure consistency and there was constant communication with legal services to ensure they get it right.

The Strategic Director stated that it was helpful to reflect on this and was certain they could start to introduce colleagues and be clear on their roles in the appeals. She took the point that although officers were objective, it was about how they were perceived, and explained they were exploring how they could be more co-productive. Also, there was the usual escalation processes within the Council.

Impact and Support

It was highlighted that they have done all they can to understand the impact on children and families' and restrictions to accessing education. It was explained that additional support under exceptional circumstances had been offered and difficult decisions have been made.

They have identified through schools where there needed to be additional support provided to support families, and it was explained that the Director of SEND and Inclusion and Director of Special Education Needs Assessment and Review (SENAR) have met regularly with Special Schools to understand the impact of the changes and assist families to ensure inclusion.

The Committee was informed that the potential impact of the change to post-16 transport policy was published via the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of the papers that went to Cabinet. They were continuing to review the EIA and once they had verified the attendance figures and impact on schools, they would be in a position to present a breakdown of who was not attending, feedback from schools as to the reasons why, and an understanding where students were.

The Chair highlighted the next steps in paragraphs 4.17 and 4.18 in the report and was pleased that they were working towards understanding the impact of the post-16 transport policy. The Committee had previously discussed being involved in impact identification, but there was concerned about parents getting a false sense of hope that the Committee could change policy decisions. It was confirmed that the Committee does want to do some work and there would be further discussions on how the Committee could support the Service with this.

The Strategic Director highlighted that the change to post-16 transport had come as a shock to some parents, but this would not come as a shock to parents of 13 and 14 year olds, as there would be the assumption there would be no transport on offer unless they had exceptional circumstances. Assurance was provided that they gave as much lead in time as possible, and they were working with Adult Services to assist with helping parent to plan.

Contracts

Information on the routes that did not run on the first week of term was provided and assurance was given that they carefully managed the contracts. It was explained that there was an understanding of reasonability as there would be situations out of the Council's control, and the Council needed to demonstrate they were doing everything they could to mitigate these, such as offer to reimburse parents for costs.

SEND Sufficiency Strategy

The Strategic Director recognised they did not have enough specialist provision in the right places, and this put a pressure on families and the Council. Assurance was given that the aim of the strategy was that every young person could go to their local school, and they recognised they were a long way off. It was confirmed that the strategy would be refreshed as needed.

The Chair summed up the discussion and highlighted that in terms of next steps, the Committee was keen to have more information on the plans for post-16 transport policy change and impact and there would be further discussions on this.

Requests were made for an update on: the attendance work, to include information on post-16s that have moved under the remit of Adult Social Care, as soon as it was available; the appeals figures; and utilising empty seats, when the work had taken place.

In addition, a request was made for an updated structure chart for the Directorate, which would then be updated and shared with the Committee when changes were made.

RESOLVED:

That:

- i) The changes and impact of the Post-16 Transport Policy Review was noted.
- ii) The Committee provided feedback on the update.
- iii) The Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance to provide:
 - a. Information explaining the plans for post-16 transport policy change and impact to enable the Committee to have further discussions on this.
 - b. An update report on the attendance work, to include information on post-16s that have moved under the remit of Adult Social Care, as soon as it was available.
 - c. The up-to-date appeals figures.
 - d. An update report on utilising empty seats when the work had taken place.
- iv) The Strategic Director, Children and Families to provide an updated structure chart for the Children and Families Directorate, which would then be updated and shared with the Committee when changes were made.

WORK PROGRAMME

40 **RESOLVED:**

That:

- i) The work programme, set out in Appendix A was noted and there were no amendments required.
- ii) Agreed, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, its proposed work programme will be submitted to Corporate and Finance O&S Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

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

41 None.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

42 None.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

43 **RESOLVED:**

- i) Noted the date of the next meeting was 4th December 2024 at 1000 hours in committee rooms 3 & 4.

The meeting ended at 12.54 hrs

Chair's signature:

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
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.	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	Ongoing.
		Future agenda items to include a snapshot of their associated spend / budget and impact.	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	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.	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families Fayth Skeete - Head of Strategic, Governance and Planning	This is scheduled for completion by w/c 10th June 2024 and a copy will be provided.
17 Jan 2024	Improving Services for Children and	An update on the finalised data and digital road map to be provided alongside future	Fayth Skeete - Head of Strategic,	It is anticipated that a copy of the finalised Data and Digital Road map will be provided by the end of July.

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
	Families Plan Update	improvement and performance updates to the Committee.	Governance and Planning	
		A diagram of the transformation to include services that have been lost, timelines for the different areas, and staffing information.	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	
15 May 2024	Improving Services for Children and Families Plan Update	The timeline for the finalised data and digital roadmap.	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	It is anticipated that a copy of the finalised Data and Digital Road map will be provided by the end of July.
		Feedback on the consultation for School Improvement – the New Relationship with Schools via email.	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	This is scheduled for completion by w/c 10 June 2024 and a copy will be provided.
		Timescales from Birmingham Audit on its review of Elective Home Education (EHE).	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	11 June 2024 - Officers are exploring some of the findings and the responsibilities that Audit have assigned to EHE. Officers have held a meeting with them and expect to have the revised report to share shortly.

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
		The Chair to discuss Birmingham Audit Review of Elective Home Education with the new Independent Chair of the Audit Committee.		
17 July 2024 Minute No 17	Birmingham School Attendance Strategy 2024 – 2028	ii) There will be an executive summary when the School Attendance Strategy is finalised.	Razia Butt, Director of Thriving Children and Families	The strategy is in the final stages of completion and requires professional graphics added. Drafting of the executive summary is underway and will be with the Committee as soon as completed.
		iii) Officers to e-mail the Scrutiny Office their ideas as to how councillors could assist in the promotion of school attendance.	Razia Butt, Director of Thriving Children and Families	‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ introduced the concept of a ‘Senior Attendance Champion’ in schools. We’d like all our partner agencies to also appoint an ‘Attendance Champion’ to promote attendance and to make sure it remains on the agenda not just for the O&S committee but for the Council as a whole. We would welcome Members of the Committee to consider appointing a champion.

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
				We would also be grateful for support from Members of the Committee for any promotional activity related to attendance as we progress the development of our Communications Strategy, once the new service is in place.
17 July 2024	T&F Meeting – Implications of Savings	<p>Saving 150: Review of Non-Statutory Transport Packages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Committee to undertake an engagement exercise to seek to understand the impact of this policy change. b) More information was required on the number of appeals and other legal actions, and the potential impact on delivery of savings. c) Officers to inform the Committee on the advice from legal colleagues on the definition of exceptional circumstances. 	Adrian Weissenbruch - Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance	The Post 16 Service was discussed at the 23 rd October committee meeting and further information has been requested and listed in the action tracker for the 23 rd October.

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
17 July 2024	T&F Meeting – Implications of Savings	Saving 89 - Review of Youth Services, NEET and Careers Services: The item is on the agenda for the September committee meeting, and the Committee to receive an update on the review, recommendations, and details of the engagement programme.	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	The Strategic Director requested this item be moved to the October committee meeting and this was discussed as part of the Savings 2024/25 – Progress Report item on 23 rd October. Further information has been requested and this is listed in the action tacker for the 23 rd October.
17 July 2024	T&F Meeting – Implications of Savings	Saving 185 - Reductions on Contract Sum for the Birmingham Children’s Trust: a) The Committee to be provided with the breakdown of the budget and areas of spend. b) A briefing note to be provided to the Committee on the risk of legal challenge and financial implications for the short breaks policy.	James Thomas Chief Executive, Birmingham Children Trust	To be discharged: Information e-mailed to the Committee on 23 rd October.

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
17 July 2024	T&F Meeting – Implications of Savings	Local Authority Schools Deficits - there were potential impacts on the local authority's budget if a school with a budget deficit becomes an academy, and a request was made for a fuller picture to be provided.	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	<p>There was also the following request from the Corporate & Finance OSC on 26 July 2024 regarding the Section 151 Officer Update on the Financial Position of the Council - July 2024 & General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan update: Information to be provided on work with schools over last 4 years regarding £11.96m aggregate deficit following previous work of Overview and Scrutiny.</p> <p>This was also referred to at the 23rd October meeting and is listed in the action tracker for 23rd October.</p>
11 October 2024 Minute No. 26	Alternative Solution for Schools HR, Payroll & Finance Business Case	1) That the Chair prepare a summary of the key points raised in the discussion and forward to Cabinet for consideration alongside the report.	Chair & Scrutiny Office	To be discharged: The key points raised in the discussion was forwarded to Cabinet for consideration alongside the report at the meeting on 15 October 2024.
11 October 2024	Alternative Solution for Schools HR,	2) The Directorate be requested to provide the following	Steve Kay, Director,	

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
Minute No. 26	Payroll & Finance Business Case	<p>additional information to the committee:</p> <p>i) A plan-on-a-page information on the process and timescales to getting schools ready to operate under the new alternative solutions, as well as the training requirements.</p> <p>ii) Details of processes for future financial oversight following implementation of any changes.</p> <p>iii) That the committee be updated prior to September 2025 on the monitoring of the impact of these changes on schools, and how schools were managing to administer their HR, Payroll and Finance.</p> <p>iv) That the committee continue to be updated on how schools' participation in</p>	<p>Education and Employability</p> <p>Catherine Taylor-Ludolf - HR Shared Services, School HR & Payroll Programme Lead</p>	<p>To be discharged: E-mailed information to Members on 4 November 2024.</p> <p>To be discharged: E-mailed information to Members on 4 November 2024.</p> <p>It is proposed that the project report quarterly to OSC from March 2025 on how the transition is impacting schools. This should continue until at least September 2026 to ensure OSC has a clear idea of how the change is being imbedded in schools.</p> <p>It is proposed that the project report quarterly to OSC, with the first update e-mailed 4 November 2024.</p>

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
		engagement activities and processes was being managed and monitored.		
11 October 2024 Minute No. 26	Alternative Solution for Schools HR, Payroll & Finance Business Case	3) The timing of future pre-decision scrutiny exercises be programmed at an earlier stage, including the supply of timely and accessible information to members.	Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director of Children & Families	Ongoing.
23 October 2024 Minute No. 35	Order of Agenda	ii) To provide the Committee with a summary for lengthy and detailed reports.	Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director of Children & Families	Ongoing.
23 October 2024 Minute No. 36	Savings 2024/25 – Progress Report	ii) Provide a paper explaining to Members what was proposed and decided for the Careers and NEET Services.	Steve Kay, Director, Schools and Employability	
		iii) To provide the Young People's Service Review to enable the Committee to explore before the new year undertaking a focussed piece of work (Task & Finish) regarding the future	Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director of Children & Families	

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
		model and what young people would like to see in relation to youth services.		
23 Oct 2024 Minute No. 38	Update on Birmingham Strategic Youth Justice Plan 2023-2028	ii) a) Future updates to be succinct or have a summary provided.	David Stringfellow, Director, Commissioning and Specialist Services, BCT Dave Webb, Interim Head of Service for Youth Offending Service, BCT	Ongoing.
		b) Officers to explore updating the five year plan and after 'we worked with a total of 977 children' add '332 of these children had not offended in 2022/23, but their involvement either continued into 2022/23, or they received an intervention through a preventative or Think Family Intervention, neither of which are offence driven'.	David Stringfellow, Director, Commissioning and Specialist Services, BCT Dave Webb, Interim Head of Service for Youth Offending Service, BCT	

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
		iii) The Committee to be provided with quarterly briefing notes to explain what was happening in relation to the improvement journey being rated Good, the risks identified and the impact they were having.	David Stringfellow, Director, Commissioning and Specialist Services, BCT Dave Webb, Interim Head of Service for Youth Offending Service, BCT	Ongoing – updates are due January 2025, April 2025, July 2025.
		iv) The Cabinet Member to take a view as to whether the update report went to Full Council.	Cllr Mick Brown, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	
23 Oct 2024 Minute No. 39	Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service - September Mobilisation Report for the Post-16 Service	iii) a) Information explaining the plans for post-16 transport policy change and impact to enable the Committee to have further discussions on this.	Ade Weissenbruch Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance	Linking in with a joint piece of work with SENAR which is in the data gathering stage.
		b. An update report on the attendance work, to include information on post-16s that have moved under the remit of	Ade Weissenbruch Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance	Linking in with a joint piece of work with SENAR which is in the data gathering stage.

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

Minute No. / Date	Agenda Item	Outstanding Actions	Lead Responsible Officer	Comments
		Adult Social Care, as soon as it was available.		
		c. The up-to-date appeals figures.	Ade Weissenbruch Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance	Ongoing - CYPTS will provide these updates monthly. Figures were submitted for October and will continue to be updated at the end of each month moving forward. This will ensure the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the most current appeals data.
		d. An update report on utilising empty seats when the work had taken place.	Ade Weissenbruch Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance	This is in progress.
		iv) To provide an updated structure chart for the Children and Families Directorate, which would then be updated and shared with the Committee when changes were made.	Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	

Birmingham City Council

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

4 December 2024



Title:	PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS
Lead Members:	Councillor Mick Brown, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Councillor Nicky Brennan, Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not Applicable.
Report Author:	Clair Graham, Head of Service Contextual Safeguarding, Birmingham Children's Trust clair.graham@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
Authorised by:	Lisa Harris, Director Help and Protection, Birmingham Children's Trust lisa.harris@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
Is this a Key Decision?	No.
If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?	Not Applicable.
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:	Not Applicable.
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late:	Not Applicable.
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable.
If not eligible, please provide reason(s):	Not Applicable.
Wards:	All.
Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?	No.
Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?	No.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook an Inquiry on Child Criminal Exploitation. The report was taken to City Council on 16th April 2024.
- 1.2 The report made a series of recommendations, and this report provides an update on progress made.
- 1.3 It also provides an update on wider work taking place in this area and the Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy.

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 No observations.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 3.1 Notes the contents of this report and the update on the recommendations made in the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 Provides feedback and agrees a schedule for future updates.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 An Inquiry on Child Criminal Exploitation was agreed as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 and this work continued into 2023/24. The Inquiry considered evidence from 12 organisations and services using a combination of face-to-face sessions and written submissions.
- 4.2 The Inquiry and its recommendations were taken to Full Council on 16th April 2024. Work has taken place to address the recommendations, and the update (Appendix 1) sets out the progress made.
- 4.3 The recommendations made in the Inquiry are closely linked to the Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy 2023-26 (Appendix 2) and progress on this is set out below.

Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy

- 4.4 The Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy is a whole partnership strategic approach to tackling child exploitation in Birmingham. The governance and accountability lies within the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Board and is set out in Appendix 3.
- 4.5 A summary of progress against this Strategy is set out below.
- 4.6 Governance and Strategy recommendations

- 4.6.1 Most of the Governance and Strategy recommendations have progressed with some completed and others in continuous progress.
- 4.7 Priority 1 (Increase reporting of children identified as being at risk of exploitation and being referred to services):
- 4.7.1 Increased reporting has been seen in relation to children either experiencing or vulnerable to child exploitation with a clear process and pathway of support and intervention (inclusive of advice and guidance being provided).
- 4.7.2 Hoteliers have undertaken the train the trainer programme to ensure early identification and awareness around exploitation.
- 4.7.3 The impact of this is two fold; whilst we now see more reporting within hospitality; it has lessened as perpetrators are now booking properties through Airbnb which is less regulated.
- 4.7.4 The EMPOWER U Hub in partnership with the Community Safety Partnerships and the Children Society are also looking at ways to address this as well as the mandatory awareness raising required in relation to transport specific to taxi drivers.
- 4.7.5 Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS) has arrangements in place to tackle exploitation through its Exploitation Reduction Health Group.
- 4.8 Priority 2 (Ensure the needs of those children, young people and families identified as being at risk are appropriately and effectively met with the right help and the right time)
- 4.8.1 Through the Violence Reduction Partnership, the Faith Alliance has been established with a Faith Alliance Toolkit that identifies training and awareness not just around exploitation but also the role they can play in terms of safeguarding, being a trusted adult and providing safe space for children vulnerable to or being exploited.
- 4.8.2 There are also a number of awareness raising campaigns and a clear training package for staff within the Trust and through the Birmingham Safeguarding Partnership for partners to access. This leads to a workforce that is more equipped in the identification of exploitation (as well as being trauma informed and culturally competent) leading to increased reporting.
- 4.8.3 The threshold document Right Help, Right Time has been updated to reflect the indicators of both child exploitation and serious youth violence with a clear clarity as to what action needs to be taken dependant on the level of risk/severity, giving consideration to the context and circumstances.
- 4.8.4 A review of arrangements for referrals/joint working with Adult Social Care /Preparation for Adulthood will be progressed. The service is considering an all-age service to ensure consistency for children turning 18 as it is recognised that risk does not stop when your chronological age considers

you by law to be an adult. This will form part of the next step plans over the next two to three years.

4.8.5 In addition, the plan and implementation of extra familial conferences is also yet to be progressed.

4.9 The Violence Reduction Partnership has supported the council to complete their strategic needs assessment and problem profiling which provides a good analysis of the data to support the partnerships in reducing exploitation and understand and respond to risk. It also assists with the commissioning of services and the implementation of the Violence Reduction Commissioning board aids with scrutiny when looking at commissioning services.

4.10 As part of the implementation of the Serious Youth Violence Pilot team (which will ensure that the service is also meeting the Serious Violence Duty); the Children's Trust's recording system is currently being reviewed to ensure forms built are trauma informed and can gather data and evidence impact.

4.11 Continued work with parents and carers to ensure that they are seen as safeguarding partners has been successful. The initial pilot parent/carers group in the Newtown and Lozells area is now becoming an independent community interest company funded through the Youth Endowment Fund. However, what is now required is for the service in partnership with partners to also look at how this can be replicated in other areas across the city.

Next steps

4.12 A review of the governance arrangements in this area is underway, in consultation with key stakeholders and partners. This will ensure scrutiny in relation to the Tackling Child Exploitation key priorities and plan.

4.13 In addition, to review the Tackling Child Exploitation and ensure key priorities are added in relation to the Serious Violence Duty and how the service intends to meet this duty by aiming to respond, prevent and reduce serious youth violence. The review of the governance arrangements will incorporate oversight of the implementation, delivery and impact of this team.

5 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

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

Legal

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

5.3 The legal duties placed on Councils in this area were set out in the Inquiry report taken to Full Council on 16th April 2024.

Equalities

- 5.4 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Procurement

- 5.5 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

People Services

- 5.6 There are no staffing recommendations arising from the recommendations of this report.

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

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

Corporate Parenting

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

Other

- 5.9 There are no other implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Update on the recommendations of the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry

Appendix 2: Tackling Exploitation of Children and Young People 2023-26

Appendix 3: Governance arrangements for delivery of the strategy

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Report of the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to City Council 16 April 2024

[CCE Scrutiny Inquiry Report to City Council | Birmingham City Council](#)

APPENDIX 1 - Update on recommendations from CCE Inquiry

Ref	Theme	Recommendation	Cabinet portfolio(s)	Completion date	Cabinet Member assessment	Notes
R01	Definition and Scale	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to request the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) commissions a Child Criminal Exploitation problem profile.	Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	July 2024	1: Achieved (Fully)	The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership's Strategic Needs Assessment is published online at https://data-and-insight-hub-wmvru.hub.arcgis.com/ . The profile is overseen by the Birmingham Violence Reduction Board and will be shared across the relevant Boards.
R02	Early Intervention and Resilience	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to request the stakeholder engagement group convened by the Violence Reduction Partnership is extended to statutory organisations with a remit for Child Criminal Exploitation.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024	1: Achieved (Fully)	VRP has confirmed there is not a Birmingham wide stakeholder group. There are local community safety partnership meetings which include all statutory organisations - West Midlands Police, Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Children's Trust, West Midlands Fire Service as well as other organisations such as Birmingham Social Housing Partnership.
R03	Early Intervention and Resilience	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to work with the Contextual Safeguarding Board and Partners to explore delivery of a campaign to increase the awareness of parents and carers of the risks of exploitation and what steps they can take.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024	6: In Progress	A number of meetings and discussions have been had with football clubs across the region regarding a regional campaign around missing children to take place on match days at half time as Missing is an indicator of exploitation. In addition discussions have been had about attendance at community events to raise awareness to parents and carers around exploitation and when children go missing and the service has met with the BCSP web and social media officer. Discussion is to be had with the BCC Head of strategy and communications and a clear comms plan is needed in relation to this specific recommendation. The Violence Reduction Partnership have launched their My Tomorrow campaign which fits in with this agenda . In relation to Recommendation 3 there is an opportunity to perhaps merge this with the planned awareness campaign being undertaken by Contextual Safeguarding Board. Work is underway to explore the feasibility of pooling resources to make a bigger impact. I have written to HoS Contextual Safeguarding and BCSP Clair and Katherine separately to explore the feasibility of pooling resources to make a bigger impact.
R04	Early Intervention and Resilience	Council asks the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to lobby Government (and any future change in government) to adequately fund the provision of youth services, with ring-fenced funding and to protect this in statute with a Youth Service Bill	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024	6: In Progress	In Labour's manifesto, the party pledged to deliver the Young Futures Hubs programme, aiming to "intervene earlier to stop young people being drawn into crime, creating a new network of hubs reaching every community. These hubs will have youth workers, mental health support workers, and careers advisers on hand to support young people's mental health and avoid them being drawn into crime". This brings together a number of important and interlinked aspects of young people's lives: violence and crime, mental health and employability. Labour has pledged that the hubs will be boosted by new youth workers to operate in Pupil Referral Units and hospital accident and emergency departments who can be based out of the hubs, to offer young people a pathway out of violence. We are awaiting the announcement on the roll out of Youth Hubs and the scope is being considered in the redesign of the Youth Service.
R05	Early Intervention and Resilience	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to request the Contextual Safeguarding Board and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership work with organisations to review their mandatory training offer to better equip staff to recognise signs of Child Criminal Exploitation and minimise the risk of bias in decision making.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024	1: Achieved (Fully)	The Contextual Safeguarding Board has worked in collaboration with the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership to review and expand its Multi-Agency Training offer on both Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation for 2024/25. BSCP commissions three specific training modules for front-line practitioners focused on Child Exploitation. Three 'Tackling Child Exploitation in Birmingham' courses have been delivered during this financial year with a further two courses planned. To coincide with publication of a Local Child Safeguarding Practice into serious youth violence and exploitation in June 2024, BSCP hosted a webinar to cascade the key learning. The 'Breaking the Cycle' webinar was attended by over 240 professionals in Birmingham. The partnership also delivered an Advanced Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation – Trauma and Developing Skills for Practice Training Module in March 2024. There are plans to revise and develop our Child Exploitation Modules this year. 1. A webinar raising awareness on grooming of children. 2. Introduction to Child Exploitation. 3. Tackling Child Exploitation. 4. A Webinar on Child Criminal Exploitation a lived experience.

Ref	Theme	Recommendation	Cabinet portfolio(s)	Completion date	Cabinet Member assessment	Notes
R06	Early Intervention and Resilience	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to work with Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Children's Trust to ensure all staff working directly with children receive mandatory training on Child Criminal Exploitation and this is part of a continuous professional development approach.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024	1: Achieved (Fully)	<p>The Trust's Learning Academy runs an in-person CCE course every quarter which is delivered by experts in the field. This course has run for at least the last three years and is the most attended course of all the Trust's training opportunities. Empower U has their own staff training plan and staff there are trained to a higher level in the area of CCE.</p> <p>The mandatory safeguarding training for all BCC employees includes child criminal exploitation.</p>
R07	Early Intervention and Resilience	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to provide a report to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the Council's work with schools to address exploitation as part of their safeguarding policies. This should include academies and primary schools.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024	6: In Progress	<p>The Birmingham Model Safeguarding Policy for schools is reviewed annually and shared with all schools and settings in the city. This includes information on all forms of exploitation and the responsibilities of schools and settings. Whilst this is offered to all schools in the city, some may choose to use their own policy, particularly where the school is part of a national multi-academy trust. The policy is available at https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/29548/safeguarding_model_policy</p> <p>The redesign of the Thriving Children and Families Division has a dedicated resource that provides support to schools and BCT in EmpowerU, the exploitation hub, consolidating temporary arrangements that have been in place. Training on exploitation is available to schools from a wide range of agencies including BCC Prevent, Education Safeguarding, BCT and BSCP. The Safeguarding Leaders Assembly taking place in November 2024 is focussed on child exploitation. Specialist support for schools is put in place following a critical incident in the city, including the delivery through Minus Violence (Home Office accredited provider).</p> <p>Further information can be provided to the Committee in the form of a report if this would be useful.</p>
R08	Early Intervention and Resilience	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to provide a timeline for the development and publication of an Exclusions strategy, engage with the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its development, and commit to providing regular reports on outcomes from the new strategy once in place.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	April 2025	6: In Progress	<p>A new Exclusions Strategy is in development and will take a preventative approach that reinforces an Early Help response. The strategy will demonstrate the interdependencies between safeguarding, improving attendance, access to early help and support and how schools can work preventatively. There are examples of successful practice across the city, with sharing panels and managed moves enabling children to remain in education provision, in addition to the other statutory duties for the provision of education. Birmingham also benefits from having the DfE SAFE Taskforce that is working preventatively with the highest excluding schools in the city and this is due to report on impact in March 2025. SAFE works in partnership with the Violence Reduction Partnership where there is a training offer to schools in preventing exclusions and understanding forms of exploitation. There are 255 UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools in Birmingham, where the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is embedded and celebrated. Articles 33-36 of the Convention focus on forms of exploitation. In order to progress through the Award, schools are assessed by UNICEF on how well they have embedded the UNCRC. The Birmingham Relationships Education Toolkit for primary schools is a spiral curriculum resource that builds on children's understanding of good relationships, safety and wellbeing. Whilst there are various ways of evidencing the impact of this work, for schools the single arbiter of quality is Ofsted where safeguarding, including exploitation is scrutinised during inspection.</p> <p>The Exclusions Strategy is on the work programme for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2025.</p>
R09	Early Intervention and Resilience	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to report to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on how the Council is monitoring the risk of exploitation with children and young people who receive Elective Home Education.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024	6: In Progress	<p>We know from Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews that children who experience significant harm have often been out of sight of services for periods of time. As a priority for BSCP, a Children Out of Sight group is now well established and is bringing together new ways of working across the Partnership through integrated triage and responses. This response has been modelled across the C&F Directorate with services coming together in a more integrated way. There is an improvement plan for Elective Home Education in place that is scrutinised by BSCP annually, due to return to the Partnership in January 2025.</p> <p>This will be included in the item due to be considered at the Feb 2025 meeting of the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny committee on school exclusions, elective home education and part-time timetables.</p>

Ref	Theme	Recommendation	Cabinet portfolio(s)	Completion date	Cabinet Member assessment	Notes
R10	Supporting Young People to Exit Exploitation	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to consider how intelligence and information can be better shared with community partners and public sector organisations.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024	1: Achieved (Fully)	The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership's Strategic Needs Assessment is available through the Birmingham City Observatory as part of the Community Safety dashboard. A meeting of the Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly on 7th November 2024 reviewed the Birmingham and WM SNA and discussed next steps.
R11	Enforcement	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to lobby for a national and/or regional campaign to highlight enforcement action against Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) which are exploiting young people.	Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024	6: In Progress	A letter was sent to the Secretary of State in July, congratulating her on her appointment and setting out some of the challenges faced in Birmingham and requesting an opportunity to meet to discuss these issues, where the request for a campaign could be made. A positive response was received on 1/8/24 and a date to meet is being sought.
R12	Governance and Strategy	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families and the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to report back on the progress, and outcomes achieved of the strategy and delivery plan: Tackling Exploitation of Children and Young People 2023-26	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024	1: Achieved (Fully)	Contextual Safeguarding Board is the governance for this strategy. The report for the December meeting of the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes an appendix to evidence the progress made against the delivery plan
R13	Governance and Strategy	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families and the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to clarify the governance and accountability arrangements for this strategy.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024	1: Achieved (Fully)	The report for the December meeting of the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes an appendix detailing the governance arrangements .
R14	Governance and Strategy	Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families and the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to lobby Government (and future Government) for a Minister for Young People to enable joined up and holistic policy making in relation to young people.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024	3: Not Achieved (progress made)	A letter was sent to the Secretary of State in July, congratulating her on her appointment and setting out some of the challenges faced in Birmingham and requesting an opportunity to meet to discuss issues pertaining to young people in the city. A positive response was received on 1/8/24 and a date to meet is being sought. In addition, Stephanie Peacock MP was appointed as Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth in July. A meeting is being sought with Ms Peacock.
R15	Tracking	Council agrees that the Executive Member reports on progress towards achievement of these recommendations no later than October 2024. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024	6: In Progress	First progress update was due to be taken to Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2024 and is now due to be considered at the December meeting. At this meeting, it is suggested that the Committee provides a view on subsequent reporting, including building on the initial recommendations made by the inquiry,

CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING BOARD

Strategy and Delivery Plan:
Tackling Exploitation of
Children & Young People
2023-2026



CONTENTS

Glossary	4
1. Statement of Intent	5
2. Vision and Principles	6
2.1 The Vision	6
Participation of and Partnership with Children, Young People, their Families and Community	6
2.2 Principles	6
3. Governance	9
4. Scope	10
Definitions	10
4.1 Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (Home Office)	10
4.2 Definition of Child Criminal Exploitation	10
4.3 Definition of Serious Youth Violence	11
4.4 Definition of Children Missing from Care and Home	13
4.5 The West Midlands Region Definition	12
5. The Birmingham Picture	13
5.1 Serious and Organised Crime in the City	13
What We Know About Our Children and Young People	13

CONTENTS

5.2 Locations	14
5.3 Missing Children	14
6. The Birmingham Approach to Exploitation	16
Contextual Safeguarding Domains of Abuse	18
Current Delivery Mechanisms	19
Service Overview: EMPOWER U	19
7. What We Have Achieved So Far	21
8. Key Priorities 2023-2026	23
Delivery Plan	Appendix 1

GLOSSARY

CEM	Criminal Exploitation and Missing
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CE	Child Exploitation
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CL	County Lines
CSSB	Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Board
CYP	Children and Young People
CSP	Community Safety Partnerships
BSCP	Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
BSVRB	Birmingham Serious Violence Reduction Board
EMPOWERU	Birmingham Exploitative and Missing Service
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
OCG	Organised Crime Group
PNC	Police National Computers
ROCU	Regional Organised Crime Unit
VRP	Violence Reduction Partnership
WMP	West Midlands Police
YOT	Youth Offending Service

1. Statement of Intent

1.1 This strategy is developed and delivered under the auspices of the Birmingham Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Board (CSSB) to drive forward the development and implementation of a whole system strategic and operational partnership response to the exploitation of Children and Young People (C&YP). The CSS Board acts on behalf of the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and Community Safety Partnership both of whom hold a shared responsibility for Child Exploitation.

1.2 The exploitation of children (CCE) both criminal and sexual is completely unacceptable. Children and young people who are exploited are the victims of child abuse, and their needs require careful understanding, assessment, and interventions often beyond the scope of Children's Social Care alone, as stipulated in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. They and their families are likely to need swift access to wider support services and in some instances protection under the Children Act 1989. We understand that this type of risk (commonly referred to as extra-familial or contextual) requires a very different response to that of traditional statutory safeguarding designed largely as a response to harm within a family setting. We make a joint commitment to a Contextual Safeguarding Model to ensure that risk is managed, and effective interventions are delivered appropriately.

1.3 We recognise that child exploitation has both a serious immediate and long-term impact on every aspect of a child or young person's life, health, and education. It damages the community and the lives of families and carers often leading to family breakdown and children being subject to significant harm and/or death. It is our collective responsibility to identify those children and young people at risk of exploitation and our joint responsibility to protect them and safeguard them from further risk of harm. It is also our joint responsibility to prevent children from becoming victims of this form of abuse and reduce the opportunities that offenders may have to exploit children in the future. We strongly believe that where possible agencies should ensure that victims are not criminalised and prosecuted, with such action only used as a last resort.

1.4 We aim to raise the profile of child exploitation to protect and safeguard children from harm. We shall achieve this by developing and maintaining effective local responses through the delivery of this effective multi-agency strategy and delivery plan delivered by key partners and the community through the Board. This includes the implementation of timely and effective risk management and the execution of a comprehensive range of child-centred interventions for children who are at risk or are victims of sexual and/or criminal exploitation. We will also strategically collaborate with the Reducing Serious Violence Board (formerly Birmingham Gangs, Violence and Serious Organised Crime Board) in addition to other criminal justice/community safety forums to ensure adult perpetrators of exploitation are identified, disrupted and brought to justice.

2. Vision and Principles

2.1 The Vision

Our vision is to reduce the level of and impact of child exploitation affecting children and young people in Birmingham, to keep them safe so they can lead healthy, productive lives. We want to make Birmingham a safer city for our communities to live in whilst also making it an undesirable city for perpetrators of exploitation. We commit to taking new, innovative, and evidence-based approaches, focusing on harm reduction in our communities, preventing victimisation and repeat victimisation, and ensuring the lived experiences of the child and family sit at the centre of our approach. Whilst acknowledging the role of traditional approaches to safeguarding and criminal justice, we will prioritise a strong core offer alongside statutory partnership responsibilities. A joint approach seeks to increase engagement and long-term safety resulting in sustained positive outcomes for our communities. The partnership recognises there may be a risk associated with this approach, however, accepts this as a necessity to deliver resilient, thriving communities.

Participation of, and in Partnership with, Children, Young People, their Families and Community

The exploitation of children and young people cannot be tackled by statutory agencies alone. Parents/carers and communities play a vital role in supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and it is vital that positive, strong trusting, open and honest relationships are built with parents/carers and communities and that they are also seen as safeguarding partners.

Parents, carers and families play a vital part in the development and delivery of services and effective participation ensures that services develop/reflect local needs. Parents and carers are the experts and their child's primary educators. As a service, we pledge to ensure that we engage and work flexibly with children and young people and parents/carers. This will include ensuring we are inclusive in terms of disabilities, communication barriers, for example, language and cultural differences, as well as providing tangible resources, access and time.

2.2 Principles

The strategic plan is based upon the principles set out below, as identified in the 'See Me, Hear Me Framework'.

A. The Child's Best Interests Must be the Top Priority

The strategy takes a child-centred; relationship-based approach, whilst at the same time recognising that to protect other children and future abuse there is a need to identify, disrupt and prosecute offenders.

Children do not make informed choices to enter or remain in exploitative situations., they do so, through coercion, enticement, manipulation, or desperation. Children under 16 years old cannot consent to sexual activity and sexual activity with a child under 13 years is statutory rape.

Sexually exploited children or those at risk, should be treated as victims of abuse and never as offenders. Prosecution should be focused on those who abuse children and young people in this way. County Lines West Midlands Police data includes markers for people involved in county lines as victims, perpetrators or suspects.

The learning and best practice in place around CSE should be extended to include victims of all forms of exploitation.

‘Children who are exploited and groomed for criminal purposes are equally as deserving of support. The language of ‘criminal exploitation’ is rarely understood and therefore those affected are not offered the same response. All forms of exploitation should be considered in the same way, with an understanding of grooming and vulnerability,’

For more information see: <https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/get-help/help-services/exploitation-and-county-lines/what-is-county-lines>

B. Enduring Relationships and Support

Support should consider age, ethnicity, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, language, and maturity in order to be tailored to meet the needs of the individual.

Lasting, trusting relationships with professionals identified as the ‘trusted adult,’ who offer consistent support are crucial to support and protect children and young people and aid their recovery. Professionals should be supported to allow time to build relationships with the children and young people they are working with.

C. Early Identification and Prevention is Better

The effective safeguarding of children and young people is best achieved through early help and intervention. All professionals working with young people are well placed to identify risks and access support at an early stage without delay.

D. Intelligence-Led Delivery

The strategy must be intelligence-led and informed by comprehensive problem profiling based on victim, perpetrator, and location, which is also shared across key partners to inform meaningful activity concerning the prevention and disruption of child exploitation.

C. Effective Information Sharing

Information sharing should be facilitated by an agreed protocol predicated on the best interests and safeguarding of children and young people in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). All relevant agencies and services should be signatories and it should clearly state what information should be shared, by whom and the process and purpose for doing this.

D. Supervision, Support, and Training for Staff

Agencies within Birmingham should invest in the development and support of staff through regular supervision (including clinical supervision) and the opportunities for staff to reflect on practice. Those professionals who offer direct support to exploited children and young people might require further intensive training and must have frequent planned opportunities for meaningful reflection on their practice with a skilled line manager or supervisor.

E. Evaluation and Review

Quarterly reviews and an annual evaluation of this strategy and delivery plan, will be undertaken to ensure services are progressing activity and interventions are achieving their intended outcomes.



3. Governance

The Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Board (CSSB) acts on behalf of the Birmingham Safeguarding Children and Adult Partnerships and Community Safety Partnership, this provides strategic governance for the incremental implementation of Contextual Safeguarding across Birmingham. The initial focus has been the exploitation of children and young people and children missing from home and care.

The CSS Board includes, but is not limited to the Police, Children's Social Care, Youth Offending Service, Health, Education, Early Help, Community Safety Partnership, National Probation Service and Chaired by Senior Representatives.

The CSS Board also works in collaboration with a number of key strategic boards including but not limited to:

- Birmingham Serious Violence Reduction Board (BSVRB Subgroup)
- The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership
- The West Midlands Criminal Exploitation and Missing Board
- The Prevent Executive Board
- Birmingham Protecting People from Harm (BCSP Subgroup)

In developing this strategy we have considered the City's vision as outlined in Birmingham's Corporate Plan 2022-2026 to strengthen Birmingham's position as a thriving, young, diverse global city. It also reflects the developing Birmingham Children and Young People's Plan 2023-2028 with its aim for children and young people to stay SAFE at home and in places outside of our families and schools.

The CSS Board provides governance, support and performance monitoring to the specialist partnership exploitation and missing hub known as EMPOWER U. The Board receives quarterly reports from the Head of Contextual Safeguarding who holds responsibility for the EMPOWER U Hub and the development of a contextual safeguarding approach across the Trust and wider partnership.

The CSS Board will ensure the development of approaches to tackling sexual and criminal exploitation work is prioritised and coordinated through the Child Exploitation Priorities and Plan. The plan will be refreshed every three months and reviewed annually.

4. Scope

The following is within the scope of this strategy in respect of children and young people up to age 25:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Serious Youth Violence (where exploitation is a feature)
- Exploitation relating to trafficking and missing
- Children Missing from Home and Care

The focus on the areas above does not underestimate the impact of other forms of exploitation however, there are existing processes, systems, and practice guidance in place to respond to teenage relationship abuse, forced marriage, bullying, peer-on-peer abuse, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and radicalisation. The areas identified as within scope are key priorities for the city.

Definitions

4.1 Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (Home Office)

Child sexual exploitation is not defined in law. Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity 'causes harm, to the victim's needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology (online child abuse and sexual exploitation). The definition of exploitation includes the element that the child has been, 'controlled, coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity.'

4.2 Definition of Child Criminal Exploitation (Home Office)

CCE is not defined in law but is a term that has come to be associated with 'county lines'. The government definition of county lines is set out below together with our definition of Child Criminal Exploitation, which is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or another form of 'deal line'. This can also happen in borough.

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child criminal exploitation occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity:

- Causes harm to the child
- For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
- Through violence or the threat of violence
- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology. The criminal exploitation of children is not confined to county lines but can also include other forms of criminal activity such as theft, acquisitive crime, knife crimes and other forms of criminality.

4.3 Definition of Serious Youth Violence

Serious Youth Violence is defined as incidents whereby children/youths either under 19 or under 25 years old and are involved in any offences (such as manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm, assault/injury that is life-changing and involves weapons such as knives or firearms). We know children can be exploited into committing violence, and that their experiences in childhood and adolescence can increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or offender in adulthood (at times the two can go hand in hand). We are ambitious about retaining focus on 'children as children' whilst challenging the complex and nuanced issue of serious youth violence.

The service continues to develop and implement a clear and consistent approach to responding to serious youth violence, which rightly focuses on children and adults. A review of the previous Gangs Violence Organised Serious Crime Board has taken place and informs the strategy. Existing governance and operational functions are facilitated via the Violence Reduction Board with a sub-operational group that looks specifically at individuals and groups of children and places to address SYV as a growing trend.

4.4 Definition of Children Missing from Care and Home

A missing child is defined as a child reported to the Police or by Police as someone whose whereabouts are unknown by their families or carers, whatever the circumstances of their disappearance, and they are considered missing until located. Any missing person under the age of 18 is classified as a missing child.

The statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (Department of Education, January 2014) sets out the steps Local Authorities and their partners should take to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they go missing.

In respect of children missing, we are informed by the knowledge that children (and children in care) who go missing can be an indicator of exploitation and a child missing is vulnerable to exploitation.

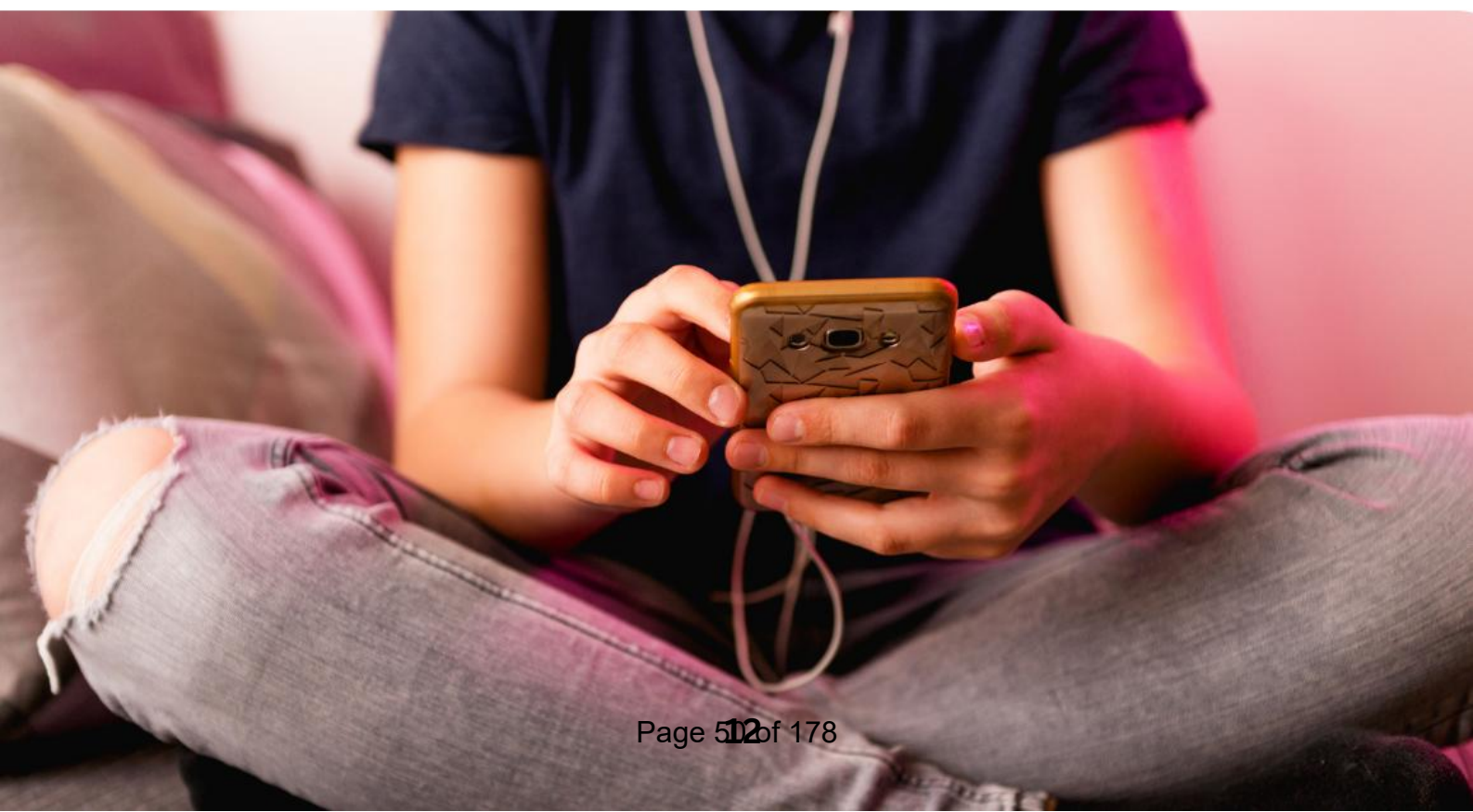
4.5 The West Midlands Regional Definition

The West Midlands Region also have a combined definition for all types of exploitation:

‘An individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young person or adult and exploits them:

- through violence or the threat of violence, and/or
- for financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants

The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual due to his /her specific situation. Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology, e.g., as the result of a grooming process which takes place during conversations in chat rooms, or through the use of social media.’



5. The Birmingham Picture

Birmingham is the largest city in the UK outside of London with a significantly young population (25% of its one million residents are under 16). Birmingham is also an ethnically and culturally diverse city (47% of its residents identified as non-white British in the 2011 census- a figure which has likely increased in the decade since). Like many cities in the UK, inequalities and deprivation are evident and there are areas of deep poverty. Many of our city's young people live in low-income families and along with neighbouring Sandwell and Wolverhampton in the West Midlands, Birmingham is one of the 20 most deprived local authorities in the country (all being more deprived in 2019 than they were in 2004).

5.1 Serious and Organised Crime in the City

Serious and organised crime affects more UK citizens, more often, than any other national security threat and leads to more deaths in the UK each year than all others combined.

Serious and organised crime persists to be a significant challenge for Birmingham, due to the hidden nature of crimes, such as the trafficking of individuals into Modern Slavery, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, the importation, supply or production of illicit drugs, and the use or supply of firearms. There are currently 66 tracked Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) in Birmingham. The likelihood of this threat increasing is real and a failure to recognise the impact is likely to lead to further exploitation of vulnerable children and adults; more murders and serious violence, fractured communities and increased harm to our economy and institutions.

The Birmingham Serious Violence Prevention Strategy (2022-2023) and Action Plan reflect the actions that the services will take to respond to serious and organised crime <https://westmidlands-vrp.org/data-insights/strategic-needs-assessment>

What We Know About Our Children and Young People

At the time of writing (September 2022) in Birmingham there are a total of 469 children deemed at risk of exploitation (192 CSE and 337 CE). The number of children criminally exploited is higher than those sexually exploited but we know for a city the size of Birmingham the number of children identified as being sexually exploited is too low. The number of children criminally exploited is significantly higher for children from a black and ethnic background and in terms of gender, males tend to be higher (in terms of numbers than girls). For CSE, girls are more likely to be identified as being at risk of/or being sexually exploited than boys and White girls are more identified than Black and ethnic minority girls.

5.2 Locations

In terms of vulnerability, Birmingham East has the most children identified as vulnerable (Regional Organised Crime Unit). Concerns remain consistent with those identified in 2021 where individuals have been recognised by the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) or arrested for County Lines Offence and/or with a County Lines flag on PNC (for those aged 20 years or under). Aston/Lozells/Winson Green (Birmingham West area) are persistently arising as areas of need, whilst emerging areas of concern include Sparkbrook (Birmingham East).

Within the Aston /Lozells (Birmingham West) area there are addresses where young people within the NRM, CL arrest and/or PNC flag data have multiple missing episodes within the last 12 months, a similar pattern occurs in Winson Green (Birmingham West) and Sparkbrook areas (Birmingham East).

A clear link also exists between exploitation and children excluded (permanently/temporarily) from education. Birmingham has primary school permanent exclusion rates above both the national and regional averages with primary school suspension rates also surpassing the national and regional picture. Some of the schools listed in Regional Organised Crime Data (ROCU) are within the areas of concern noted above.

It is evident from the data that the number of children identified as being vulnerable or being criminally exploited is increasing and those identified as vulnerable or being sexually exploited is decreasing. There has been a specific focus and drive on the identification of criminal exploitation, which could account for the decrease in CSE identification. As such, continuous awareness raising in this area is a minimum requirement and is ongoing.

5.3 Missing Children

Children missing from home and care can be at increased risk of criminal and sexual exploitation. The number of children within Birmingham that are reported missing continues to increase month on month and the period of January 2022 to December 2022 saw 265 children reported missing from home or care where exploitation was identified. Children are often missing for short periods, but at times have multiple missing episodes. Of the 2197 children currently in care in Birmingham, 9% have at least one missing episode.

The reasons for children being reported missing appear from the data, to centre around family conflict, wanting to be with family /friends or unhappiness within their home away from home (placement).

The Birmingham Child Exploitation and Missing Service (EMPOWERU) continues to advocate on behalf of children, working closely with placements, area teams and care homes to resolve many of these issues and reduce missing episodes. In addition, where there is family conflict, Family Group Conferences are utilised to repair vital relationships and empower families to develop their own plans as to manage situations moving forward.

In the period October 2020 to September 2021, there were also a total of 104 County Lines recognised to be operating in Birmingham. Of those identified, 94 lines were assessed to be originating from Birmingham, impacting areas outside of Birmingham and ten lines are believed to operate presently in the City of Birmingham. Some children who have been reported missing from home or care have been located by Police (usually following arrest) in Scotland, Wales, London or in neighbouring regions such as Leamington Spa or Coventry having been trafficked for the purpose of exploitation. A number of children placed from Birmingham outside of the area who have been reported missing have been located in and around the city. The service recognises the need for fuller, more robust locality-based assessments when placing children outside of the local authority and when supporting families to move due to threats to life.

EMPOWER U continue to work with parents and carers as safeguarding partners in relation to identifying the indicators of exploitation and links with children missing to increase parent reporting and intelligence gathering.

In addition, the service continues to increase awareness raising around the vulnerability of children who are missing from education and /or at increased risk of exploitation through special educational needs or additional special educational or emotional needs. The service is developing a formal pathway and response to children missing from education working and reducing permanent exclusions in partnership with the SAFE (Support, Attend, Fulfil, Exceed) Taskforce and the AP (Alternative Provision Taskforce) to ensure children have the right access to support that promotes their emotional, physical and health needs, maximising all opportunities for children to fulfil and exceed their aspirations.



6. The Birmingham Approach to Exploitation: Assessment and Response to Risk to Children Outside the Family Home

Children are being groomed and coerced into carrying out various acts of criminality often by ruthless and sophisticated OCGs, sometimes resulting in them being at risk of significant harm, exposed to County Lines activity and/or sexual exploitation. Many parents, despite their best efforts, are unable, as opposed to unwilling, to protect their children from these external risks. Partner Agencies find safeguarding within the traditional legislative framework challenging as it is fundamentally designed to mitigate risk within, or very close to the family home. Working Together recognised these challenges and the responsibilities that non-traditional agencies hold in addressing this risk.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (pg. 25: 2018) states that:

‘As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking; online abuse; teenage relationship abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered’.

It also states that:

‘assessments of children in such cases should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children who may be alleged perpetrators should also be assessed to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare. Interventions should focus on addressing these wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and welfare of a number of different children who may or may not be known to local authority children’s social care. Assessments of children in such cases should consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each child. They should look at the parental capacity to support the child, including helping the parents and carers to understand any risks and support them to keep children safe and assess potential risk to the child.’

and:

early help services will typically include.....responses to emerging thematic concerns in extra-familial contexts (Chapter 1 Para 2)

information sharing is also essential for the....when multiple children appear associated to the same contexts or locations of risk (Chapter 1 Para 25)

social workers...understand the level of need and risk in, or faced by, a family from the child’s perspective (Chapter 1 Para 56)

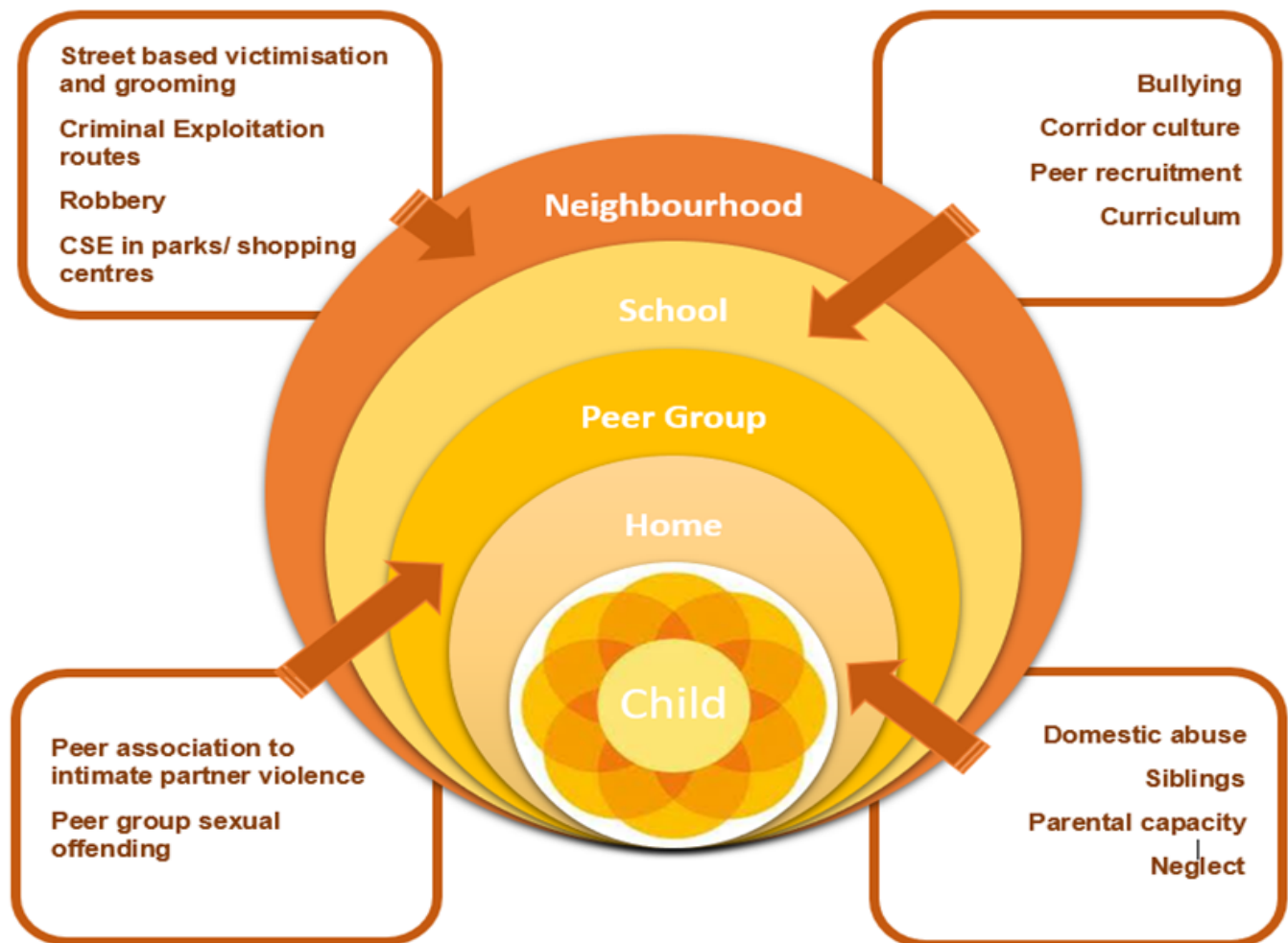
(organisations) should have arrangements in place for: ‘creating a culture of safety, equality and protection within the services they provide’ (Chapter 2 Para 3)

in schools, it is important that staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

YOTs....are therefore well placed to identify children.....and the contexts in which they become vulnerable to abuse’ (Chapter 2 Para 41-9)

Other Local Authorities have adapted alternative plans/arrangements for responding to this type of extra-familial harm a development which is also ongoing in Birmingham. The approach we are developing builds upon the work of Dr Carlene Firmin driving its approach from the concept of Contextual Safeguarding.

6. The Birmingham Picture



(Adapted from C. Firmin, 2017)

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to risks to children and young people outside the family home, which recognises that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be at risk of violence and abuse within the context of their neighbourhoods, schools and online. These risks are safeguarding issues and require us to work together with children, young people (as partners in their own safeguarding), all partner agencies, communities and parents.

Contextual safeguarding includes many types of extra-familial risk including child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation (missing children can be an indication of exploitation) urban street gangs, county lines, radicalisation and modern slavery. It should be noted that children and young people can be subject to multiple types of risk at any one time. Both males and females can be exploited, and it can affect any class and race of children and young people, notwithstanding that there are additional

factors (such as adverse childhood experiences, poverty and disabilities) that can add to vulnerability. Children and young people can be exploited to commit serious youth violence, crime and can be exploited online as well as within the community. It is vital that everyone, whether a professional or a member of the public, are able to identify exploitation and how to respond. It is important to note that exploitation causes trauma which can display itself in the behaviour of the child and in turn undermine parent/child relationships and relationships with professionals, such as teachers. The child's abuse is often beyond the control of their parents/ carers.

It should be acknowledged that exploitation does not stop at age 18, yet often or not support and intervention does. Research in relation to the adolescent brain indicates that the brain does not fully mature until the late twenties, reinforcing the need for effective transitional safeguarding arrangements to continue beyond age 18. Whilst it should be noted that Mental Capacity Act legislation will apply from this age, the commitment to offer support in line with this strategy will not change.

Current Delivery Mechanisms

The EMPOWER U Exploitation and Missing Hub is a partnership team which takes a contextual approach to protecting children and keeping them safe and free from risk and harm outside of the family home. Taking a coordinated and proactive response from prevention through to safeguarding and prosecution. It is not the sole provider of services for children and young people who are exploited and/or missing from home and care but is the lead agency for driving forward the contextual approach to safeguarding.

The EMPOWER U Exploitation and Missing Hub works alongside colleagues in existing statutory and non-statutory provision, offering a range of services to both children in care and other children to reduce the risk of child exploitation and missing episodes.

Service Overview – EMPOWER U

Taking a trauma-informed response, which is culturally competent and sensitive, whilst keeping the child's needs at the centre, recognising children are victims whilst building meaningful and trusted relationships, EMPOWER U:

- Identify and have full oversight of all children exploited and missing.
- Share information in relation to these children, review all screening tools to identify exploitation and /or serious youth violence
- Identify disruption opportunities and formulate /implement disruption plans
- Connect children to the relevant and appropriate services with a focus on intervention and support
- Build relationships with parents and utilise them as safeguarding partners
- Provide support, advice, and guidance to the workforce and partner agencies in relation to children exploited or missing.

- Ensure where relevant and appropriate, that children who go missing from care or home are offered a return home interview to reduce further missing episodes and identify any further risk and safeguard.
- Ensure that staff attend and participate in strategy meetings (and where appropriate any safeguarding meetings) where exploitation, missing or serious youth violence is a concern and support with disruption planning
- Chair any complex strategy meetings or complex disruption planning meetings utilising the Home Office Disruption toolkit as a guide to alternative powers
- Work closely with all Trust staff to support them to identify and respond to missing children and children exploited.
- Undertake community profiling, mapping peer groups, locality/place-based assessments and support with the collation of information to inform intelligence package to support arrest and prosecutions
- Ensure coordinated response of resources for children of note who were part of any significant incident or who are connected through Urban Street Gangs to prevent and reduce further risk of harm

The Agencies that form the Hub (co-located or virtual) are noted below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT)
- West Midlands Police SOCEX (Serious Organised Crime and Exploitation Team/LOCATE)
- Education Safeguarding
- Health/Redthread
- Probation
- Youth Offending Services
- Youth Services
- Violence Reduction Partnership
- Housing
- Barnardos
- Children Society
- Community Safety Partnerships
- Community Interest Companies
- Multi Systemic Therapy Exploitation Team
- Rape and Sexual Violence Programme

Other key services to which the Hub are aligned include (but not limited to):

- The SAFE Taskforce funded for three years by the Department for Education (DfE)
- The Alternative Provision (AP) Taskforce, funded for two years by the DfE.
- Catch 22. funded for two years by the Violence Reduction Partnership (rescue and response mentoring children exploited)

- Barnardos Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service (ICTGS)
- National Working Group Exploitation Network (provides independent scrutiny of practice)

7. What we have achieved so far

This strategy and delivery plan defines our vision, priorities and objectives over the next three years. It also takes stock of the significant progress that has been made over the past two years across the City.

What we have done so far:

Service Delivery

- Development and implementation of the Child Exploitation and Missing Service – EMPOWER U
- Development and implementation of Multi Systemic Therapy Service for younger children at risk of or being criminally exploited.
- Established the SAFE Taskforce – DfE funded provision for mainstream educational settings to reduce exclusions for children at risk of serious youth violence.
- The Alternative Provision (AP) Taskforce, DfE funded to provide multi-disciplinary interventions within the City of Birmingham School (CoB/PRU)
- Commissioned a range of additional services appropriate to need and demand via VRP and BCT.

Practice/Process Improvement

- Improved information sharing and risk assessment between West Midlands Police (WMP) ROCU, WMP gangs Team and LOCATE (WMP Missing Team).
- Reviewed and implemented practice guidance and procedures in relation to Child Exploitation and Missing
- Review of the screening tool (simplified and combined to include CE/CSE)
- Review of Right Help Right Time threshold document to include additional extra-familial risk
- Development of the Regional protocol concealing drugs (VRP) to inform response and approach
- Development of Effective Placement planning for children in partnership with VRP(guidance) to ensure consistency in terms of placement of children and families (home and care)
- Review of Missing children's process and practice
- Practice development locally and regionally looking at South Asian and Romanian missing children cohort Supporting Children and Young People from Roma Communities who are at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation to improve the response/ approach to children in a culturally sensitive way

- Gather the lived experiences from children, parents, and carers in order to ensure good practice and that the service is taking a holistic approach in meeting the needs of children and families
- Plan and implement residential placements for children, parents, and carers to build resilience, raise awareness around exploitation and serious youth violence related to exploitation, and empower and support parent-child relationships
- Working with Care Homes to improve their response when children go missing
- Work with community and faith groups to increase awareness and response to risk outside the family home

Awareness Raising/Training

- Multi-agency and single agency workforce development and awareness raising programmes around children exploited and who go missing with a training plan in place
- Formal arrangements developed for training with the hospitality trade
- Training Community Interest Companies to ensure good practice when working with children exploited or vulnerable to Serious Youth Violence
- Place based and peer assessments/Mapping complex groups and Contextual Assessment (awareness raising with staff)

Performance

- Development of partnership performance and regional performance dashboard to gain a better understanding of the need, demand, patterns and trends in relation to missing and exploitation
- Improved evidence gathering, intelligence/mapping and information sharing to inform police and partnership problem profiling, disruption and prosecutions working in partnership with the gang's team
- Partnership problem profiling based on victim, location and perpetrator (WMP analyst)
- Community profiling to understand resilience, risk and how to respond and disrupt.



8. Key Priorities 2023-2026

Priorities

1. Increase reporting of children identified as being at risk of exploitation and being referred to services
2. Ensure the needs of those children, young people and families identified as being at risk are appropriately and effectively met with the right help and the right time
3. Ensure that safeguarding, enforcement and commissioning activity is evidence and needs led; with an understanding of what works.
4. Maximise opportunities for strategic and operational solutions with local, regional and national partners to disrupt exploitation and associated serious youth violence (including parents and community) and bring offenders to justice

We will achieve this by:

- Continued awareness raising amongst the community and partnership to identify and report both victims and perpetrators
- Ensure a skilled and responsive workforce via continued workforce development across the partnership and threshold continuum to better recognise, understand and respond to victims of exploitation.
- Ensure all agencies have a procedural framework to support staff in responding to extra-familial risk
- Continued development of an extra-familial practice model within EMPOWER U learning from evidence base and voices of children and their families.
- Collaboration with the Early Help, Prevention and Universal services
- Ensure the EMPOWER U hub is appropriately resourced by Partner agencies
- Ensure that appropriate arrangements for transition to adult services are in place

- Increased Partnership awareness of the problem profile and demand to enable better safeguarding and public protection
- Ensure that commissioning arrangements are evidence-based and in accordance with need and demand
- Maximise the potential of the additional SOCEX investment via full integration with the existing delivery model in EMPOWER U (including alignment with existing tactical teams/operations).
- Collaboration with the Reducing Serious Violence Board to agree on cross-cutting priorities and actions

The delivery plan in Appendix 1 will be reviewed quarterly by the Board with an annual refresh.

January 2023

Contextual Safeguarding Board Partnership Priorities and Delivery Plan

APPENDIX 1

April 2023 - 2026 Strategic Priorities

Priorities

1. Increase reporting of children identified as being at risk of exploitation and being referred to services
2. Ensure the needs of those children, young people and families identified as being at risk are appropriately and effectively met with the right help and the right time
3. Ensure that safeguarding, enforcement and commissioning activity is evidence and needs-led; with an understanding of what works.
4. Maximise opportunities for strategic and operational solutions with local, regional and national partners to disrupt exploitation and associated serious youth violence (including parents and community) and bring offenders to justice

We will achieve this by:

- Continued awareness raising amongst the community and partnership to identify and report both victims and perpetrators
- Ensure a skilled and responsive workforce via continued workforce development across the partnership and threshold continuum to better recognise, understand and respond to victims of exploitation.
- Ensure all agencies have a procedural framework to support staff in responding to extra-familial risk
- Continued development of an extra-familial practice model within EMPOWER U learning from the evidence base and voices of children and their families.
- Collaboration with the Early Help, Prevention and Universal services
- Ensure the EMPOWER U hub is appropriately resourced by Partner agencies
- Ensure that appropriate arrangements for transition to adult services are in place
- Increased Partnership awareness of the problem profile and demand to enable better safeguarding and public protection
- Ensure that commissioning arrangements are evidence-based and in accordance with need and demand
- Maximise the potential of the additional SOCEX investment via full integration with the existing delivery model in EMPOWER U (including alignment with existing tactical teams/operations).
- Collaboration with the Reducing Serious Violence Board to agree on cross-cutting priorities and actions
- Continued work with partners including parents and the community to identify, assess and respond to vulnerable locations across the city in line with the localism agenda

PRIORITY 1: Increase reporting of children identified as being at risk of exploitation and being referred to services

How	Action	Responsible Officer/Agency	Timescale
<p>A continued programme of awareness raising amongst the community and partnership to identify and report both victims and perpetrators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening youth, parent/carer and community voice through COMMS and engagement by: Ensuring through consultation with children and communities through the Communication and Engagement strategic and operational group that there is a formulated COMMS plan to raise awareness in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Hospitality awareness raising ·Transport awareness raising ·Faith /Community groups awareness raising ·Exploitation campaigns ·Parent/carer awareness raising ·Continued work with Care Providers (identify reduce exploitation/respond/ reduce missing) ·Utilise national campaigns such as, 'See me, Hear me' to create opportunities to raise local and regional awareness around exploitation ·Engage and participate in targeted COMMS such as County Lines Intensification weeks ·Utilising youth engagement to convey information about the service in a language that is simple 	<p>VRP EMPOWER U</p> <p>VRP Barnardos Children Society CSP</p> <p>Care Home Forums (WMP)</p>	<p>Year 1</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Promotion of the BCT Practice Model across the service (child at the centre of everything we do, how we are, what we do, what we achieve, evidence-based, culturally and trauma-responsive) ·Designated leads appointed in each service to implement the strategy 	EMPOWER U	Year 1
		All agencies	Year 1
Ensure all agencies have a procedural framework to support staff in responding to extra-familial risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting contextual safeguarding approaches to reducing exploitation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·BSCP to request agencies undertake self-assessment of current extra familial procedures ·Agencies to develop internal extra-familial procedures where required 	BSCP lead	Year 1
		All agencies	Year 1
		All agencies	Year 1
Continued development of an extra-familial practice model within EMPOWER U learning from evidence base and voices of children and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with OLA/researchers and develop an extra-familial model to inform service review • A review of Missing and return home services to be completed to ensure a needs-led response to volume and demand • Service review to be undertaken (to align with SOCEX developments) 	HoS Contextual Safeguarding	Year 1
		HoS Contextual Safeguarding	Year 1
		EMPOWER U Hub	Year 1
Collaboration with the Early Help, Prevention and Universal services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current joint working arrangements between EMPOWER U, prevention/Early Help agencies including Schools, Early Help, Alternative Provision Taskforce, Safer Taskforce, Youth Service, Youth 	HoS Early Help HoS Contextual Safeguarding HoS Youth Service	Year 1

	·Utilising conferences to deliver key messages and ensure staff awareness as to what the service has to offer(to include multi-agency conferences and parent/carer/children conferences)		
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PRIORITY 2: Ensure the needs of those children and families identified as being at risk are met with the right help at the right time

How	Action	Responsible Officer/Agency	Timescale
Ensure a skilled and responsive workforce via continued workforce development across the partnership and threshold continuum to better recognise, understand and respond to victims of exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the workforce development in coordinated training across all systems and all partners by ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Training needs analysis for each partner agency ·Training plan (bespoke to each agency) ·Work in partnership with all partner agencies and ensure that all are familiar with the powers within the Home Office ·Multi-agency training and implementation across the workforce inclusive of partners. Working in partnership with the Violence Reduction Partnership support all agencies (Education, Health West Midlands Police to identify, respond, prevent, and reduce exploitation) 	<p>All agencies/Practice Hub</p> <p>Birmingham Local Safeguarding Board EMPOWER U</p> <p>All agencies/Local Safeguarding Board</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p>

to ensure a bespoke Early Help Offer is developed and embedded.	Offending Services to be reviewed and a revised prevention offer to be developed.	HoS YOS	
Ensure the EMPOWER U hub is appropriately resourced by Partner agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of understanding to be completed and agencies to commit to the resource and funding required within the service • Each agency's commitment to the resources provided with the hub 	Education 14-19 Participation and Skills Team Health Third party sectors and charity/voluntary organisations VRP funded services Housing CSP Youth Services RSVP CiCs	Year 1
Ensure that appropriate arrangements for transition to adult services are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding and review of dedicated pathway for 18+ care leavers • Review of arrangements for referrals/joint working with Adult Social Care /Preparation for Adulthood 	HoS Care leavers HoS Contextual Safeguarding Probation Service HoS Transitions/	Year 1 Year 2

		Adult Social Care and Contextual Safeguarding	
PRIORITY 3: Ensure that safeguarding, enforcement and commissioning activity is evidence and needs led			
How	Action	Responsible Officer/Agency	Timescale
Increased Partnership awareness of the problem profile and demand to enable better safeguarding and public protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership problem profile based on victim/location and perpetrators to be developed 	WMP/SOCEX & Partners ROCU	Year 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a good analysis of the data to support the partnership in reducing exploitation and understanding and responding to risk 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCGs exploiting children to be identified and tracked - increased risk rating 	WMP	Year 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure relevant software and tools to effectively and efficiently gather relevant information and accurate data 	WMP	Year 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current Children Social Care system and forms to ensure they are fit for purpose and able to collate the data required(data dashboard also required to 	HoS Contextual Safeguarding	Year 2

	<p>ensure timely live data can be extracted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure local trends and needs are fed into the regional data to enable the commissioning of services on a local and regional needs basis. 	EMPOWER U Hub/VRP	Year 1
Ensure that commission arrangements are evidence based and in accordance with need and demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Needs assessment based on Problem profile to be completed. • Feedback and data from children, parents, carers and partner agencies to inform needs assessment and commissioning. • Work in partnership with commissioning to commission and review services 	<p>VRP</p> <p>BCT IMT Team & VRP /WMP data and Trust Commissioning Team in partnership with EMPOWER U</p>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 2</p>
<p>Priority 4: Maximise strategic and operational solutions with local, regional, and national partners to disrupt all types of exploitation and associated serious youth violence</p>			
How	Action	Responsible Officer/Agency	Timeline
Maximise the potential of the additional SOCEX investment via full	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop with agency leads to be undertaken to develop full integration of SOCEX within the existing EMPOWER U delivery model 	EMPOWER U and all partner agencies.	Year 1 Q1

integration with existing delivery model in EMPOWER U.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An operational model for the new SOCEX EMPOWER U model is to be agreed upon and presented to CS Board. • Performance dashboard including disruptions and prosecution to be presented to CS Board. • Ensuring suitable premises, facilities and co-location • Work in partnership with all partner agencies and ensure that all are familiar with the powers within the Home Office Disruption Toolkit 		<p>Year 1 Q2</p> <p>Year 1 Q2</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 1</p>
Collaboration with the Reducing Serious Violence Board to agree cross-cutting priorities and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint review of action plans and priorities • Joint Board 6 mid-year • Formal reporting arrangements to be agreed 	Chairs of CS and RSV Board	Year 1
Continued collaboration with the Violence Reduction Partnership to ensure local and regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership with the Violence Reduction Partnership through strategic meetings the service will ensure that any recommendations and improvements in practice are driven by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feedback findings from Rapid Reviews, problem profiles and performance data (locally and from partners) to understand the patterns and themes in terms of exploitation 	<p>VRP</p> <p>VRP & HoS Contextual Safeguarding</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p>

<p>consistency in terms of identification, reporting, responding, awareness raising, and reduction of children exploited and who go missing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Utilising these strategic board meetings to ensure a consistent response and approach to exploitation and serious youth violence locally and across the region in terms of process, practice and guidance across the seven regions to prevent, reduce, respond and support children exploited, who go missing and vulnerable to/ or involved in serious youth violence. ·Utilising the Child Exploitation and Missing operational group to implement the procedures, practice and guidance agreed upon at strategic board operational across the seven regions ·Influence and support (using the information gathered from the data, problem profiling feedback from children, parents and carers) to identify support and intervention required to commission services funded via the VRP. 	VRP & HoS Contextual Safeguarding	Year 1
		VRP & HoS Contextual Safeguarding	Year 1
		VRP & HoS Contextual Safeguarding	Year 1
<p>Continued work with partners to including parents and the community to identify, assess and respond to vulnerable locations across the city in line with the localism agenda.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and strengthen community initiatives by building, establishing and maintaining trust and confidence with parents and carers and communities. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Residential placements/stays for children (to be trained as accredited Youth Inspectors) ·Residential placements/stays with children, parents, and carers to rebuild relationships between children and their parents affected by exploitation and serious youth violence ·Residential placements /stays for parents to be trained and accredited in awareness raising around exploitation and missing, advocacy and empowerment. 	<p>EMPOWER U Parent /Carer forums</p> <p>EMPOWER U Parent /Carer forums</p>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p>

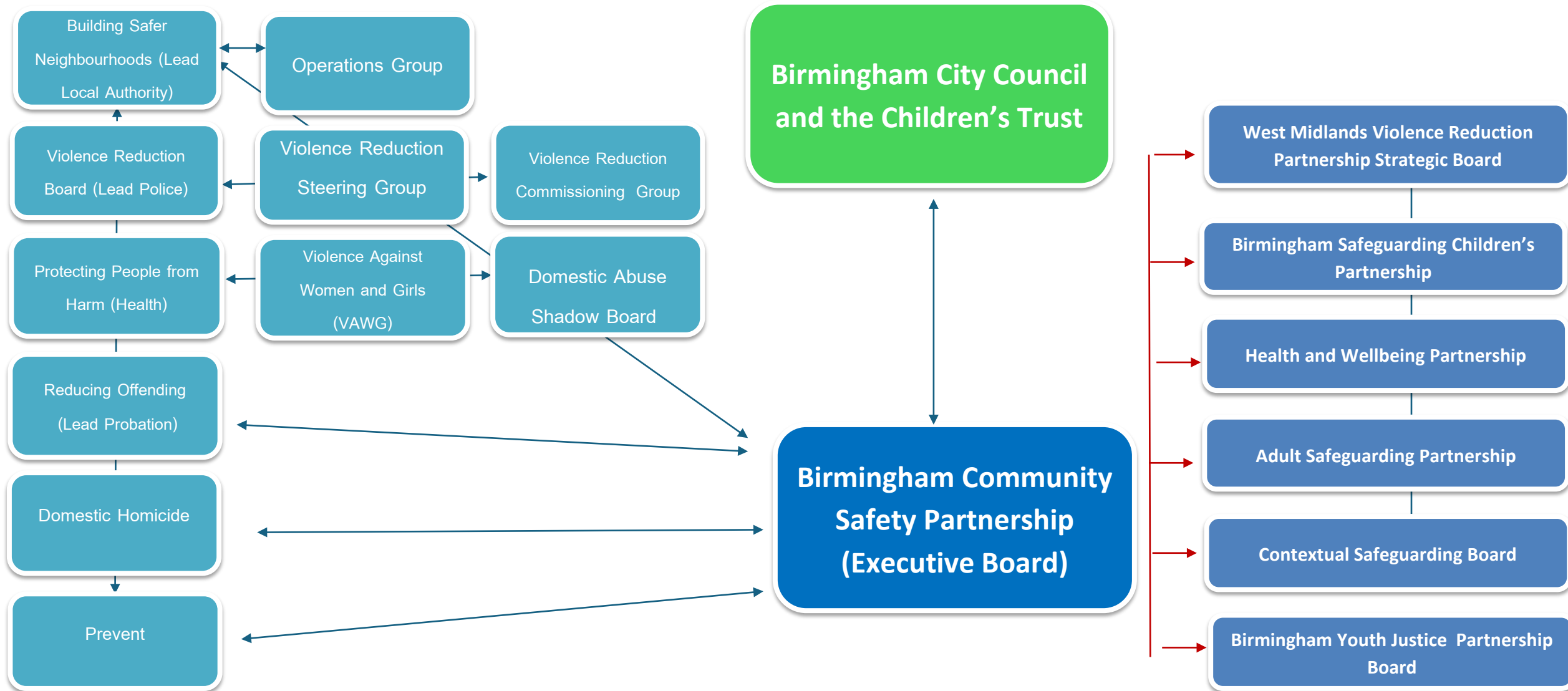
Page 74 of 78

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Advocacy and empowerment accredited training required to look at an independent Family Advisory Board ·Supporting place-based approaches to exploitation prevention and reduction by community profiling, working inside local areas to understand needs locally and individually to ensure that prevention, response and intervention are effective. ·Regular feedback from parents/carers via the regular parent /carer forum and children 	<p>EMPOWER U Parent /Carer forums</p> <p>EMPOWER U Parent /Carer forums and partner agencies</p> <p>EMPOWER U Parent /Carer forums</p>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p>
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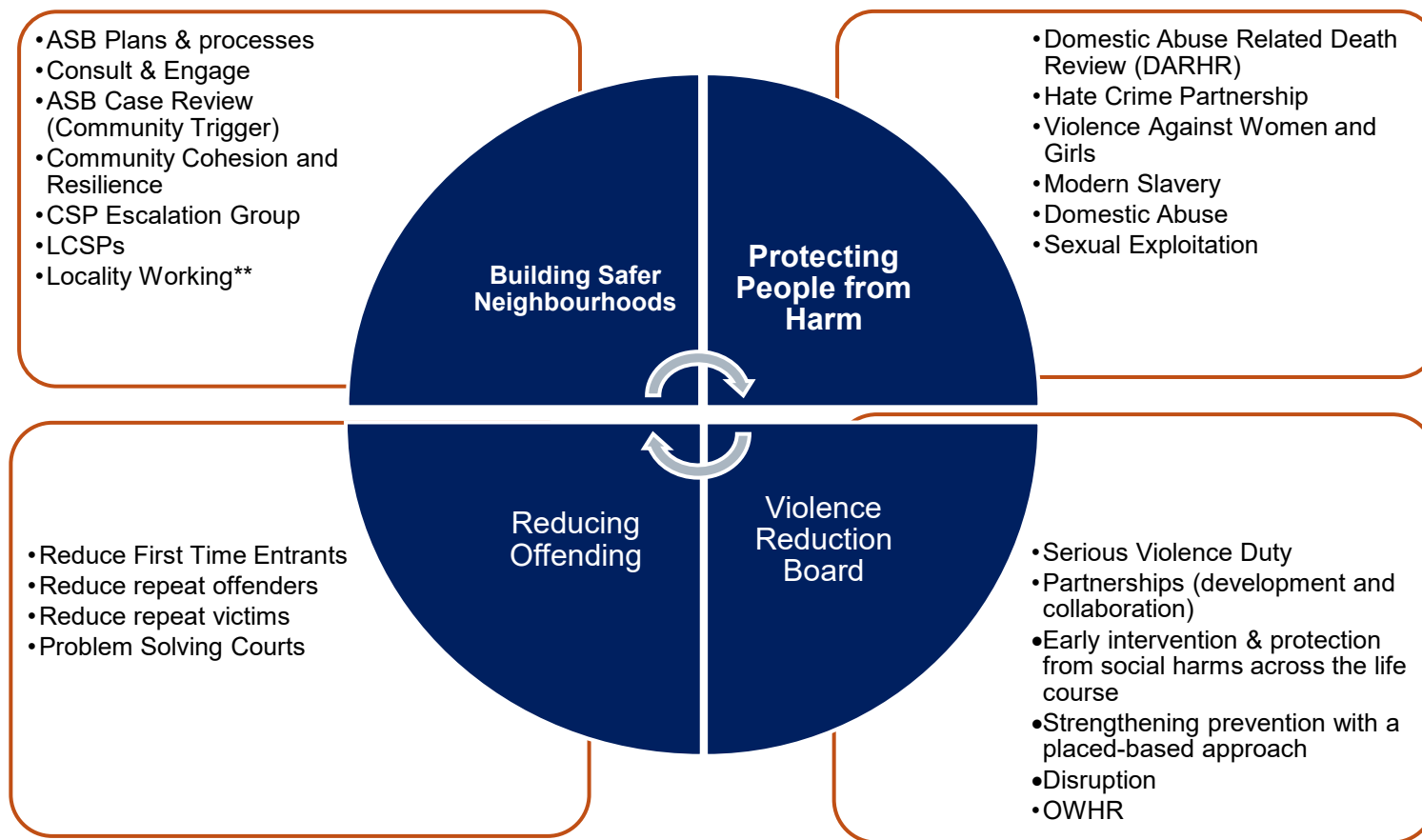
To be reviewed quarterly

Annual Refresh due January 2024 for completion April 2024

Birmingham Strategic Partnerships BCSP



Birmingham Community Safety Partnership Governance



Relations with other Statutory Boards and Partnerships

West Midlands Violence
Reduction Partnership
Strategic Board

Birmingham Safeguarding
Children's Partnership

Health and Wellbeing
Partnership

Adult Safeguarding
Partnership

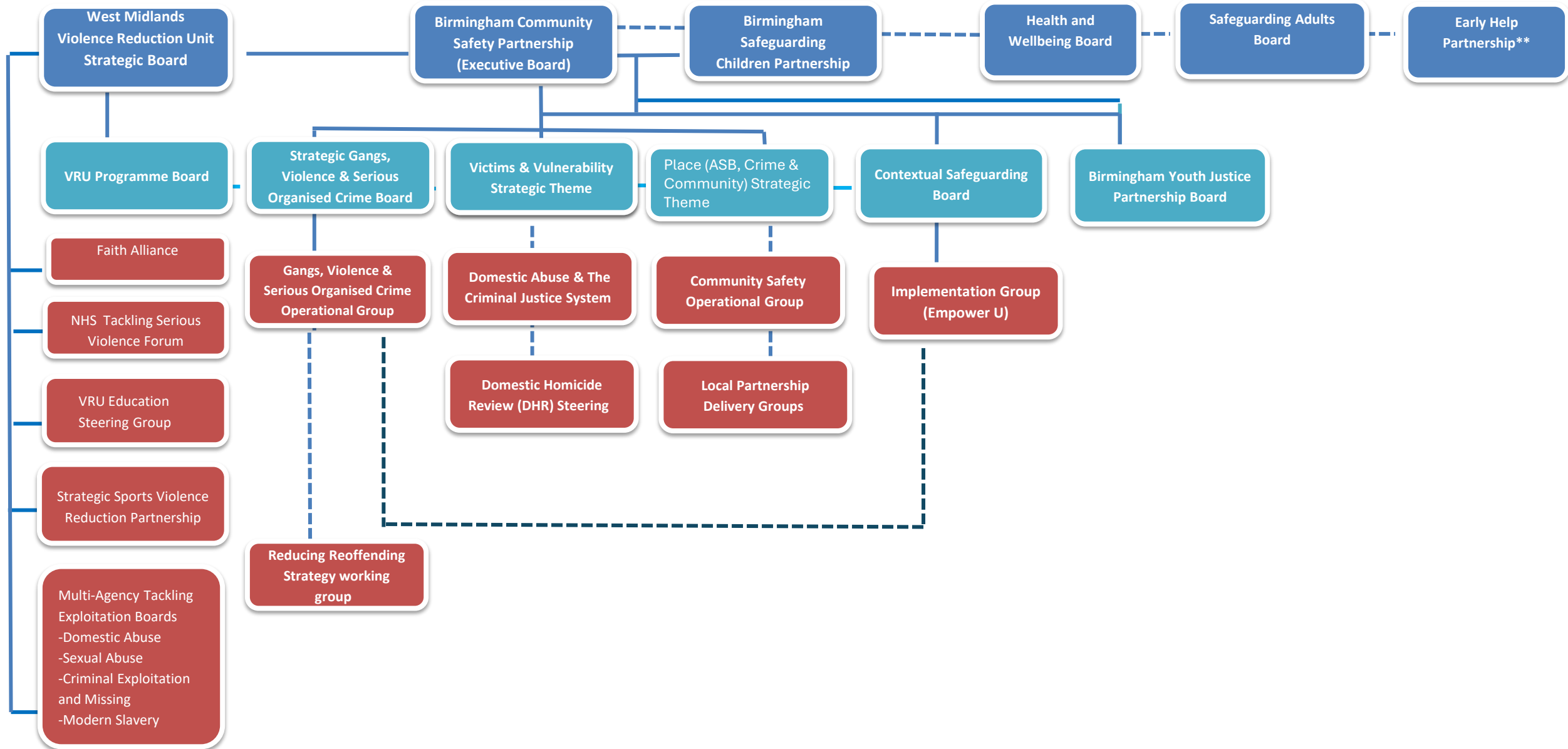
Contextual Safeguarding
Board

Birmingham Youth
Justice Partnership Board

Health and Wellbeing Board

Birmingham Combatting
Drugs & Alcohol Partnership

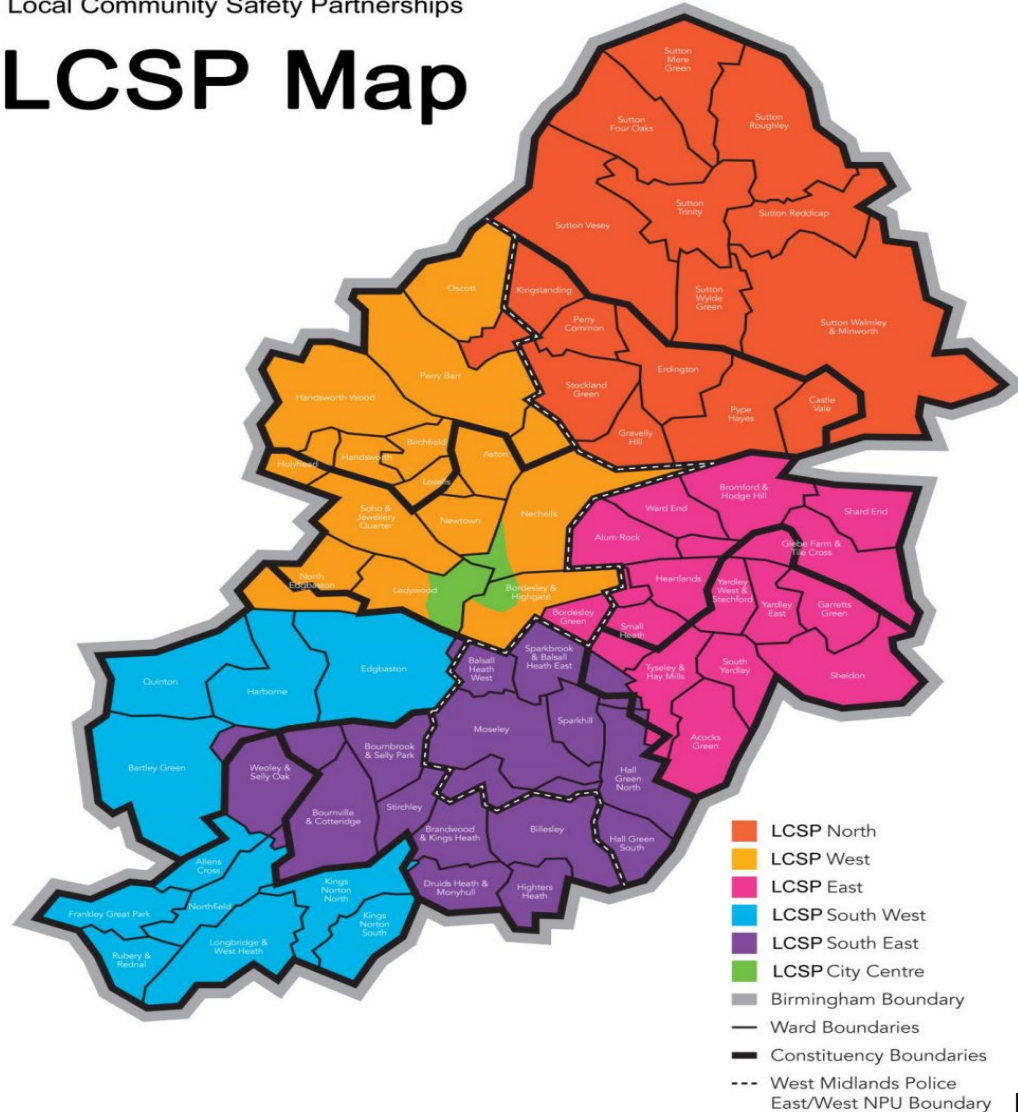
** See Local Community Safety Partnerships on slide 3



Locality working – Problem solving partnerships

Local Community Safety Partnerships

LCSP Map



- 6** Local Partnerships
- Membership reflects the BCSP
- Terms of Reference
- Data Sharing agreement
- Place and People
- Chaired by WM Police, Fire and Registered Providers

Birmingham City Council

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

Date: 04 December 2024



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

Does this report contain exempt or confidential information? No

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

Reasons why not included on the Notification: Not Applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 No observations.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

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

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

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

The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan Refresh

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

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

The Continuous Improvement Plan 2024 (CIP)

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



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

Governance, Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting

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

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

5 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance

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

Legal

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

Equalities

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

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

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

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

Procurement

- 5.4 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

People Services

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

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

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

Corporate Parenting

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

6 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix One – Children and Families Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan
- 6.2 Appendix Two – Children and Families Improving Services for Children and Families Board Highlight Reports, as presented to the Improving Services for Children and Families Board, 24 October 2024
- 6.3 Appendix Three - Improving Services for Children and Families IRP Report, as presented to the Delivery Board, 13 November 2024.

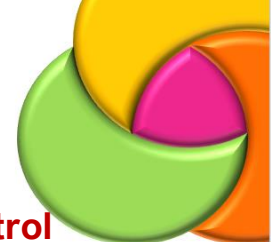
7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

Children and Families Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

July 2024





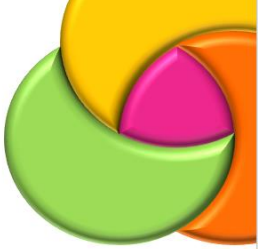
1. Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan 2024 (CIP) Version Control

Date Issued	Version	Document Status	Summary of Changes/Notes	Created By/Reviewed by
Various Dates across February, March and April 2024	0.1		Offline CSLT	Fayth Skeete
25/06/2024	0.1	Initial Draft	Draft CIP to Directorate Improvement Board	Fayth Skeete
	0.2	Final Draft	Financial Sustainability - Cross Cutting Theme added	Fayth Skeete

2. CIP Ratification

This document has been issued to the following people/forums for Review (R) Information (I) and Review and Approval (A).

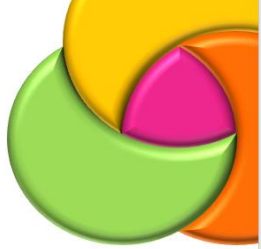
Date	Version	Position/Forum	R/I/A	Comments/Notes
TBC	0.2	Final Draft ~ CSLT	R	
w/c 22 nd July 2024	0.2	Final Draft Plan ~ Offline Ratification Improvement Board Members	A	
	0.2	Final Draft Plan ~ Offline Ratification. SH, HE, RB, AW and SK	A	Plan shared as two parts, outward facing CIP and a second inward facing version with all the project lines – this method supported by Board members
	0.2	Ratified Plan circulated to Members (and cascaded across the Directorate	I	



3. CIP Circulation

Date	Position/Team/Service Area

Better Outcomes for Children and Families



Dr Sue Harrison

Strategic Director of
Children and Families
(DCS), Birmingham City
Council.

“Welcome to the Children and Families Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan 2024 (CIP).

In Birmingham we want all children and young people in every part of the city to be healthy, safe, confident, included, happy, respected and connected to meaningful opportunities so that they can thrive as they prepare for adulthood. We recognise that we can only achieve this ambition through effective partnership with families and agencies including schools, social care, the health conglomerate, the police, and a variety of voluntary and community sector partners. The Directorate remains focussed and ambitious for our children and young people and stakeholders remain committed to ensuring that Birmingham is a great place to grow up and thrive.

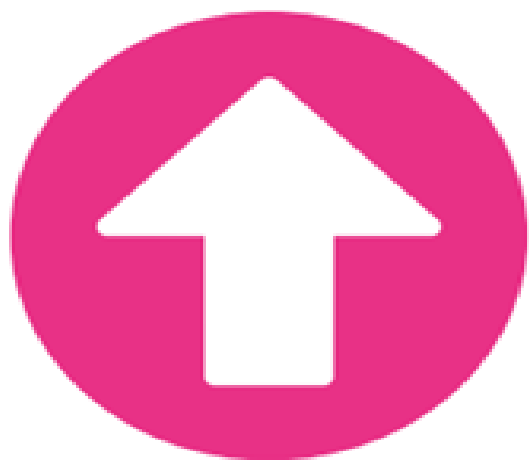
We are exactly where we need to be at this point in our improvement journey. We are beginning to experience real meaningful traction across the partnership and ownership from partners of the inclusion agenda. However, we have still got a long way to go before we are consistently delivering a good service to everyone. The keys to this success are the continued appointment of high calibre experienced officers whilst drawing on existing expertise across the workforce, continuing to focus on our quality assurance frameworks driving assurance seeking practice and impact measurement across all that we do and continuing to work together to develop an INCLUSIVE CITY”.

Please take the time to read the CIP in its entirety, this plan will underpin all that we do together to secure better outcomes for children and families.

ABOUT BIRMINGHAM

% OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE

(2020/21):



13.70%
IN BIRMINGHAM
(10.10% in 2019);
ABOVE ENGLAND RATE
OF 8.80%

NOT IN EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET)



2.5%
OF YOUNG PEOPLE
(December 2022)

– below National Average

YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE DATA:

snapshot at end of Nov 2022

(328 children and young people):



86%
MALE



14%
FEMALE

67% **BLACK, ASIAN
OR MIXED HERITAGE**

55% **EHCP OR
LEARNING DIFFICULTY**



67%
**EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
OR MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN**

ABOUT BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM

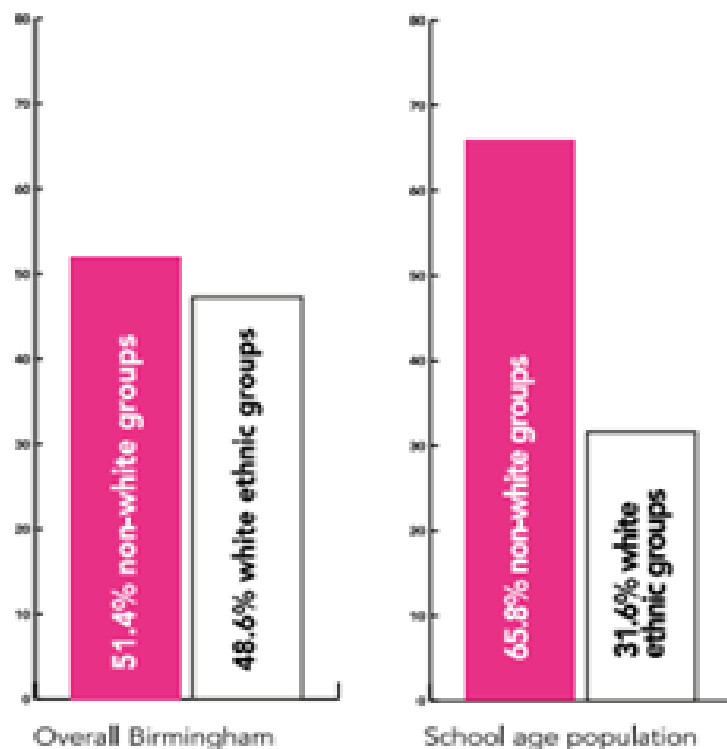


ONE OF THE
YOUNGEST
CITIES
IN THE UK

36.6%
AGED UNDER

25

ETHNIC DIVERSITY



FREE SCHOOL MEALS – 2022 - BIRMINGHAM



37.3%

of pupils eligible for free school meals (England 23.1%)

POVERTY

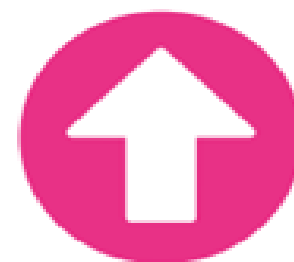
43%
OF THE POPULATION
ARE LIVING IN THE
10%
MOST DEPRIVED AREAS

51%
OF CHILDREN
(under 16's)
LIVE IN THE
10%
MOST DEPRIVED AREAS



PROPORTION OF PUPILS WITH EHCP

3.5%
(Jan 2022)
UP FROM
3.2%
IN 2019



(England average 4% in 2022)

PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS / SUSPENSIONS (2020/21):

- Higher permanent exclusions than national rate, especially in primary schools
- Higher suspensions than national average in primary schools
- Higher permanent exclusions and suspension rates for pupils from Black, White and Mixed ethnicities
- Higher permanent exclusions for children with EHCP and SEN Support, than national rates

4. Introduction

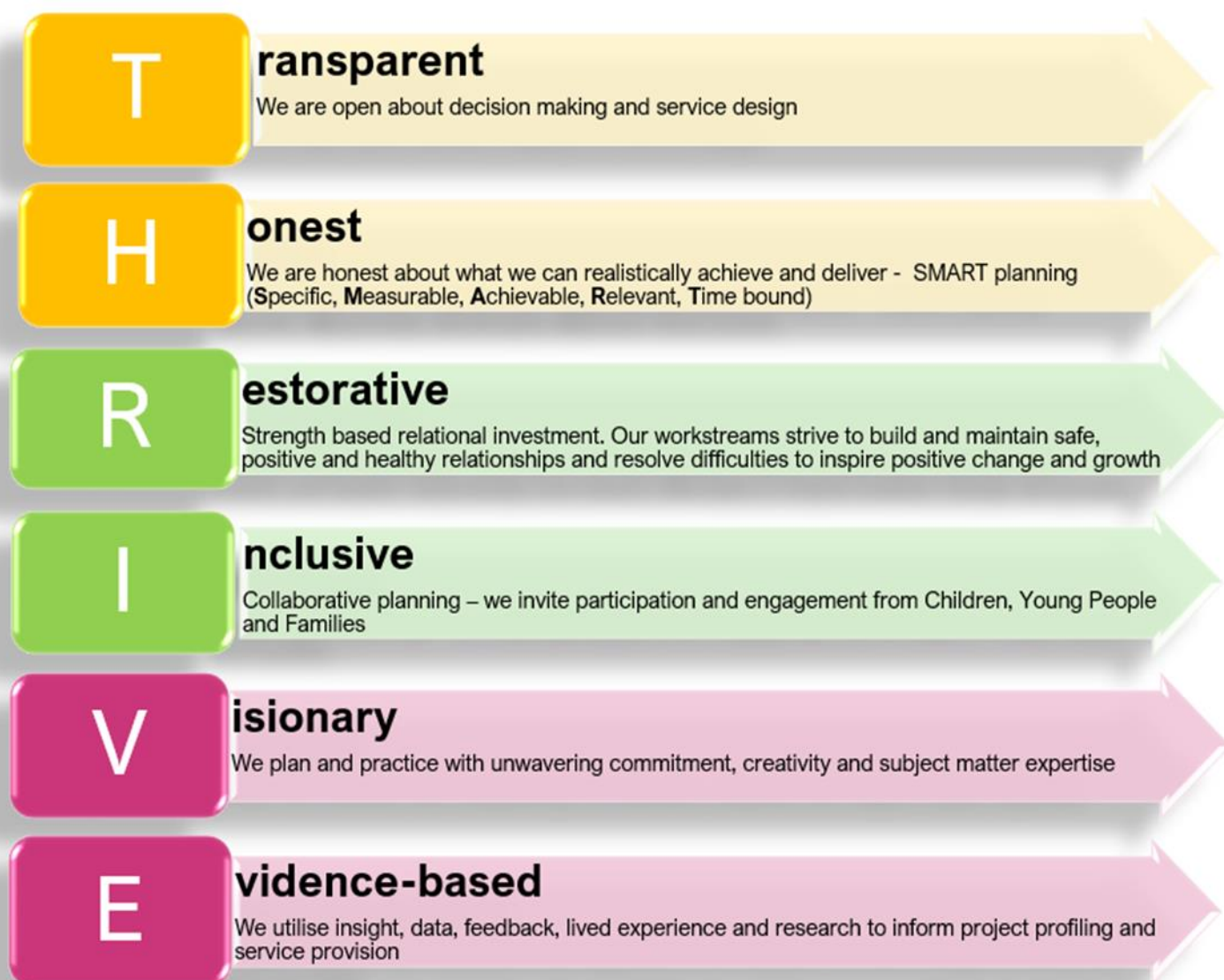
Birmingham City Council is on an unprecedented journey of growth and improvement. Our vision remains the same, Birmingham children and young people, are seen, safe, healthy, included, confident and achieving. We strive to ensure that children and young people living in Birmingham are able to **thrive**. We understand that to consistently achieve this we need to also invest in creating the right conditions for our workforce to succeed. We will continue to embed relational, strength-based practices to enable our principle of high support ~ high challenge to underpin our Directorate ways of working.

We have Council wide commitment to put children and young people at the heart of everything we do and the support of the Partnership in achieving our joint vision for children and young people. The Birmingham Children and Young People's Partnership is a collaboration between Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Children's Trust, Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands Police, and the Birmingham Voluntary Services Council. The partnership works together as one, with a shared set of priorities and strategic vision. A real point of celebration is our strengthened arrangements resulting from meaningful collaboration between Birmingham City Council's Children and Families Directorate, the Trust and right across the partnership.

5. Securing Continuous Improvement – Building on Progress

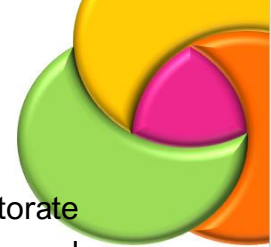
Through extensive improvement activity, the Directorate is in a markedly improved position than it was in November 2022 at the time of launching our first Improvement Plan, Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Plan.

The Directorate has secured continued growth, recruited to key roles, and continues to draw on the experience, skills, and knowledge of existing and incoming staff to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The increased workforce and defined structure have allowed the Directorate to better adapt the chosen implementation of and approach to project and change management. 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 transparent, honest, restorative, inclusive, visionary and evidenced based.



The CIP is everybody's business, an entire Directorate point of reference detailing our 'New Ways of Working', owned by the Children and Families workforce for the children, young people and families in Birmingham.

We seek to design services inclusively and creatively for children, young people and families. We value the opportunity to consult with families and our partners to make sure we get things right. The voices of children, young people, families, and communities are critical foundations of our approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement and making sure that we are getting it right. They help us to understand the difference we make and the complexities of need, decision making and service design and provision.



Prioritisation is based on evidence, triangulated assessment of Directorate performance and insight, the needs of our children, young people and families and current and projected outcomes. We carefully assess what will be the most fit for purpose methodology to deliver better outcomes in the most efficient and effective way.

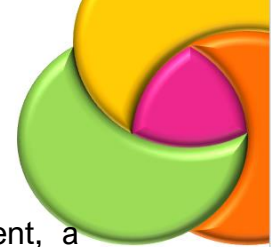
The CIP does not seek to detail improvement priorities and activity across SEND and Alternative Provision as this activity sits within the dedicated and robust SEND and AP Improvement Programme and associated programme management and governance arrangements as monitored by the SEND and AP Improvement Board Chaired by John Coughlan, DfE Commissioner.

The Improving Service for Children and Families Board will continue to receive a quarterly update report from the SEND and AP Improvement Board to ensure robust triangulation and co-production across Directorate wide improvement activity.

6. Plan Structure

The CIP has been branded for easy identification, to support easy identification of all associated documents and activity, to help raise the profile of the plan and to encourage ownership.





The CIP is centred on the premise of coordinated continuous improvement, a commitment to continuous proactive analysis of the Directorate's performance. This is supported by embedded systematic arrangements that will provide ongoing insight into the outcomes and impact of the services that we provide. The CIP reflects a pledge to ensuring that the Directorate is positioned to respond to findings and identify opportunities to improve outcomes.

The CIP key workstreams and activities are presented across four areas of priority, with Financial Sustainability as a cross-cutting theme:



The CIP captures key activities across our four priority areas, with financial sustainability as a cross-cutting theme, the golden thread. It is essential that continuous improvement activity is underpinned by the Directorate's ability to maintain financial stability.

The Directorate Continuous Improvement Project Pipeline:

- ✓ Council's Improvement Recovery Plan (IRP) (16 programmes)
- ✓ Governance Board associated programmes (TBC)
- ✓ Delivery of Saving Proposals (19 programmes)
- ✓ Directorate Priority Projects (Fluid)
- ✓ Remaining objectives from the 2022 – 24 Improving Services for Children and Young People Plan
- ✓ Emerging Transformation Saving Opportunities (Fluid)



The granular detail of the CIP is captured within an internal CIP pipeline and further outlined within respective project plans. The project plan for each priority details action owners, timelines and all the Directorate wide activity, KPI's, milestones, risks, mitigations, possible efficiencies and benefits realisation in relation to the respective priority alongside any project interdependencies, this to include across the entire CIP plan, Directorate and Council.

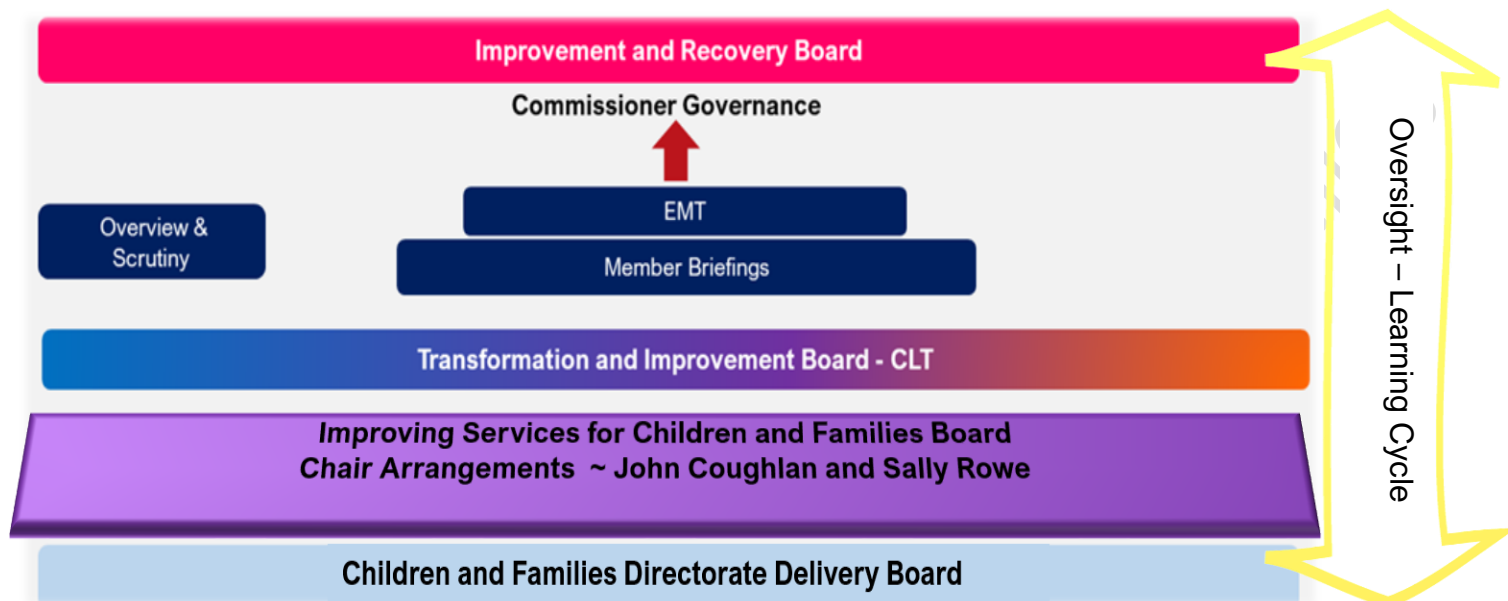
CIP Pipeline



Strategic Priority	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 1	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 2	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 3	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 4	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 5	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 6	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 7	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 8	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 9	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End
Strategic Priority 10	Ref	Key Activities	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCf)	Description/Key Activities	Target Start	Target End



7. Governance, Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting



Overall Strategic accountability for the delivery of the CIP is the responsibility of the Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS), the appointed Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). It is the responsibility of the Head of Strategic Governance, Planning and Improvement as Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL), to maintain robust arrangements fit to facilitate effective monitoring and measuring of impact.

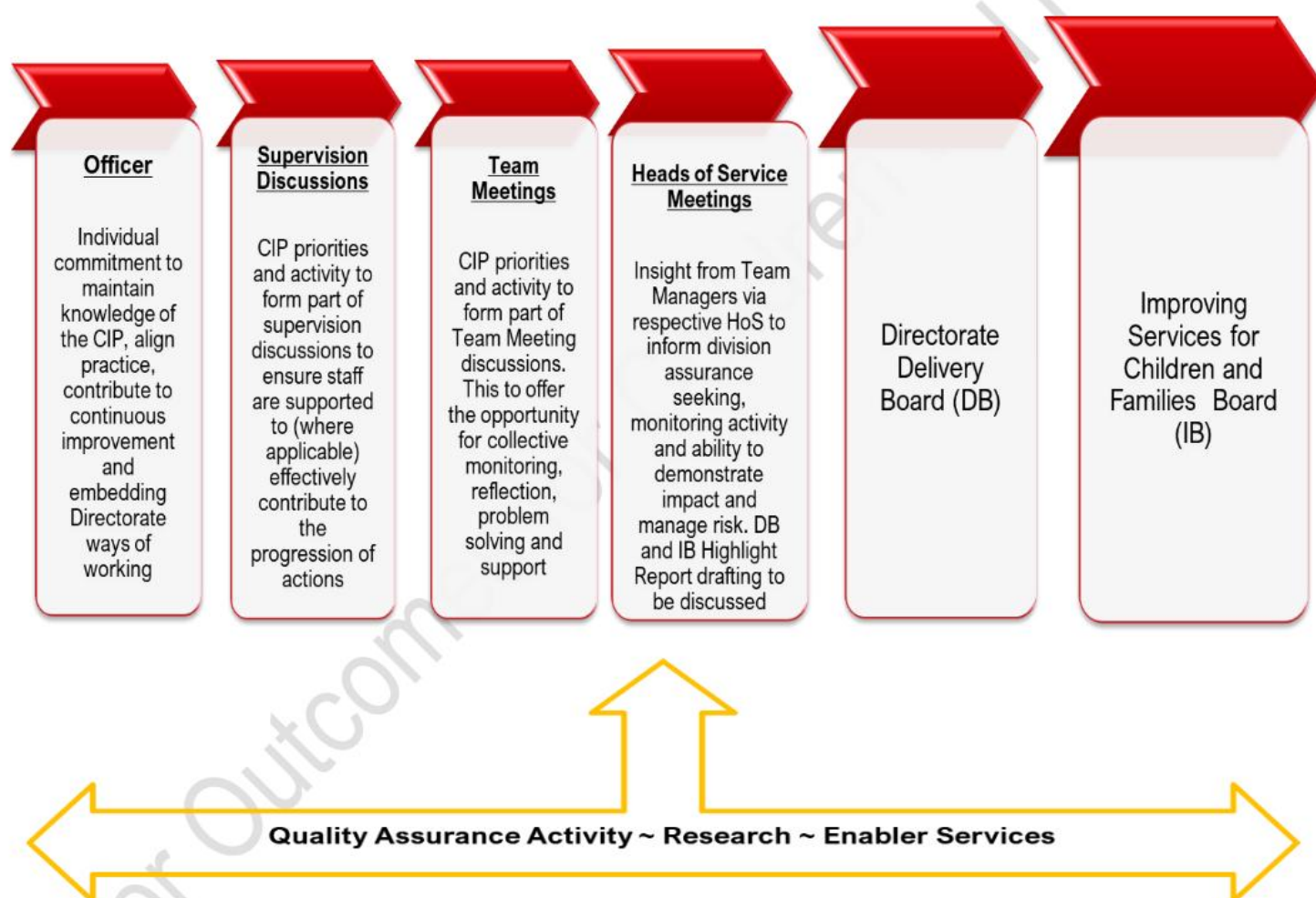
Assurance seeking is undertaken through the Improving Services for Children and Families Board. The role of the Board is to monitor and enable progress and hold accountability for the overall progress and impact of the CIP. The Board consists of senior leaders from across the Council, with representation from Birmingham Children's Trust, to ensure a whole system focus is maintained. The Board is co-Chaired by John Coughlan, Commissioner and our existing Independent Chair, Sally Rowe.

8. Directorate Monitoring and Assurance Seeking Arrangements

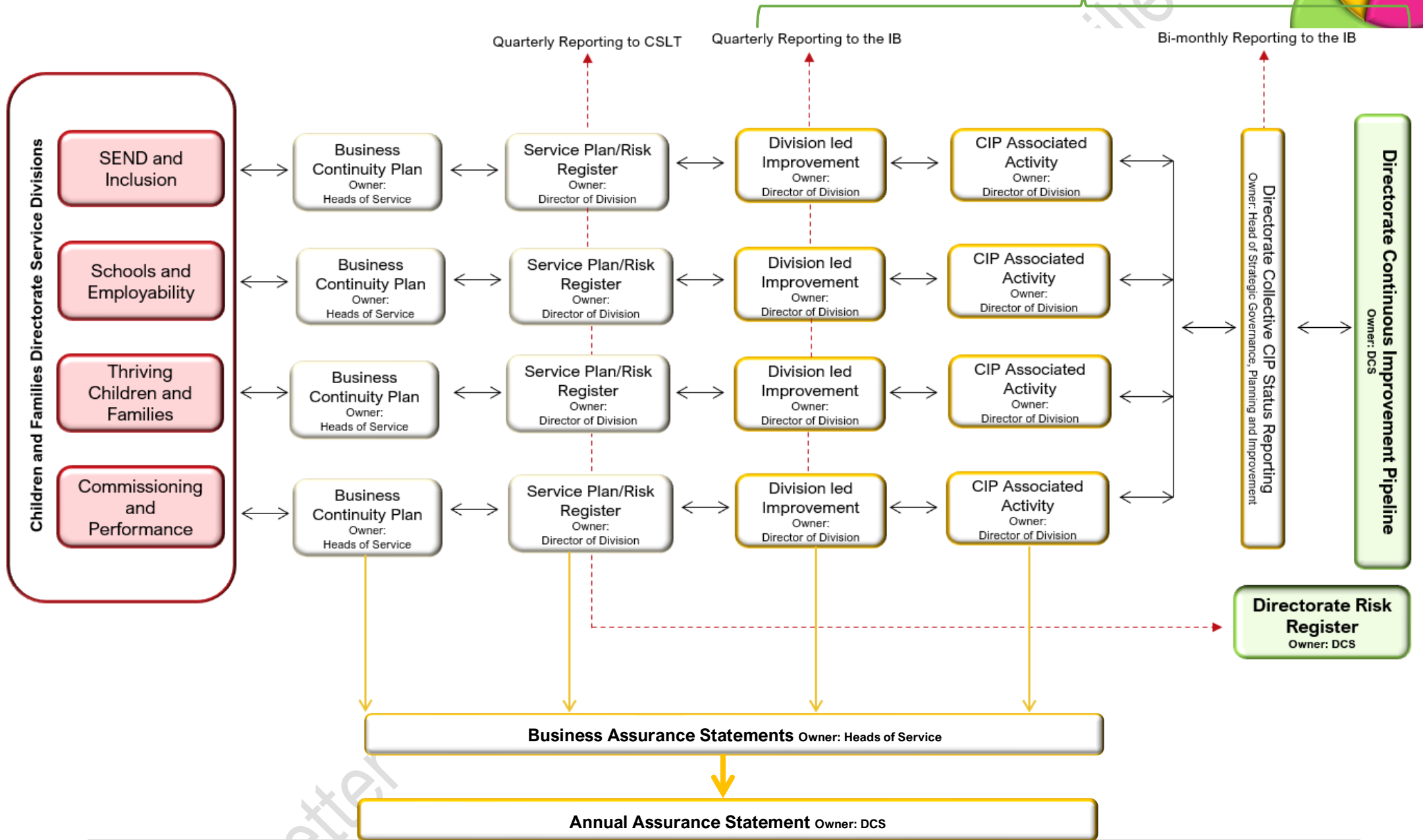
Continued progress and impact across the CIP are a Directorate wide responsibility. The CIP is a live evolving document, and the design and continuous profiling of CIP activity interlinks with service design and planning activity across each Directorate Division. Each Division Service Plan will inform the respective Division led improvement which will also consider CIP associated activity required of the Division to support the Directorate to meet CIP milestones.



Robust monitoring activity will continue across the Directorate through internal assurance seeking mechanisms including 121 meetings, Team meetings, audits/deep dive activity and Division Heads of Service (HoS) meetings held monthly by Division Directors. This will ensure that staff will be kept abreast of all CIP developments and supported to ensure that they understand their role in contributing to continuous improvement. This triangulation will support to strengthen the Directorate's learning culture and maximise the opportunities to gain insight and knowledge to consistently inform practice and decision making.



All activity contributes to the Directorate's ability to improve, test our outputs and evaluate our position. All staff will contribute and inform all that we do, the engagement and participation of staff is essential, and the Directorate's 'New Ways of Working' will support staff to confidently contribute and drive our improvement. There are aspects of Division/Directorate business as usual that form fundamental components of systematic maintainable improvement.





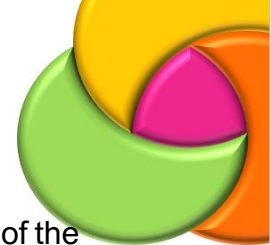
9. Directorate 'New Ways of Working'

New Ways of Working, is the term that we will use to refer to new arrangements introduced and implemented through the CIP. It describes in part the detail held within the CIP alongside our joint values, Directorate culture and our commitment to creating conditions for success, safe, inclusive and empowering conditions for the workforce to thrive. This to include (not exhaustive list):

- ✓ Strengthened governance and defined approval and report clearance protocols
- ✓ Short, Medium, and long term planning
- ✓ The launch of our new Directorate wide 121 Supervision Framework – Valuing Individual Performance (VIP) centred on continuous support and discussion, building reflective practice and our ability to prioritise
- ✓ Learning Needs Analysis ~ to support staff to identify points of practice to celebrate and to identify professional development opportunities
- ✓ The launch of our new Quality Assurance and Compliance Framework
- ✓ Structured Team Meetings and Division touch points
- ✓ Increased communication, engagement and opportunities to participate
- ✓ Competency Framework, support staff to understand expectations of roles, teams and Directorate structure
- ✓ Maximising existing expertise, knowledge, skills, and experience
- ✓ Cultural Curiosity ~ meaningful effort to celebrate diversity and individuality of contribution
- ✓ Increased opportunities to meet and work alongside your team and teams across the Directorate

10. Reporting Cycles

Monitoring of progress will be ongoing, preparation for each Improving Services for Children and Families Board will be supported by a dedicated Project Manager for each CIP priority area, suitably skilled to support the project management of each priority areas workstreams in a technical project management space utilising tailored methodology. Project Directors (PD) will be supported within this arrangement to chair monthly project meetings and populate respective Highlight Reports in readiness for the monthly Delivery Board meetings and Bi-monthly Improvement Board meetings in line with the governance measures detailed in section 7 of this document. Project meetings will be attended by key operational colleagues from across the Directorate and wider Council, this to include colleagues from HR, Finance and where applicable Procurement and Commissioning.



Highlight reporting and the detail/narrative reported will remain the responsibility of the respective PD. Highlight Reports will document key priority activity, risks, issues and mitigations along with escalations. The information reported will need to demonstrate a grip of continuous improvement and Directorate wide impact and interdependencies.

11. Learning Culture

We continue to strive to cultivate a learning culture that affords everyone the opportunity to learn, develop, aspire and feel empowered. CIP activity supports the implementation of a systematic approach to learning through consistent and embedded quality assurance activity, performance data, reviews, learning from practice, research, feedback and communication, engagement and participation.

12. Review of the CIP

The CIP is a live document and open for continuous review, any anticipated significant changes for example to incorporate and respond to relevant national government policy changes, will be ratified by the Improving Services for Children and Families Board.

13. Risk Management

Risks associated with the delivery of the plan will be tracked and monitored by PD's and the RDL and reported to the Improving Services for Children and Families Board through the programme Highlight Report.

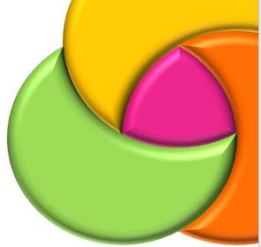
14. Directorate Objectives, Focus and Benefit Realisation Overview



Directorate Wide Shared Priorities

SRO: Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS)		
Objective	Focus	Benefits Realisation
Priority A Embed a culture of continuous improvement across all Children and Young People's services with outcomes for Children and Young People at the heart of everything we do PD: Director of Commissioning and Performance	To secure arrangements positioned to mobilise the Directorate's commitment to continuous improvement and proactive analysis of the Directorate's performance. This supported by embedded systematic arrangements that will provide ongoing insight into the outcomes and impact of the services provided and opportunities to build in efficiencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Directorate Savings Programme • Financial Sustainability • Embedded proactive efficiency analysis • Value for Money across all services • Identified opportunities to reduce cost whilst maintaining or improving quality • Proficiency across the identification of interdependencies • Robust management of the Directorate's Project Pipeline • Strengthened triangulation of project pipeline milestones and Directorate and Council wide interdependencies • Robust and embedded performance culture • Progressive and responsive digital systems
Priority B Embed a culture of assurance and accountability PD: Director of Schools and Employability	To embed a Directorate wide systematic approach to assurance seeking, professional challenge and accountability. For every element of Directorate outputs, an embedded methodology to test and measure effectiveness and impact. Clear lines of responsibility and accountability to strengthen the Directorate's ability to respond to findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Schemes of Delegation • Embedded governance and reporting cycles • Embedded Quality Assurance and Compliance Framework equipped to respond to the nuances of each service area • Clear Directorate Target Operating Model ~ practice/postholder competencies, expectations and standards • Robust Division and Directorate Forward Plans and KPI's

RDL: Head of Strategic Governance, Planning and Improvement



SRO: Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS)

Directorate Wide Shared Priorities

Objective	Focus	Benefits Realisation
<p>Priority C</p> <p>Reinforce the Directorate's approach to cultivating a professionally curious, strength – based practice environment</p> <p>PD: Director of Thriving Children and Families</p>	<p>Enhance the workforce approach to practice by encouraging and facilitating reflective practice and professional curiosity. A workforce that proactively engages in research and emerging developments across respective areas of expertise. This to also increase workforce capacity to lead as subject matter experts and strengthen strategic thinking whilst modelling what good looks like.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic approach to workforce communication, engagement and participation • Well supported workforce that consistently feels valued, included, consulted, heard and seen • Comprehensive Workforce Development Strategy underpinned by Directorate core principles and practice model • Directorate practice model woven throughout Directorate key policies, ways of working and workforce expected behaviours • Embedded workspace arrangements
<p>Priority D</p> <p>Ensure services are credible, compliant and collaborative</p> <p>PD: Director of SEND and Inclusion</p>	<p>To continue to strengthen the design and provision of services through multi-discipline and multi-agency collaboration. Utilising our joint performance and insight to support decision making by ensuring that Children, Young People and Families are consulted, and opportunities for them to engage and participate with the Directorate, are embedded across our practice. Build capacity to ensure that our service design and provision reflects and responds to the Children, Young People and Families in Birmingham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded design and decision-making processes that reflect meaningful steps to engage and participate with Children, Young People and Families and mechanisms to demonstrably input and utilise feedback and insight • Embedded Participation Strategy • Embedded Risk Management Protocols • Embedded Policy Review Protocol • Improved experience of Children, Young People and Families • Improved experience of the Directorate workforce • Impact exemplified across quality assurance and compliance activity • Improved Inspection outcomes

RDL: Head of Strategic Governance, Planning and Improvement



Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Board (CYPIB)

CIP Update - October 24th , 2024

Next Delivery Board Date: December 10th, 2024





Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Board (CYPIB) Highlight Report

- Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Improvement Recovery Plan (IRP) overall status is green – on track.
- The IRP Update Report was presented to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee yesterday and the Directorates progress was noted.

IRP Completed Milestones

- Develop SEND & AP Improvement Plan ~ **Plan ratified by SAPIB, published on the Local Offer website**
- Implement SEND improvement priorities as agreed in the SEND and AP Improvement Plan ~ **Monitored by the SAPIB**
- Monitoring of progress via SEND Improvement Board (SIB) ~ **Embedded process in place**
- DfE / NHSE stock take of Accelerated Progress Plan for SEND ~ **Completed, presented to July SAPIB**
- Review & Refresh of the Improving Services Plan ~ **The 34 projects and 230 actions were evaluated and profiled accordingly**
- Transfer of identified existing improvement activity into business as-usual arrangements ~ **Completed**
- Define Priority Improvement Areas ~ **4 Refreshed Priority areas**
- Improvement Board sign off refreshed Plan ~ **Complete**



Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Board (CYPIB) Highlight Report



IRP Next Steps

- IRP Milestones have now been updated to reflect the CIP 4 priority areas, future reporting will be against each priority and therefore align with the CYPIB reporting format.
- Continued focus on recruitment, onboarding and induction of permanent staff, permanency will help to facilitate stability across teams and future planning.
- The next reporting period will continue to focus on further communicating, launching and embedding the CIP.
- Mapping of 2025 reporting timelines is underway. We are working closely with Corporate to ensure that moving forward we have sufficient time between each meeting within the reporting cycle. This will help to facilitate robust meeting preparation and support timely bundle cascade allowing time for the bundle to be read ahead of each meeting.
- Circulate a copy of the CIP, O&S IRP Update Report and the draft refreshed CYPIB Terms of Reference for offline approval





Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Board (CYPIB) Highlight Report

CIP Ref	CPRA	CIP Priority	Embed a culture of continuous improvement across all Children and Young People's services with outcomes for Children and Young People at the heart of everything we do				Overall RAG	This Month	
Programme Director	Director of Commissioning and Performance			Data as of:	30 th September 2024			Last Month	
Overall Summary/SRO Comments				Current Reportable Risks and Issues			Mitigations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directorate continues to secure arrangements positioned to mobilise the Directorates commitment to continuous improvement and proactive analysis.• Focus for the next reporting period, launching and embedding the new Quality Assurance Framework. The framework has been designed to support and enable the robust testing of all Directorate outputs• Planning for Directorate wide phased socialisation of refreshed IP and associated priorities is underway. Utilising supervision, Team, HoS, meetings, Leadership Forum, and Directorate Comms to ensure staff are supported and empowered to engage.• Further workstreams have been plotted to encompass emerging priority areas.• The Directorate reporting/governance arrangements have been amended to ensure robust monitoring of the revised arrangements.• We continue to recruit to the permanent project managers and project support officer posts within our structure.				<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Delays to the Directorate redesign/recruitment timeline will compromise the Directorate's ability to consistently discharge, test, monitor and provide assurances across Directorate statutory functions			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Directorate has interim cover in place and where applicable approval for extensions. Interim contract durations allow for recruitment & onboarding of permanent post holders and robust handover activity to ensure seamless transition to permanency		
BRAG Scorecard This Month			Savings	Issues	Risks	Milestones	Resources	Dependencies	
			N/A						
Route to Amber Green Blue Actions									
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Routes to green are centered on successful recruitment the launch and implementation of the Continuous Improvement Plan and successful roll out and Directorate wide engagement. Improvement activity is systematic and the retention and continued roll out of the Directorates ways of working, is reliant on workforce stability.▪ Project management activity schedule/forward planner secured▪ Scope and map further activities/workstreams									
Items for Decision / Resolution									
N/A									



Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Board (CYPIB) Highlight Report

CIP Ref	CPRB	CIP Priority	Embed a culture of assurance and accountability				Overall RAG	This Month	
Programme Director	Director of Schools and Employability			Data as of:	30 th September 2024			Last Month	
Overall Summary/SRO Comments				Current Reportable Risks and Issues			Mitigations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus for August, September, and October is the discovery period to map out current operational, strategic meetings and partnership arrangements to review and align Directorate wide governance, shared ambitions and proposed outcomes.• Schemes of delegation embedded and 'Ways of Working Framework' to launch by November 24• Planning for Directorate wide phased socialisation of refreshed IP and associated priorities is underway. Utilising supervision, Team, HoS, meetings, Leadership Forum, and Directorate Comms to ensure staff are supported and empowered to engage.• Further workstreams have been plotted to encompass emerging priority areas.• The Directorate reporting/governance arrangements have been amended to ensure robust monitoring of the revised arrangements.				<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Delays to the Directorate redesign/recruitment timeline will compromise the Directorate’s ability to consistently discharge, test, monitor and provide assurances across Directorate statutory functions			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Directorate has interim cover in place and where applicable approval for extensions. Interim contract durations allow for recruitment & onboarding of permanent post holders and robust handover activity to ensure seamless transition to permanency		
BRAG Scorecard This Month			Savings	Issues	Risks	Milestones	Resources	Dependencies	
			N/A						
Route to Amber Green Blue Actions									
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Items for Decision / Resolution									
N/A									



Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Board (CYPIB) Highlight Report

CIP Ref	CPRC	CIP Priority	Reinforce the Directorate’s approach to cultivating a professionally curious, strength – based practice environment				Overall RAG	This Month	
Programme Director	Director of Thriving Children and Families			Data as of:	30 th September 2024			Last Month	
Overall Summary/SRO Comments				Current Reportable Risks and Issues			Mitigations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socialisation of the CIP will facilitate a reintroduction to the principles of strength based, relational practice centred in high support high challenge methodology.• Processes will be reviewed to ensure that our ways of working support this priority.• The Staff Reference Group (SRG) Terms of Reference and forward plan to be revised to ensure plotted activity and priorities align with the Directorates pipeline of work-better coordinate the work of the group• Planning for Directorate wide phased socialisation of refreshed IP and associated priorities is underway. Utilising supervision, Team, HoS, meetings, Leadership Forum, and Directorate Comms to ensure staff are supported and empowered to engage.• Further workstreams have been plotted to encompass emerging priority areas.• The Directorate reporting/governance arrangements have been amended to ensure robust monitoring of the revised arrangements.				<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Delays to the Directorate redesign/recruitment timeline will compromise the Directorate’s ability to consistently discharge, test, monitor and provide assurances across Directorate statutory functions			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Directorate has interim cover in place and where applicable approval for extensions. Interim contract durations allow for recruitment & onboarding of permanent post holders and robust handover activity to ensure seamless transition to permanency		
BRAG Scorecard This Month			Savings	Issues	Risks	Milestones	Resources	Dependencies	
			N/A						
Route to Amber Green Blue Actions									
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Items for Decision / Resolution									
N/A									

Page 112 of 178



Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Board (CYPIB) Highlight Report

CIP Ref	CPRD	CIP Priority	Ensure services are credible, compliant and collaborative				Overall RAG	This Month	
Programme Director	Director of SEND and Inclusion			Data as of:	30 th September 2024			Last Month	
Overall Summary/SRO Comments				Current Reportable Risks and Issues			Mitigations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspection Preparation is ongoing, recognising that whilst we are keen to raise the profile and engagement of prep activity, the overarching aim is to systematically embed associated activities, for example, Multi Agency Audits and service and partnership communication and engagement• Discussions to plan and progress the drafting of our Participation Strategy are underway, this will be a co-produced strategy• Planning for Directorate wide phased socialisation of refreshed IP and associated priorities is underway. Utilising supervision, Team, HoS, meetings, Leadership Forum, and Directorate Comms to ensure staff are supported and empowered to engage.• Further workstreams have been plotted to encompass emerging priority areas.• The Directorate reporting/governance arrangements have been amended to ensure robust monitoring of the revised arrangements.				<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Delays to the Directorate redesign/recruitment timeline will compromise the Directorate’s ability to consistently discharge, test, monitor and provide assurances across Directorate statutory functions			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Directorate has interim cover in place and where applicable approval for extensions. Interim contract durations allow for recruitment & onboarding of permanent post holders and robust handover activity to ensure seamless transition to permanency		
BRAG Scorecard This Month			Savings	Issues	Risks	Milestones	Resources	Dependencies	
			N/A						
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Items for Decision / Resolution									
N/A									

Page 113 of 178



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Improving Services for Children & Families

Summary Update

Planning for a Directorate wide phased socialisation of the refreshed Improvement Plan (Continuous Improvement Plan – CIP) and associated priorities, continues.

The Directorate is focussed on finalising the scheduling of the utilisation of supervision meetings, Team meetings, Heads of Service meetings, Leadership Team meetings, Leadership Forums, and Directorate Communications to ensure that staff are supported and empowered to engage with and progress the plan.

The design of the CIP will strengthen individual and collective ownership of the Directorate’s continuous improvement workstreams and associated activity. Progress was last reported to the Directorate Improving Services for Children and Families Board, 24th October 2024, and scheduled to be reported at the December 4th, Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Progress

Mapping of 2025 reporting timelines is underway. We are working closely with Corporate to ensure that moving forward we have sufficient time between each meeting within the reporting cycle.

This will help to facilitate robust meeting preparation and support timely bundle cascade allowing time for the bundle to be read and considered ahead of each meeting.

Planned Progress

Continued focus on recruitment, onboarding and induction of permanent staff. Permanency will help to facilitate stability across teams and future planning.

Improvement activity is systematic and the retention and continued roll out of the Directorates ways of working, is reliant on workforce stability. The next reporting period will continue to focus on the communicating and launching the plan.

IRP Theme

Category Delivering Good Services

Senior Accountable Officer Sue Harrison

Responsible Delivery Lead Fayth Skeete

Cabinet Member Cllr Mick Brown

Overall

Overall RAG



Sub RAGs

- Milestones **G**
- Risks **G**
- Deps. **G**
- Resources **G**
- Issues **G**

Escalations



Route to Green

Route to green

Routes to green are centred on successful recruitment and the launch and implementation of the Continuous Improvement Plan, successful roll out and Directorate wide engagement.

Resources Update

Risks

Programme Name	Risk Description	Impacts	Status	Score ↓	Mitigation Summary	Residual Score
Improving Services for Children & Families	There is a risk attached to the timeliness of the Children & Families redesign due to recruitment activities underway.	There will be potential delays to the administration of key Directorate functionalities		<div>4</div>	31 Jul 2024 - - The Directorate has interim cover in place and where applicable approval for extensions. Interim contract durations allow for recruitment & onboarding of permanent post holders and robust handover activity to ensure seamless transition to permanency	<div>2</div>
Improving Services for Children & Families	Delays to the Directorate redesign/recruitment timeline will compromise the Directorate's ability to consistently discharge, test, monitor and provide assurances across Directorate statutory functions	Non - compliance		<div>4</div>	17 Sep 2024 - - Interim post holders	<div>1</div>









Issues

Programme Name	Status	Issue Description and Impact	Target Resolution Date	Impact Classification ↓	Action Summary

Dependencies

Description	Impact	Overall Score ↓	Mitigations	RAG
Dependent on the output of enabling services	Would cause delay to recruitment timelines and onboarding therefore impacting the stability of the workforce	4	Interim Post holders in place Continuous discussions with enabling services	G

Milestones

Programme Name	Name	Status	Baseline Date	Forecast Date	RAG	Comment
Improving Services for Children & Families	Deliver Priority B		31/03/2025	31/03/2025		Focus for Aug,Sep,Oct is discovery period to map out current op and strategic mtg arrangements to review and align Directorate wide governance and proposed outcomes. Schemes of delegation embedded and 'Ways of Working Framework' to launch by Nov 24.
Improving Services for Children & Families	Deliver Priority C		31/03/2025	31/03/2025		Socialisation of the CIP will facilitate a reintroduction to the principles of strength based, relational practice centred in high support high challenge methodology. Staff Reference Grp-ToR and forward plan to be revised to align with pipeline.
Improving Services for Children & Families	Deliver Priority D		31/03/2025	31/03/2025		Continue to secure arrangements positioned to mobilise the Directorates commitment to continuous improvement. Focus launching & embedding the new QA Framework. This has been designed to support and enable robust testing of all Directorate outputs.
Improving Services for Children & Families	Deliver Priority A		31/03/2025	31/03/2025		Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspection Prep is ongoing, whilst we are keen to raise the profile and engagement of prep activity, the overarching aim is to embed associated activities, Plans to draft our co-produced Participation Strategy are being worked up

Completed Milestones

Programme Name	Name	Status	Baseline Date	Forecast Date ↑	RAG	Comment
Improving Services for Children & Families	Review & Refresh of the Improving Services Plan	C	24/04/2024	24/04/2024	C	
Improving Services for Children & Families	Improvement Board sign off of refreshed Plan	C	26/08/2024	26/08/2024	C	
Improving Services for Children & Families	Define Priority Improvement Projects	C	26/08/2024	26/08/2024	C	

Birmingham City Council

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

4 December 2024



Title:	SEND Commissioner Update to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Lead Member:	Councillor Mick Brown, Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not applicable
Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?	Not applicable
Report Author:	Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager Legal and Governance 0121 303 1727 Email: sarah.fradgley@birmingham.gov.uk
Authorised by:	Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services Legal and Governance
Is this a Key Decision?	No Forward Plan Reference: Not applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	No
If 'call-in' has been dis-applied, please provide reason(s) and confirm who has authorised:	Not applicable

Wards: All

Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?

No

Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?

Not applicable

Reasons why not included on the Notification and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:

Not applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 SEND Commissioner John Coughlan CBE has been invited to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide an update and answer questions from members.
- 1.2 Cabinet on 12 November 2024 considered the SEND Commissioner's third report to the Secretary of State for Education (published by the Department for Education in August) and accepted the recommendations made by the Commissioner. The Commissioner's third report and the Cabinet report are appended to this cover report to inform the discussion at the overview and scrutiny committee meeting.

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 No observations.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 3.1 Considers the information presented at the meeting by the SEND Commissioner John Coughlan CBE.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 In October 2021 the Secretary of State for Education issued a statutory direction to Birmingham City Council requiring the Council to take steps to improve its SEND services, including co-operating with the DfE appointed SEND Commissioner, John Coughlan CBE.
- 4.2 The Council subsequently published an [Accelerated Progress Plan](#) that set out:
 - the governance and accountability structures and processes to support improvement.
 - the actions the Council is taking to respond to concerns, the impact measures and milestones to which the Council is working on, and the improvements that will be delivered.
- 4.3 In February 2022, the SEND Commissioner published his [first report to the Secretary of State for Education](#).
- 4.4 In May 2023, the SEND Commissioner published his [second report to the Secretary of State for Education](#) (dated February 2023) and in September 2023, [Birmingham City Council Cabinet accepted the ten recommendations in the SEND Commissioner's second report](#) and considered the action plan setting out how the Commissioner's recommendations would be addressed and the progress made against these.

- 4.5 In October 2023, Mr Coughlan was further appointed as Commissioner by the former Secretary of State for DLUHC to join the wider Best Value intervention that followed the issuing of a 114 Notice for the City Council. He continues with his SEND Commissioner role.
- 4.6 In November 2023 Mr Coughlan provided an update to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.7 In August 2024, the [SEND Commissioner's third report to the Secretary of State for Education](#) (dated February 2024) was published by the Department for Education (Appendix A) and on 12 November 2024 [Birmingham City Council Cabinet accepted the seven recommendations in SEND Commissioner's third report](#) (Appendix B)

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The 12 November 2024 Cabinet report identified the following risk management considerations:
- 5.2 Risks in delivering against the recommendations made by the SEND Commissioner are identified, evaluated, and controlled through the SEND Improvement Board (SIB). The Accelerated Progress Plan has a risk register through which risks are logged and managed.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Ward Councillor(s)

- 7.1 Not applicable.

Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.2 Not applicable.

8 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation set out in this report.
- 8.2 However, the 12 November 2024 Cabinet report identifies the following Finance and Best Value implications:
- 8.3 The Commissioner highlights the adverse impact of inadequate corporate and governance support on SEND service delivery. Financial Resources were included in the base budget for 2023-24 onwards

Legal

- 8.4 On 15 October 2021 the Secretary of State for Education issued a statutory direction under section 497A(4B) of the Education Act 1996, directing the Council to take a number of steps including complying 'with any instructions of the Secretary of State or the SEND Commissioner in relation to the improvement of the Council's exercise of its SEND functions and provide such assistance as either the Secretary of State or the SEND Commissioner may require'. The Council is therefore required to act upon the recommendations set out in the SEND Commissioner's Third report dated February 2024.

Equalities

- 8.5 The inspections of Birmingham's services for children and young people with SEND identified areas of weakness that needed to be addressed.
- 8.6 In considering and fully accepting the Commissioner's recommendations the Council has had regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and in particular notes that the functions carried out by the Council's SEND services are designed to support the aims set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, particularly for those with the protected characteristic of disability.

Procurement

- 8.7 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

People Services

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

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

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

Corporate Parenting

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

Other

- 8.11 There are no other implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

9 APPENDICES

- 9.1 Appendix A - [Improving special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) services in Birmingham: third report](#)

- 9.2 Appendix B - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet report [Acceptance of Recommendations from SEND Commissioners Third Report](#), 12 November 2024.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Birmingham Local Area Accelerated Progress Plan](#)
- 10.2 [Improving Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Services in Birmingham First Report to the Secretary of State for Education by John Coughlan CBE, Commissioner for SEND Services in Birmingham](#)
- 10.3 [Improving Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Services in Birmingham Second Report to the Secretary of State for Education by John Coughlan CBE, Commissioner for SEND Services in Birmingham](#)

Improving Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Services in Birmingham

**Third Report to the Secretary of State for
Education by John Coughlan CBE,
Commissioner for SEND Services**

August 2024

Contents

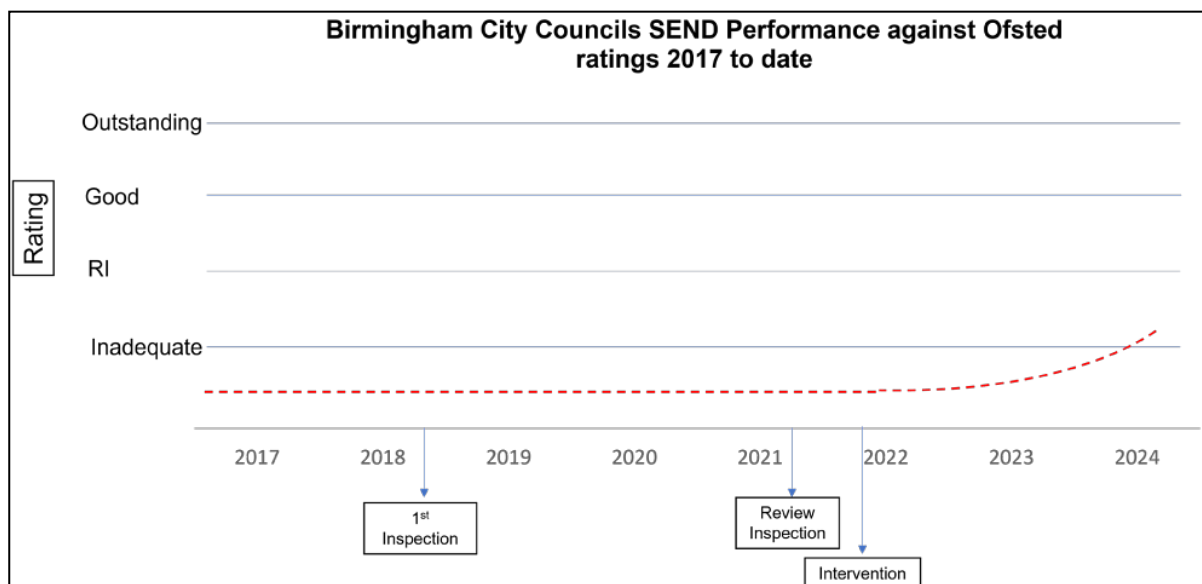
Introduction and Executive Summary	3
SEND Improvement Board (SIB)	5
SENAR and SENDIASS	5
Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and Co-Production	6
Schools and Education (and Alternative Provision)	6
Health	7
Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT)	8
BCC Corporate Support and Governance	8
Politics	9
Best Value (BV) Intervention	10
Previous Recommendations	11
Conclusions	12
Recommendations	12

Introduction and Executive Summary

1. This is the third full (annual) report of the DfE intervention into SEND services in Birmingham City Council (BCC). The intervention was triggered by a review inspection of the services in May 2021 which found that 12 of 13 areas for priority action, identified in a highly critical inspection in 2018, had not made any progress. This intervention by DfE commenced in October 2021 (by which point indicating a minimum of four plus years of gross service failure) through the appointment of a Commissioner together with a Statutory Direction. That is the first time those powers have been exercised over a SEND service.
2. The first report in early 2022 confirmed deeply worrying and chaotic service arrangements with widescale breakdowns in working relations within and between the key services including between the LA and schools but especially within Birmingham City Council. The EHCP assessment and review services (SENAR) were in particular disarray with a substantial dependency on interim staff. This reflected very high levels of senior churn in the council, at the highest levels, including the now much quoted statistic of no less than nine chief executives and nine directors of children's services in the preceding eight years. In particular, that report concluded that, as a concept and entity, the wider statutory children's services under Children Act 2004 were no longer properly evident within Birmingham. There were also extensive failings in corporate support to SEND through HR, legal, finance and procurement functions. The report was directly critical of adversarial political cultures, not just between political parties but in the interface between members and officers with SEND having become something of a political football. There was an especially difficult issue to do with a disproportionately powerful SENDIAS service which was in turn implicated by significant political conflicts of interest. However, for a variety of argued reasons, that first report decided on balance not to recommend the transfer of SEND into a children's trust.
3. The second report in early 2023 identified some progress being made in establishing new foundations to SEND in Birmingham under the auspices of more stable continuous leadership from chief executive and DCS. That included the leadership being established through partners at the SEND Improvement Board (SIB). However, the progress was seen to be too slow and inconsistent and not yet effectively reaching the experiences of long-suffering children and families. This second report was still more overtly critical of the various political cultural challenges which generally were at best not helping improvement and, regrettably, were directly hindering improvement, not least with regard to SENDIASS. Alongside the strengthening SIB, a notable, and it turns out well-founded, cause for optimism was the appointment of a highly committed and skilled new Director for SEND.
4. This report will chart more positive and embedding progress within Birmingham SEND itself in the past year. That progress remains slow but is now measurable and accelerating, more secure and impacting on more children and families (though by no means all). The wicked issue of SENDIASS has been finally resolved (but there remains little evidence of genuine political appreciation of what went wrong and why or of the scale of the fundamental political problem in BCC of understanding conflicts

of interest). There are vision, strategy and confidence from the officer and the service political leadership spreading through services and partners.

5. The SEND Improvement Board (SIB) is now a well-established partnership arrangement driving improvement as evidenced by a positive review of the written statement of action in December 23. That review has since been endorsed by a very positive letter from DfE.



However, the above graphic is a simple but reasonable illustration of the nature of SEND progress (against the broader Ofsted criteria) in Birmingham over a seven-year period. The more recent improvements are to be welcomed and are measurable. But this is the first time in that period that the services have come close to moving out of an inadequate rating. This is an uncomfortable if now optimistic graphic. There is much more to be done and no room for complacency.

6. Recruitment remains an unacceptably and unnecessarily difficult challenge, as do financial and related business systems in the council. That in turn relates to the widespread corporate and financial crisis in the city which has led to a separate Best Value intervention.
7. The Best Value intervention commenced in October 23 following the issuing of a s114 notice by the council. This was directly triggered by revelations concerning the scale of the council's liabilities to fix both equal pay and a failure of implementation of Oracle. That challenge has since been extended as it is clear now that the council is also facing a significant revenue gap of over £300 million which must be closed in a two-year period. These events will substantially change the council going forward and have implications both for children services and SEND. In the circumstances it was agreed between DfE and DLUHC that the SEND Commissioner should also join the Best Value commissioning team.
8. The remainder of this report will look in more detail at some of the key areas of both progress and concern. The report will reflect back on the previous reports'

recommendations by exception and go on to make further recommendations for the period ahead.

SEND Improvement Board (SIB)

9. The SIB is now very well established. It meets routinely and is well attended particularly with strong schools and health representation. The board is properly serviced by BCC with good agenda planning. That includes a well-established routine of hearing from parents and carers and key cases (examples of the lived experience). Political engagement and behaviours at the SIB have improved substantially across parties, led by the Lead Member.
10. In December '23 the board undertook a thorough and well-prepared review of the progress of the written statement of action. It remains the case that overall progress has been too slow and there is a great deal of work still to do. However, there is now clear evidence of measurable progress against all of the areas of the written statement of action. Notably, DfE colleagues have since agreed to close the first area concerning strategic joint working. That is a welcome endorsement of progress and has been matched with a positive letter from the Department.
11. Among the measurable areas of progress being reported to the board are the following:
 - Significant reductions in the lodging of tribunal appeals
 - Very strong performance in the completion of EHCPs within the 20-week timescale (now significantly better than national averages)
 - Good rates of actioning annual reviews within four weeks of meetings
 - Increased proportions of children with EHCPs being maintained in mainstream placements (but lower than national averages)
 - Reducing numbers of children awaiting a school placement
 - A developing body of evidence of the quality of individual case management through a model of case audit which is slowly being embedded.
12. Further work is now underway with the Commissioner's agreement to convert the board into a SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) partnership which retains the role of improvement towards inspection but also covers the partners' collective wider responsibilities including with regard to alternative provision.

SENAR and SENDIASS

13. SENAR, Birmingham's assessment and review service, is in a stronger state leading to a more effective flow of EHCP processes and substantially better communication with parents. A restructuring of this service which will include a necessary reinforcement of staffing has been approved by SIB and by Cabinet. The funding for this work is not in jeopardy at the current time. That funding remains essential for any prospect of continued service improvement. A decision was taken at the start of this improvement process to ensure SENAR staff are more directly accessible to parents and carers and this together with the bolstering of the service has probably had the single most important impact on improvement so far. However, attempts to appoint to a permanent head of service have floundered as have attempts to shift the balance

from interim to permanent staff. The latter issue is definitely at least in part a result of the continued challenges of corporate HR support in Birmingham. These need finally to be addressed including through the work of the Best Value intervention.

14. SENDIASS is now much closer to full compliance. The service is under new management with a largely new team with much clearer governance and understanding of remit. The overt and unhelpful political interference has now abated. This progress coincided with the intervention in early '23 of the national Labour Party with regard to the council's political leadership. It is notable that the relief of this specific and disproportionate problem has had a major positive impact on the rest of the improvement programme. It has freed wasted senior management capacity and perhaps asserted the determination of the current improvement programme to achieve proper solutions and deal with unhelpful barriers to improvement. There is further work to be done corporately and in the context of the Best Value improvement programme to ensure that the failures of governance which contributed to this unnecessarily damaging issue should not recur here or elsewhere in Birmingham.

Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and Co-Production

15. As previous reports have noted, the PCF in Birmingham had a strong record in offering appropriate and usually constructive challenge to the services and agencies. This was demanding and often frustrating work for the then Chair of PCF. For various reasons there was a change of leadership of the PCF in early '23. That change has been well delivered and the new PCF leadership continues to offer strong and constructive support and criticism but is also establishing a wider base of distributed leadership across the widening membership of the forum which will be positive for the future. The new head of the forum should be congratulated for her part in the very effective transfer and continued strong contributions to the board. The Commissioner and service leaders know they are receiving strong and clear representation.
16. Unfortunately, but not unusually across SEND systems, other representations have more recently been made which reflect some tensions between different members of the parent carer community. It will continue to be for service leaders and managers in all the key agencies to ensure effective parent carer engagement and co-production going forward. For the effective working of the board however, we should continue to focus on the PCF as the key member of the board and point of contact into that parent carer community.
17. On a linked point and in the context of a continuous drive to promote the principles of co-production in SEND in Birmingham, the SIB has recently undertaken targeted coproduction training to support our own work but also to set down a marker for other parts of the leadership system. Co-production, as with other aspects of inclusion and equality, must be and be seen to be a continuous process of improvement that is endorsed and empowered across the sector.

Schools and Education (and Alternative Provision)

18. The relationship between schools and the local authority remains under considerable general strain and this applies especially in the SEND arena as outlined in the previous reports. This is inevitable given the history and context but there are now a number of growing positives upon which to build a stronger system in future.

19. Representation of all phases on the SIB has been consistent and constructive. Those phase representatives undertake a difficult task on behalf of their respective school communities with high levels of commitment. The task of communicating between the board and often beleaguered school communities is not easy, especially when messages of progress can be countered by evidence of various case challenges. The Commissioner has seen direct evidence of outstanding school leadership for SEND children in Birmingham, and regrettably some direct evidence of cynicism. The SIB and the children's leadership are working hard to shift the dial of the relationship and with some success, but for various reasons the progress remains slow.
20. Some of the key metrics relate to inclusion of SEND children. That is improving with (at last count) around 34% of EHCP children retained in mainstream which compares favourably to the 29% figure last year but remains short of the national averages. Presenting this as a positive shift to schools and parents who may distrust the very targets, especially with regard to individual children, is part of the challenge.
21. A key agent in the relationship between the LA and schools is Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP), which, largely, was commissioned in the past as a school improvement provider. As part of the new strategy for education and partnership with schools, the DCS and team are intending to take more direct control of these functions and re-establish direct relations. This is seen as an existential threat for BEP, though the LA is intent on retaining its services for other activities including coordination of the Developing Local Provision model of school's partnerships. There has been external pressure for this commission to intervene in the LA's plans, but the Commissioner is of the view that this is a legitimate local decision which should not be blocked in the absence of clear evidence otherwise. It is a legitimate local determination. Furthermore, the LA's plans are consistent with legitimate determination to establish a more balanced wider education and schools' system in the city, which will certainly be of benefit to the SEND community. The DCS is also very positive of the engagement with the role of the Regional Schools Director to this end.

Health

22. In early '23 the SIB commissioned a "health summit" in order to achieve greater coherence between health commissioning and provider services, and with partners, in order to better address outstanding health concerns for SEND. These particularly were to do with waiting times for various therapies, and the need to develop better early intervention that might reduce the sense among families that a clinical diagnosis and EHCP are a necessary "currency" for seeking support for children. Among other things, the summit agreed to promote a "balanced system" as a model for the development of that earlier health intervention.
23. The summit, generally regarded as a successful intervention, has effectively converted into a working sub-group of the SIB and both enjoy consistently strong engagement from all aspects of the health system including highest involvement of the ICS.

24. However, most of the performance measures for a healthy SEND system, while reducing, remain stubbornly high and continue to represent a system that is too frustrating for parents and too slow for a child's developmental needs. The improved engagement and commitment will need to continue to drive improvement hard for the foreseeable future. There remain significant questions for the resource investment and clinical capacity in all health systems for SEND, not just in Birmingham. The continued direct engagement from the leadership of the ICS is especially helpful.

Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT)

25. The major recent event for BCT was its achievement of a Good rating in the Ofsted ILACS inspection, which is excellent news for Birmingham's vulnerable children and probably a partial vindication of the decision not to destabilise the trust by integrating SEND at that time. BCT has since undergone a change of leadership but that has been managed effectively and with helpful continuity.

26. That said, there were last year emerging tensions between the work of BCT and some SEND issues. They especially related to the review of provision of short breaks which largely affected SEND families who were concerned about the commitment to them and to co-production. The processes were subsequently revised but damage was done to some working relations including across the PCF. The new CEO of BCT has helpfully taken on direct engagement with the SIB from his predecessor. The trust also now has an interim designated social care officer (DSCO) which is a good step reflecting the increasing overlaps between SEND and social care. The "commissioning" relationship between BCC, through the DCS, and the trust is now much more coherent and appropriate.

BCC Corporate Support and Governance

27. These issues are now reflected by the context of the Best Value intervention discussed below. This SEND intervention has commented strongly throughout on the poor corporate support in BCC - specifically HR, finance and legal - and its detrimental impact on the undeniable service and professional failures. A year ago, not least through the Chief Executive's support, there was a sense of a turning point with BCC apparently better understanding the need for that support to improve with the service. Regrettably, that sense has not generally translated into actual support improvement – as the triggering of the Best Value intervention more widely illustrates.

28. In terms of finance, perhaps the most frustrating issue is that the usual main barrier to service improvement – a lack of hard cash – has not been the issue here (as best we can understand). The Council has voted through the required resources to support improvement, especially with regard to the essential expansion of SENAR into a functioning assessment service. But the chaotic history of BCC's financial management and systems, inextricably linked to the much-publicised failings of the Oracle implementation, continues to block or at best damagingly delay the service leadership's attempts to pursue key aspects of the improvement plan, including recruitment.

29. A further aspect of the Oracle problem is its impact upon schools individually and especially upon the fabric of the essential relationship between schools and the LA. Schools have been struggling to manage their own finances and close their own

books because of the Oracle failings. This is reinforcing their sense of being within a local authority that is poorly run, doesn't understand or care about their problems and exacerbates the SEND related problems.

30. Much the same applies to HR within the service, especially on recruitment. Significant and unnecessary process delays, and bureaucratic blocks that seem to have lost sight of their purpose, have contributed to the continued failure to recruit to a Head of SENAR. This is a key post which remains unfilled in a failing service that is entering its third year of statutory intervention. The service itself remains dependent on about 70% agency and interim staff. Aside from the cost, inefficiency and professional weakness that represents, at time of writing even those interims are at risk from an internal financial ruling which is limiting even the job security of interims and which bears no relationship to the essential nature of the work and the continued experiences of families. The Council still needs to re-learn its fundamental responsibility to provide effective administrative support which enables rather than frustrates statutory service delivery and support.

Politics

31. Notwithstanding the Best Value intervention and its antecedents, there have actually been at least some positive political developments in the SEND journey since the last report. Most notably, the Lead Member has remained in role for almost two years now and is offering invaluable political stability and leadership – within the service, within Cabinet and externally. The calm and assurance she brings to the role have been invaluable and hopefully are increasingly better recognised across the political spectrum. The conflict of interest behaviours that seriously impeded the early stages of the intervention, especially through SENDIASS, have significantly abated, particularly since the national Labour Party intervened in the local political leadership last year. Although painfully slow, some political disciplinary measures should help to encourage better individual politicians' behaviours going forward. There has also been a notable shift of tone and focus from the Children's Scrutiny Committee with some developing recognition of that committee's role in supporting officers and improvement rather than being a challenging adversary to them and the intervention. Finally, cross party support and behaviour has substantially improved.
32. There is a but. These political improvements, such as they are, have been hard fought and painfully but also damagingly slow. The poor political culture and functionality in Birmingham have certainly contributed to the flat-lined graph of improvement shown above. More importantly, the wider political culture and function in Birmingham – the foundation of this malaise – have not substantially changed and it is hard to see how any of these or other improvements can be accelerated or sustained without a major shift in governance and culture. The first of these reports made clear recommendations about work needed to improve that culture. Those recommendations were not properly implemented. If they had been, arguably, the Best Value intervention might have been averted. The opportunity now, through the Best Value intervention, to take this work more seriously needs to be grasped by all concerned to avoid disastrous repetition for Birmingham children.

Best Value (BV) Intervention

33. The circumstances of the BV intervention, led by DLUHC, are crudely summarised above and better explained elsewhere. For these purposes the important issues are to do with the interface between that intervention and this.
34. The BV process is necessarily wider, more potent and better resourced. On one level, the SEND intervention is arguably “subsumed” by the BV one given the SEND process is focussed on one dimension of a local authority that is now entirely under the auspices of the BV intervention. However, the SEND intervention must remain subject to its own statutory framework and formal direction.
35. The solution arrived at to this exceptional dilemma has been to retain and respect the continuing integrity and necessity of the SEND process as a continuing free-standing one, but to include it in the architecture of the wider improvement and recovery programme for the whole council, under the BV process. The SEND Commissioner remains in role but takes on an additional role as a member of the BV Commissioning Team, sharing the wider corporate responsibilities and accountabilities of that team alongside the more specific SEND ones. The model makes sense and so far seems to be working but will require continuing monitoring, especially, for these purposes, to ensure the SEND progress is not compromised.
36. More immediately, the deepening financial crisis which triggered the BV intervention poses a significant threat to all concerned. The late recognition of the scale of the revenue gap has required urgent activity to develop a two-year savings programme (‘24-‘26) with sufficient credibility to release the required “exceptional financial support (EFS)” from DLUHC without which the council would not be a going concern. That involves circa £150m targeted savings in the first year (24/25).
37. The savings required of children’s services excluding the children’s trust in the financial year 24/25 amount to 38% of spend, which is obviously a very significant figure. When the BCT budgets and savings are included the savings figure “nets” as 13% and is a reflection of the necessary protection that must be offered to children’s social care. These savings will be painful to deliver (including a substantial change to the funding of home to school transport including for SEND) but the DCS and her team have put forward credible if challenging plans. The DCS has also made it clear that she is gravely and rightly concerned about the implications of a further savings target in the following year. The other significant impact will be upon the capacity and personal resource of the leadership of the SEND service, which is already severely stretched, in the implementation of these savings proposals.
38. It should also be noted that the corporate budget gap includes the costs of inflation, demand and population growth, which will be built back into the service budgets going forward. That actually means that notwithstanding the savings proposals, in cash terms the department will be spending as much if not slightly more than the current year on essential support to the most vulnerable children. Obviously, this is a difficult message to explain publicly and the savings are real and challenging to deliver. It would be wrong and dangerous to underestimate the scale of risk – through general instability and indirect financial challenges – which this context now represents to SEND improvement. There has to be a wide commitment to manage those risks and

embed and sustain the fragile improvements for SEND. That includes with regard to the reductions in early help funding. The impressive and developing partnership between the DCS and BCT is providing essential system leadership in this regard.

39. The second crucial dimension to the BV intervention will be the governance improvement programme which relates to the technical governance of the LA (audit, decision making, constitutional) and to the organisational culture and behaviours – including political and officer behaviours and the relations between the two. As a first step towards this process the Council commissioned and has publicly agreed a report from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). The ensuing improvement process in BCC will be overseen by the BV intervention team with the SEND Commissioner closely involved. The key point to note at this stage is the close synergies between the CfGS work and the issues of profound governance concern that have been thematic to this series of SEND reports. The main lesson from that theme is that BCC has an ability to pay convincing lip service to such interventions. In fact, BCC is a highly sophisticated institution in the way it defends itself from genuine change. The processes of governance and culture change will need to be driven with the utmost determination to prevent regression on behalf of SEND as well as the wider council and its services.

Previous Recommendations

40. Against a more positive back drop of hard fought progress in SEND in Birmingham the following recommendations remain outstanding from previous versions of this report. These recommendations were agreed by all parties at the time.
41. *[February 2022, Rec16]* The City Council should conduct a thorough business process review, if necessary with external support, to ensure all of its corporate business process and governance arrangements and systems are fit for purpose and efficient with a particular view to ensuring their ability to support not hinder service delivery.
42. *[February 2022, Rec 17]* Following the establishment of a new political administration through the May 2022 local elections, the City Council should conduct an exercise with external support to review and refresh the member-officer culture to ensure it too is fit for purpose especially but not only in the support of children's service improvement.
43. *[February 2022, Rec 18]* The Department for Education should conclude an effective review of the 2014 SEND reforms including with regard to more stable funding and, through that process or otherwise, look to establish ways to assess schools on their duty of inclusion.
44. *[February 2023, Rec 7]* The intention to give stronger focus through this intervention on the role of schools and the development of a new SEND strategy between the LA and schools should be agreed.
45. All of the above were essential and agreed recommendations which have not progressed well enough if at all. They need continued if not now urgent attention.

Conclusions

46. After a challenging period and slow start, SEND improvement in Birmingham is now evidentially progressing. That should be applauded, given the context, but all efforts must now be brought to bear on supporting and accelerating that improvement.
47. Regrettably, the wider malaise in BCC, financial and otherwise, which has now triggered the Best Value intervention, represents a potential further threat to that improvement, so concerted efforts will be required to ensure otherwise, not least on behalf of vulnerable children and families who have lived with an under-performing system for far too long. Therefore, the mechanisms described above to synchronise the two interventions must be maintained and developed.
48. Conversely, these two interventions working together may now offer Birmingham the best chance in many years of achieving a stable and effective council which is a good home for these crucial SEND services.

Recommendations

49. The established “architecture” of this SEND intervention should be retained, including: the Statutory Direction; the Commissioner; the SIB.
50. The synchronisation with the BV intervention should also be maintained through a shared Commissioner but this novel arrangement should be kept under review by both processes and government departments.
51. The SIB and the Improvement Plan should be maintained as the cornerstones of the local improvement work – and that should include agreement for the SIB taking on general improvement and partner oversight for SEND including AP.
52. The SIB will receive updates from the BV work with regard to governance and corporate service reform in BCC (linked to 40 and 43 above).
53. Once agreed, the SIB should oversee the recommendations within this report including reviewing the outstanding actions described in 40-43 above.
54. That should include an update from DfE about the progress of national reform for SEND.
55. The SIB should also continue to champion the principles of co-production as a model to the system including through the inclusion of the PCF at the Board.

John Coughlan CBE

DfE SEND Commissioner for Birmingham City Council

February 2024

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Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet

12th November 2024



Title:	Acceptance of Recommendations from SEND Commissioners Third Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Brown- Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families.
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?	Education, Children and Young People Report to be shared with Cllr Jenkins before corporate clearance
Report Author:	Helen Ellis Director of SEND and Inclusion helen.ellis@birmingham.gov.uk
Authorised by:	Sue Harrison Children and Families Directorate
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report? Reason(s) why Late and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	No Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?' If 'call-in' has been dis-applied, please provide reason(s) and confirm who has authorised:	No Not Applicable
Wards:	All Wards
Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?	No
Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?	No

Reasons why not included on the Notification and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not Applicable
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is dated February 2024 but was not published or made available until August 2024 (due to the general election).

In February 2024, John Coughlan CBE, the DfE appointed Commissioner for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Services in Birmingham, provided his third report to the Secretary of State for Education. This report was published by the DfE in August 2024. The SEND Commissioner's first report was published in May 2022 and his second in February 2023. The recommendations from both reports were accepted by cabinet in November 2022 and September 2023 respectively.

- 1.2 In this third report, the SEND Commissioner notes 'This report will chart more positive and embedding progress within Birmingham SEND itself in the past year. That progress remains slow but is now measurable and accelerating, more secure and impacting on more children and families.'
- 1.3 In this third report, the Commissioner notes that SEND Improvement is now evidently progressing, but additional effort is needed to support and accelerate the improvement work further.
- 1.4 The Commissioner also notes that the circumstances which brought about the , Best Value intervention represent a further challenge to continuing SEND improvement, so concerted efforts will be required to ensure otherwise, not least on behalf of vulnerable children and families who have lived with an underperforming system for far too long.
- 1.5 The Commissioner makes seven further recommendations.
- 1.6 Cabinet is asked to accept the recommendations in the Commissioner's third report, note the council's commitment to delivering the plan (at Appendix 1) that seeks to address them as well as note the progress made against the Commissioner's set of recommendations.

2 COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW

- 2.1 Commissioners note the Councils response.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 3.1 Accepts the recommendations made by the Commissioner in his third report (written in February 2024, published August 2024).

- 3.2 Notes the updated plan at Appendix 1 with this report that sets out progress against the recommendations set out in the Commissioners third report.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 In June 2018 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission conducted a joint inspection of Birmingham to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 4.2 As a result of the findings of that inspection and in accordance with the Children's Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) determined that a Written Statement of Actions (WSOA) was required because of thirteen significant areas of weakness in practice. The WSOA was issued in September 2018.
- 4.3 In May 2021, Ofsted and the CQC revisited Birmingham to assess whether sufficient progress in addressing twelve of the thirteen areas of significant weakness. That assessment judged that only one of the thirteen areas had made progress. Prior to this report, two other areas of significant weakness have also been signed off and therefore 10 areas of significant weakness remain.
- 4.4 In October 2021, the Secretary of State for Education issued a statutory direction to Birmingham City Council requiring the Council to take steps to improve its SEND services, including co-operating with the DfE appointed SEND Commissioner, John Coughlan.
- 4.5 The Council was also directed to submit its Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) to the DfE and NHS England (NHSE) setting out.
- 4.5.1 the governance and accountability structures and processes that will support the next phase of improvement.
- 4.5.2 the actions the Council is now taking (and has taken since inspectors left) to respond to their outstanding concerns: the impact measures and milestones to which the council is working on, being clear on the improvements that will be delivered in the next 3, 6 and 12 months.
- 4.6 The APP was subsequently published and approved by the DfE. The APP is reviewed and updated after a six monthly DfE/NHSE review, when formal feedback from each review is received.
- 4.7 In February 2022, the SEND Commissioner published his first report to the Secretary of State for Education. The report looked in detail at the range of structural options and made the key recommendations not to recommend structural reform. These recommendations were made on the basis that the council would unequivocally commit to the range of related recommendations in

the report as a statement of the local authority's determination to improve SEND services and return vulnerable children to the heart of the city's ambitions.

- 4.8 The Council unequivocally accepted the recommendations that were made in the Commissioner's first report. The Council also provided the SEND Commissioner with an action plan which set out how each of the recommendations would be addressed.
- 4.9 The plan appended with this report (Appendix 1) shows the progress made against the recommendations in the Commissioner's reports.
- 4.10 In May 2023, the Commissioner's second report (dated February 2023) was published. That report noted some areas of initial progress but reasserted a number of issues of criticism including the pace of reform and evidence of corporate and political support for change.
- 4.11 Following the issuing of the 114 Notice by the City Council, the Best Value intervention commenced in October 2023 under a separate statutory notice from (now) MHCLG. The SEND Commissioner was then also appointed as a member of the Best Value commissioner team in order to help secure consistency between the two interventions,
- 4.12 In August 2024, the Commissioner's third report (dated February 2024) was published. He Commissioner highlighted areas of progress including the SEND Improvement Board (SIB) as evidenced by a positive review of the written statement of action in December 2023.
- 4.13 The Commissioner highlighted several points. It was noted, and we continue to work in the spirit of: "There is much more to be done and no room for complacency."
- 4.13.1 The SENAR service being stronger and delivering a more effective flow of Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) processes.
- 4.13.2 The SENDIASS is much closer to full compliance with clearer governance and understanding of remit.
- 4.13.3 The Parent Carer Forum change in leadership being well delivered and offering strong and constructive support.
- 4.13.4 Around 34% of EHCP children retained in mainstream which compares favourably to the 29% figure of the previous year but remains short of the national average.
- 4.14 The Commissioner highlighted the growing positives between the relationship between schools and SEND where representation of all phases on the SEND Improvement Board (SIB) has been consistent and constructive.
- 4.15 The Commissioner also noted that a number of the issues that had been highlighted in his original report, including with regard to corporate services and systems representing barriers to progress in SEND, had been reinforced through the best Value intervention. One example was that the necessary substantial

recruitment to new SENAR posts had been delayed. Since the publication of the report the permanent Head of SENAR has been recruited and is in post and it is notable that the previous dependence on agency staff has been substantially reversed.

- 4.16 The Commissioner highlighted the short break tensions which affected SEND families. The CEO of the Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT) has taken on direct engagement with SIB. The trust now have a designated social care officer (DSCO) to support the overlaps between SEND and Social Care.
- 4.17 There is an established, positive working relationship with the SEND Commissioner across the partnership of SEND services. Partnership meetings are embedded to drive the improvement required, with commitment from the highest level of leadership.
- 4.18 The Commissioner's third report made seven recommendations. Appendix 1 contains these recommendations and the approach to addressing them. The Commissioner's third report has especially highlighted recommendations from his first and second reports which remain outstanding.
- 4.19 The Commissioner's recommendations have been accepted by the SEND Improvement Board (SIB) (now the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Board) which oversees the progress made against the APP.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Risks in delivering against the recommendations made by the SEND Commissioner are identified, evaluated, and controlled through the SEND Improvement Board (SIB).
- 5.2 The Accelerated Progress Plan has a risk register through which risks are logged and managed.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The work of the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Board is based on co-production and consultation with a variety of stakeholders.
- 6.2 Co-production and consultation help to crystalise the deliverables of the programme and how we improve outcomes for children and young people in Birmingham.

7 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Ward Councillor(s)

- 7.1

Overview and Scrutiny

7.2

8 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

- 8.1 The Commissioner highlights the adverse impact of inadequate corporate and governance support on SEND service delivery.
- 8.2 Financial Resources were included in the base budget for 2023-24 onwards.

Legal

- 8.3 On 15 October 2021 the Secretary of State for Education issued a statutory direction under section 497A(4b) of the Education Act 1996, directing the Council to take a number of steps including complying 'with any instructions of the Secretary of State or the SEND Commissioner in relation to the improvement of the Councils exercise of its SEND functions and provide such assistance as either the Secretary of State or the SEND Commissioner may require'. The Council is therefore required to act upon the recommendations set out in the SEND Commissioner's Report dated February 2023 and February 2024.

Equalities

- 8.4 The inspections of Birmingham services for children and young people with SEND identified areas of weakness that needed to be addressed.
- 8.5 In considering and fully accepting the Commissioner's recommendation's the Council had had regard to the PSED and in particular notes that the functions carried out by the Councils SEND services are designed to support the aims set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, particularly for those with the protected characteristics of a disability.

Procurement

- 8.6 The Commissioner highlights the adverse impact of inadequate corporate and governance support on SEND service delivery and failures. It is important for improvements to SEND services (and others) that there are the necessary skills, resources and systems in place across BCC support functions, as well as within the SEND service, to support the ongoing SEND improvements in the future

People Services

- 8.7 The Commissioner highlights the adverse impact of inadequate corporate and governance support on SEND service delivery and failure in particular recruitment in SENAR, it is essential for HR to align with the SEND Improvement Plan.

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

8.8 Not Applicable

Corporate Parenting second report.

8.9 Not Applicable

Other

8.10 Refer to Guidance.

9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1- Updated Plan showing progress against the recommendations from the Commissioner's reports.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Statutory direction issued to Birmingham City Council due to its special educational needs and disability (SEND) service provision. [Direction issued to Birmingham City Council \(October 2021\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000000/direction-issued-to-birmingham-city-council-october-2021.pdf)

10.2 The three independent reports with recommendations from the Commissioner for SEND Services in Birmingham. [Birmingham City Council's SEND service: commissioner's report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000000/birmingham-city-councils-send-service-commissioners-report.pdf)

Appendix 1

Recommendations from SEND Commissioner's third report to the Secretary of State

	Recommendation	Owner	Update October 2024	<u>Status</u>	<u>Review dates</u>
1	The established “architecture” of this SEND intervention should be retained, including: the Statutory Direction; the Commissioner; the SIB (49)	Director for Children and Families	Accepted and governance remains in place.	<u>Complete</u>	
2	The synchronisation with the BV intervention should also be maintained through a shared Commissioner but this novel arrangement should be kept under review by both processes and government departments (50)	Director for Children and Families	Accepted and governance remains in place.	<u>Complete</u>	
3	The SIB and the Improvement Plan should be maintained as the cornerstones of the local improvement work – and that should include agreement for the SIB taking on general improvement and partner oversight for SEND including AP (51)	Director for Children and Families	SIB has been renamed the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Board. Refreshed membership with key additional stakeholders ensure we are aligned with national guidance and the new inspection framework.	<u>In Progress</u>	At each and all SEND & AP Improvement Boards and Executive Board meetings.
4	The SIB will receive updates from the BV work with regard to governance and corporate service reform in BCC (52 linked to 40 and 43)	Director for Children and Families	SEND Commissioner provides updates at every SEND & AP Improvement Board.	<u>Ongoing</u>	
5	Once agreed, the SIB should oversee the recommendations within this report including reviewing the outstanding actions (from the Commissioner’s previous reports).	Director for Children and Families	To be discussed at the Executive Board on 29 th October 2024.	<u>In Progress</u>	At each and all SEND & AP Improvement Boards and Executive Board meetings.

6	That should include an update from DfE about the progress of national reform for SEND	DfE SEND Advisor(s)	DfE invited to deliver updates at future SEND & AP Improvement Board meeting(s).	<u>In Progress</u>	Annually at SEND & AP Improvement Board
7	The SIB should also continue to champion the principles of co-production as a model to the system including through the inclusion of the PCF at the Board.	Director for Children and Families	Training was received by the SIB in spring 2024 and co-production remains a priority within the APP.	<u>In Progress</u>	Direct intervention by Board members quarterly.

Recommendations from SEND Commissioner's previous reports to the Secretary of State

	Recommendation	Owner	Update October 2024	<u>Status</u>	<u>Review dates</u>
8	The intervention should be retained in its current form including: the Statutory Direction; the Commissioner role; the Improvement Board; and the APP.	N/A	All have been retained.	<u>Complete</u>	
9	The work being done within BCC to establish a stronger corporate infrastructure under the leadership of the Chief Executive and her team should be welcomed and endorsed.	N/A	Ongoing with new Leadership in place.	<u>Complete</u>	
9a	[February 2023, Rec16] The City Council should conduct a thorough business process review, if necessary, with external support, to ensure all of its corporate business process and governance arrangements and systems are fit for purpose and efficient with a particular view to ensuring their ability to support not hinder service delivery	N/A	Ongoing with new Leadership in place.	<u>In progress</u>	Update to be provided at Board meeting on 4 th March 2025.
10	The work of the Lead Member and the Deputy Leader should be noted in their core roles of political leadership for children and SEND which are successfully helping to drive this improvement notwithstanding other political concerns.	N/A	Ongoing with new leadership in place.	<u>N/A</u>	

10a	[February 2023, Rec 17] Following the establishment of a new political administration through the May 2022 local elections, the City Council should conduct an exercise with external support to review and refresh the member-officer culture to ensure it too is fit for purpose especially but not only in the support of children's service improvement.		Ongoing with new leadership in place.	Ongoing	Update to be provided at Board meeting on 4 th March 2025.
11	However, the additional and continuing political concerns outlined above should be kept under close scrutiny. The planned work led by the Monitoring Officer is of particular importance and should be strongly supported.	City Solicitor	Work ongoing	In progress	Update to be provided at Board meeting on 4 th March 2025.
12	The progress in the establishment of the local authority children's leadership and the strengthening children's partnerships should be supported and sustained, including towards the ambition of a child friendly city.	Director for Children and Families	Birmingham was accepted onto UNICEF's Child Friendly City programme in June 2023 and the Children and Young People's Plan has been launched.	Complete	
13	The formal establishment of a clear health and care joint commissioning framework and approach should be driven forward by key leaders, including through the ICS, but remain under the auspices and monitoring of the Board for the immediate future.	Director for Children and Families	Work is currently underway to establish a Joint Commissioning Framework between BCC and the ICB. Initial proposals were presented at the SEND Improvement Board in July 2023. This work remains ongoing.	In progress	Update to be provided at Board meeting on 4 th March 2025.
14	The intention to give stronger focus through this intervention on the role of schools and the development of a new SEND strategy between the LA and schools should be agreed.	Director for Children and Families	There is a stronger focus on the role of schools. SEND and Inclusion strategies, co-produced with schools, were launched in July 2023 and have specific priorities to work	In progress	Update to be provided at Board meeting on 3 rd December 2024.

			towards. Progress has been slower than desired.		
15	In parallel the Department for Education should commit to the implementation of the recent Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan and any related initiatives which strengthen school inclusion and without which the work with schools is all the more difficult.	Department for Education	DfE Advisor to report back as in 6 above	<u>In progress</u>	Annually at SEND & AP Improvement Board
15a	[February 2023, Rec 18] The Department for Education should conclude an effective review of the 2014 SEND reforms including with regard to more stable funding and, through that process or otherwise, look to establish ways to assess schools on their duty of inclusion.	Department for Education	DfE Advisor to report back as in 6 above	<u>In progress</u>	Annually at SEND & AP Improvement Board
16	The City Council should agree the reforms to SENDIASS in accordance with the Commissioner's direction.	Director Children and Families	In April 2023 Cabinet noted the improvements that had taken place in SENDIASS since January 2023 and that the service should remain inhouse to continue to address the issues identified by the independent review that took place in spring 2022.	<u>Complete</u>	
17	The intervention and the Board should continue to promote the principles of coproduction and communication by all agencies and that should include continued recognition and support for the BPCF in its complex role as described in this report.	Director Children and Families	The Board continues to recognise and support Birmingham Parent Carer Forum. There is now a clearly embedded co-production framework and awards scheme.	<u>Complete</u>	

			A parental participation and engagement – the Working Together – strategy has been created and endorsed with and by parents and the BPCF.		
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Birmingham City Council.

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

4 December 2024



Title:	EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25
Lead Cabinet Portfolio:	Not Applicable
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not Applicable
Report Author:	<p>Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager</p> <p>Legal and Governance</p> <p>Phone Number 0121 303 1727</p> <p>Email sarah.fradgley@birmingham.gov.uk</p>
Authorised by:	<p>Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services</p> <p>Legal and Governance</p>
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If not eligible, please provide reason(s):	Not Applicable
Ward(s):	Not Applicable
Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?	No
Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?	Not Applicable
Reasons why not included on the Notification:	Not Applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2024-25. Appendix A outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives.
- 1.2 A key aspect of the work of all Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will be the continued focus on the savings agreed in the 24/25 Council budget and the relevant programmes within the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan where the Committee can add value.

COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 1.3 No observations.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the work programme, set out in Appendix A, and identify any amendments required.
- 2.2 Agrees, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, its proposed work programme will be submitted to Corporate and Finance O&S Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

3 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 3.1 The Statutory Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny Committees [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118421/Overview_and_scrutiny_statutory_guidance_for_councils_combined_authorities_and_combined_county_authorities.pdf) was updated in April 2024 and re-affirms the role of overview and scrutiny in holding an authority's decision-makers to account remains fundamentally important to the functioning of local democracy.
- 3.2 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 improvement in public services and strategic decision-making.
- 3.3 The [Council's Constitution Part B](#) sets out the procedures and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Terms of Reference

3.4 The terms of reference for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:

To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning education and school improvement, children's social care, looked after children, children's wellbeing and safeguarding, early years, Special Educational Needs and Disability, youth services, entrepreneurship and youth offending. This includes:

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship in Birmingham schools.
- 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.
- Youth offending.

Scrutiny Work Programmes and the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan

3.5 The Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan was approved at City Council on 4 April 2024 [BCC Improvement and Recovery Plan \(IRP\) \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com) sets out the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider key programmes and projects in the IRP, provide assurance to members and citizens on progress, consider unplanned consequences and negative impacts of the changes the Council is making.

3.6 The [Scrutiny Development Plan](#) was approved by the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 September 2024. The plan builds on work carried out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny during 2023/24 and sets out the objectives and activities that will underpin the work of the Council's seven Overview and Scrutiny Committees to contribute to the Council's improvement journey.

3.7 The work of the [Corporate and Finance OSC Information Task and Finish Group](#) has concluded, and Members supported the development of a single point of access for Overview and Scrutiny Committee members to information relating to delivery, performance and risk, to support the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25

- 3.8 The work programme of all Overview and Scrutiny Committees will align to the priorities within the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan. The Committee work programme attached at Appendix A identifies the Improvement and Recovery Plan priorities work programme items relate to.
- 3.9 The work programme for 2024/25 will develop during the year. The proposed work programme for this committee includes:
- Delivery of the Corporate Plan Priorities.
 - Critical Performance Issue by Exception.
 - Safe and Effective key services for vulnerable people.
 - Equity Issues Arising from the Budget.
 - Business Critical services.
 - Life and Limb services.
 - Statutory Scrutiny Functions and engaging with external organisations to inform the work of Scrutiny Committees.
 - Monitoring the implementation of Scrutiny Recommendations.
- 3.10 The Council's latest Forward Plan can also assist members in identifying future topics. <https://birmingham.cmis.uk.com/birmingham/ForwardPlans.aspx>.
- 3.11 When considering the issues to be included in the work programme members are also asked to agree the Scrutiny method that will be used. This can include:
- **Committee meeting single item**, or items, on a public committee agenda: this fits more closely the "overview" aspect of the Scrutiny function and has limited opportunity for effective scrutiny.
 - **Committee meeting single theme** at a public committee meeting: This has the capacity to enhance the previous option by taking evidence from a number of witnesses.
 - **Task and Finish Group in a day**: provided these are properly focused, they ensure Councillors can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations and are effective even for complex topics. The work of a Task and Finish Group will be agreed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Task and Finish Group meeting is not public. The outcome of the Task and Finish Group will be reported to a public committee meeting.
 - **Multiple Task and Finish Group meetings**: to consider an issue in depth over four or six meetings spread over a limited number of months.
 - **Site Visit**: Members visit services or organisations to inform the work of the Committee.
 - **Inquiry Evidence Gathering**: Evidence for Scrutiny Inquiries may take place at public committee meetings, Task and Finish Groups or Site Visits
 - **Briefings and Workshops**: for members to be updated on specific issues.

Tracking Implementation of Scrutiny Inquiry Recommendations

- 3.12 Implementation of scrutiny inquiry recommendations is tracked every six months to enable Members to assess progress.
- 3.13 In April 2024 City Council adopted the 15 recommendations of the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's inquiry into [Child Criminal Exploitation](#). The first tracking report will be presented to Committee in December.
- 3.14 In January 2024 City Council adopted the 25 recommendations of the [Scrutiny Inquiry on Children and Young People's Mental Health: Is Birmingham meeting young people's mental health needs?](#) This inquiry group consisted of members of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Health and Adult Social Care Overview Committee tracked the implementation of recommendations at its 4 September 2024 meeting.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Council's Governance and Stabilisation Plan identified the need to strengthen the working relationships between the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee to lead and direct the function. This will include the development of a Memorandum of Understanding that will include the respective roles of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Audit in relation to the Council's management of risk.
- 4.2 Potential risks that are identified by the Committee as part of the discussion at Committee meetings will be included in the Action Tracker to request that this is considered with a response provided to the Committee.

5 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

- 5.1 There are no immediate financial implications from this report. Work to support the Committee in developing its work programme is conducted by an inhouse existing team which has been funded for and there will be no external engagement resulting in incremental costs to the council.

Legal

- 5.2 [Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000](#) states that the Council must have one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees which have the power to take the actions listed in that section. The [Council's Constitution Part B11](#) sets out how the role and function of scrutiny prescribed by the Act is applied locally.

Equalities

- 5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

5.6 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.

People Services

5.7 There are no staffing implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

5.8 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will consider the climate change, nature and Net Zero implications relevant to the work programme items.

Corporate Parenting

5.9 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will consider the corporate parenting responsibilities and opportunities relevant to the work programme.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A: Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024 - 2025

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 There are no background papers.

Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024 –2025

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
19 Jun 2024	Committee Work Programme 2024/25 IRP Programme: Deliver Savings and Balance the Budget	To note the Committee Terms of Reference and agree key issues to be considered by the Committee during 2024/25 and the scrutiny methods that will be used to undertake this work.	Committee meeting single item: written report. Deadline for reports: 3 June 2024	Christian Scade - Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services	N/A	This is a standard item for all future Committee meetings. Outcome: The Committee noted their Terms of Reference and agreed their work programme.
19 Jun 2024	Member Visit to City of Birmingham School (COBS) IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme	To build member understanding of the work of the City of Birmingham School to meet the needs of young people so to inform the work of the Committee.	Site Visit.	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	Steve Howell – Headteacher Barry Bowles - Chair of the Management Board Sunil Vyakaranam - Deputy Head Helen Ellis - Director, SEND and Inclusion	Outcome: Cllrs Kerry Jenkins (Chair), Adam Higgs, Zafar Iqbal, and Shehla Moledina visited COBS and gained a greater understanding of the work of COBS to meet the needs of young people, and the outcomes will be used to inform the work of the Committee.

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
17 Jul 2024	Birmingham School Attendance Strategy 2024 - 2028 IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme	To comment / make recommendations on the draft strategy prior to it going to Cabinet for approval.	Committee meeting single item: written report. Deadline for reports: 1 July 2024	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	Razia Butt - Director of Thriving Children and Families Edwina Langley - Lead Attendance Officer Alan Michell - Head of Admissions	Members are keen to look through the lens of SEND and COBS / alternative provision when discussing items at committee meetings, and transport is recognised as being an important part of attendance for schools. Outcome: the Committee commented on the draft strategy, further work will be undertaken in relation to councillors assisting in the promotion of school attendance, and further updates on the strategy will be provided annually.
17 Jul 2024	Implications and Impact of Identified Savings	To examine the impact and implications of the delivery of budget saving	Task and Finish Group	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member,	Lee Yale-Helms on behalf of James Thomas	Savings to be considered at this meeting were agreed

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	IRP Programme: Deliver Savings and Balance the Budget	areas identified by the committee.		Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	- Chief Executive, Birmingham Children's Trust Adrian Weissenbruch - AD, Children and Young Peoples Travel Service Paul Durrant - Finance Business Partner	by the Committee in June: Savings: 89, 90, 150, 146, 148, 151, and 185. Future items relating the Budget Savings and Financial Recovery are to be scheduled. Outcome: the recommendations will be reported to the Corporate and Finance OSC for discussion on 26 September 2024.
11 Oct 2024 11.00 – 12.00	Alternative Solution for Schools HR, Payroll and Finance Business Case	To note the contents of the business case and provide comment and feedback on the recommended approach.	Committee meeting single item: written report. Deadline for reports: 26 September 2024	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families	Catherine Taylor-Ludolf, HR Shared Services - School HR & Payroll Programme Lead	Outcome: Comments from O&S Committee was reported to Cabinet on 15 October where the comments were noted.

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	IRP Priority: Oracle Reimplementation Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria: Delivery of Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities			Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families		<p>The committee has requested to be updated prior to September 2025 on the monitoring of the impact of these changes on schools, and how schools were managing to administer their HR, Payroll and Finance.</p> <p>The committee has requested to continue to be updated on how schools' participation in engagement activities and processes was being managed and monitored.</p>
23 Oct 2024	Update on Birmingham Strategic Youth Justice Plan 2023-2028	An update on the performance and progress of the five-year plan published in 2023.	Committee Meeting: Single item	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families	David Stringfellow – Director, Commissioning and Specialist Services,	The Strategic Youth Justice Plan: 2023 – 2028 was previously discussed by the Neighbourhoods O&S Committee and the

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	<p>IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme</p> <p>Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria: Life and Limb Services</p>		Deadline for reports: 7 October 2024	Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	<p>Birmingham Children's Trust</p> <p>Dave Webb - Interim Head of Service, Youth Offending Service, Birmingham Children's Trust</p>	<p>Education, Children and Young People O&S Committee in August 2023. It was approved at City Council on 12 Sep 2023 and the papers are available here.</p> <p>Outcome: The Committee noted the update and provided feedback.</p> <p>The Committee requested to be provided with quarterly briefing notes to explain what was happening in relation to the improvement journey being rated Good, the risks identified and the impact they were having.</p>

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
						The Committee requested future updates need to be succinct, or a summary is to be provided.
23 Oct 2024	<p>Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service (CYPTS)</p> <p>IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme</p> <p>Scrutiny development plan criteria Safe and effective key services for vulnerable people</p>	<p>An update and assurance to be provided on the service and September 2024 mobilisation.</p> <p>To also provide an overview of the impact of changes to the post 16 transport policy, including number of appeals, and number of changes to the transport packages.</p>	<p>Committee Meeting: single item</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 7 October 2024</p>	<p>Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families</p> <p>Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families</p>	<p>Adrian Weissenbruch - Director, Children's Commissioning and Performance</p>	<p>This was last discussed at the 19 July 2023 committee meeting and the paper is available here and the minutes are available here.</p> <p>Outcome: The Committee discussed the impact of the changes to the post 16-transport policy and requested:</p> <p>Information explaining the plans for post-16 transport policy change and impact to enable the Committee to have further discussions on this.</p>

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
						<p>An update report on the attendance work, to include information on post-16s that have moved under the remit of Adult Social Care, as soon as it was available.</p> <p>The up-to-date appeals figures.</p> <p>An update report on utilising empty seats when the work had taken place.</p>
23 Oct 2024	<p>Savings 2024/25 – Progress Report</p> <p>IRP Priority: Deliver Savings and Balance the Budget</p> <p>Scrutiny Development</p>	To inform the Committee of the delivery of the 2024/25 budget savings within the Committee's terms of reference and the Committee to agree any recommendations.	<p>Committee Meeting: single item</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 7 October 2024</p>	<p>Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families</p> <p>Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic</p>	<p>James Thomas – CEX, BCT</p> <p>Lee Yale-Helms - Director, Finance & Resources, BCT</p>	The report was taken to the Corporate and Finance OSC on 27 September 2024. A separate cover report was provided for each Committee that indicated the savings relevant to their TOR.

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Plan Criteria: Delivery of Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities, and equality issues arising from the budget	To include the Review of Youth Service, NEET and Careers (Saving 89) and discuss the Young People Services Review report on this saving.		Director, Children and Families	For Saving 89: Steve Kay - Director, Schools and Employability, and Spencer Wilson - Interim Head of Service for Employment and Skills	<p>Outcome: The Committee discussed the progress of delivering the savings and the following to be provided:</p> <p>A paper explaining to Members what was proposed and decided for the Careers and NEET Services.</p> <p>The Young People's Service Review to enable the Committee to explore before the new year undertaking a focussed piece of work (Task & Finish) regarding the future model and what young people would like to see in relation to youth services.</p>

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
23 Oct 2024	<p>Delivery of IRP Programme</p> <p>IRP Aim: A council delivering good services. Children and Families Improvement</p> <p>Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria: Delivery of Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities</p>	To inform the Committee of the delivery of the Improvement Recovery Plan Programme within the Committee's terms of reference - Improving Services for Children and Families IRP Programme and the Committee to agree any recommendations.	<p>Committee Meeting: single item</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 7 October 2024</p>	<p>Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families</p> <p>Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families</p>		<p>All O&S Committees discussed the progress to date for the IRP Programmes relevant to their remit.</p> <p>Outcome: The Committee was updated on the Improving Services for Children and Families IRP Programme.</p>
4 Dec 2024	<p>SEND Commissioner (12.00 – 1.00pm)</p> <p>IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families</p>	An invitation to the SEND Commissioner to be extended so the Committee can be provided with an update on SEND Improvement and the Commissioner's governance role.	<p>Committee Meeting: single item</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 18 November 2024</p>	<p>Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families</p> <p>Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic</p>	Mr John Coughlan CBE	<p>Mr Coughlan CBE last attended on 29 November 2023 and the paper is available here and the minutes are available here.</p> <p>The Third Report to the Secretary of State</p>

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Improvement Programme Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria: Safe and effective key services for vulnerable people, Life and Limb services			Director, Children and Families		for Education is available here . The Acceptance of Recommendations from the SEND Commissioners Third Report was debated at Cabinet on 12 Nov 24 and the report is available here .
4 Dec 2024	Improving Services for Children and Families Plan Update IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme Scrutiny Development	To comment / make recommendations on the progress of the improvement plan.	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 18 November 2024	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	Fayth Skeete - Head of Strategic, Governance and Planning	This was last discussed at the 15 May 2024 committee meeting and the papers are available here and the minutes are available here . The Independent Chair – Sally Rowe, Improving Services for Children and Families Board sends her apologies, and an invite can be sent for

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Plan Criteria: Delivery of Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities					attendance at a future committee meeting.
4 Dec 2024	<p>Progress Report on Implementation of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) Inquiry Recommendations</p> <p>IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme</p> <p>Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria Monitoring the implementation of scrutiny recommendations</p>	To monitor the recommendations of the Committee's Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry.	<p>Committee Meeting: single item</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 18 November 2024</p>	<p>Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families</p> <p>Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families</p>	TBC	<p>The report was debated and agreed at City Council on 16 April 2024 and is available here.</p> <p>During the City Council debate Cllr Kooner raised suggestions for working with a) places of worship, b) education establishments and that teachers include ACEs training as part of the compulsory teacher training days, and c) the importance of the Child's voice being heard independently.</p>

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
22 Jan 2025	<p>Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership's (BSCP) 2022/23 and 2023/24 Annual Reports</p> <p>IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme</p> <p>Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria Safe and effective key services for vulnerable people, life and limb services</p>	To make comments / recommendations on the annual reports.	<p>Committee Meeting: single item</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 6 January 2025</p>	<p>Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families</p> <p>Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families</p>	<p>James Thomas - Co-Chair, BSCP (CEX of the Children's Trust)</p> <p>Richard North - Co-Chair, BSCP (Police Commander for Birmingham)</p> <p>Simon Cross, Business Manager, BSCP</p>	<p>The Committee last discussed the BSCP on 16 February 2022. The papers are available here and consist of the Independent Chair's Accountability Report 2020-21, Business Improvement Plan 2021-23, and a power point presentation. The minutes are available here.</p>
22 Jan 2025	Savings 2024/25 – Progress Report	To inform the Committee of the delivery of the 2024/25 budget savings	Committee Meeting: single item	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member,	TBC	

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria: Delivery of Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities, Equity Issues Arising from the Budget	within the Committee's terms of reference and the Committee to agree any recommendations.	Deadline for reports: 6 January 2025	Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families		
22 Jan 2025	Delivery of IRP Programme Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria: Delivery of Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities, Equity Issues Arising from the Budget	To inform the Committee of the delivery of the IRP Programme within the Committee's terms of reference – - Improving Services for Children and Families IRP Programme	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 6 January 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	Gemma Malhi, Head of Corporate Portfolio Management Office	This could include the overview of the programme and also a specific update on transformation / redesign regarding Thriving, Children and Families, and the Birmingham Children's Trust - Trust 2025.

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
26 Feb 2025	Developing the governance around school exclusions, Elective Home Education (EHE) and part time timetables IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme	The draft to come to the Committee to provide an opportunity to comment on proposals.	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 10 February 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	Razia Butt - Director of Thriving Children and Families Steve Kay – Director of Schools and Employability	
26 Feb 2025	Birmingham Children's Trust IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme	To provide an update on the Children's Trust (to include the short breaks review).	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 10 February 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director,	James Thomas - Chief Executive, BCT David Stringfellow - Interim Director of Practice, BCT	The Children's Trust provided an update on progress with the Trust Priorities 2022/23 and shared the draft 2023/24 strategic priorities on 5 April 2023 and the paper is available here and the minutes are available here .

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
				Children and Families	Carolyn Connor - Strategic Improvement Lead, BCT	<p>An update on the Children's Trust Ofsted Inspection (ILACS) was provided on 17 May 2023 and the papers are available here and the minutes are available here.</p> <p>An update on the Short Breaks Review was provided on 15 May 2024 and the paper is available here and the minutes are available here.</p>
9 Apr 2025	Delivery of Savings Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria: Delivery of Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities, Equity	To inform the Committee of the delivery of the 2024/25 budget savings within the Committee's terms of reference and the Committee to agree any recommendations.	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 24 March 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director,	TBC	

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Issues Arising from the Budget			Children and Families		
9 Apr 2025	Delivery of IRP Programme Scrutiny Development Plan Criteria: Delivery of Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities, Equity Issues Arising from the Budget	To inform the Committee of the delivery of the IRP Programmes within the Committee's terms of reference and the Committee to agree any recommendations.	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 24 March 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	TBC	
9 Apr 2025	School Attainment TBC for April or May IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families	To examine school attainment and what is being done to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 24 March 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director,	Lisa Smith, School Improvement – Lead for Strategic Development David Fallows - Head of Digital,	School Attainment was discussed at the 10 Apr 24 committee meeting. The papers are available here and the minutes are available here .

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Improvement Programme			Children and Families		
9 Apr 2025	School Improvement TBC for April or May IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme	To examine school improvement and what is being done to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 24 March 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	Lisa Smith - School Improvement – Lead for Strategic Development David Fallows - Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance Evidence and Performance	School Improvement – the New Relationship with Schools was discussed at the 29 Nov 23 committee meeting. The paper is available here and the minutes are available here .
14 May 2025	School Attainment TBC for April or May IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families	To examine school attainment and what is being done to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 25 April 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director,	Lisa Smith - School Improvement – Lead for Strategic Development	

Date At 10am in Committee Rooms 3&4	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Improvement Programme			Children and Families		
14 May 2025	School Improvement TBC for April or May IRP Aim: A council delivering good services: Children and Families Improvement Programme	To examine school improvement and what is being done to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.	Committee Meeting: single item Deadline for reports: 25 April 2025	Cllr Mick Brown - Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families Dr Sue Harrison - Strategic Director, Children and Families	Lisa Smith - School Improvement – Lead for Strategic Development David Fallows - Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance	School Improvement – the New Relationship with Schools was discussed at the 29 Nov 23 committee meeting. The paper is available here and the minutes are available here .

*Outcome: This will be populated once the item/topic has been completed. It will identify the added value and impact.

Menu of Issues for Consideration

The following items had been previously identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

This is a live work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

Topic	Notes including any suggested dates, method of scrutiny
Birmingham Children's Trust (Children's Services)	The Committee has previously received an annual update and may wish to schedule a future report.
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). This may be a briefing session to understand the process.
School Attainment and Achievement Strategies	Draft to come to OSC to provide an opportunity to comment on proposals.
Children and Young People's Travel Service (CYPTS) – Impact of policy changes and budget savings	Discussed at the 23 October 2024 meeting and further information to be provided to the Committee.
Review of the careers 16 – 19, youth service and NEET – impact of changes and budget savings	Discussed at the 23 October 2024 meeting and further information to be provided to the Committee.
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.
Early Years, Primary Education, and Exclusions	Members are keen to gain a better understanding and at the visit to COBS in June requested a visit to the primary unit at COBS and a mainstream primary school is organised.
Draft Achievement Strategy	Summer 2025.
Birmingham School Attendance Strategy 2024 – 2028	Updates to be provided annually (July 2025).

Topic	Notes including any suggested dates, method of scrutiny
Update on Birmingham Strategic Youth Justice Plan 2023-2028	The next annual update to be provided in 2025.
Development of a Youth Strategy	This piece of work would be suited for a T&F/focused piece of work.
Family Hubs Programme	An update on progress and plans, plus how they are to be funded long term and/or what other support is needed to make up for any future drop in funding.

Scrutiny Method Options: Committee meeting single item, Committee meeting single theme, Task and Finish Group, Site Visit, Inquiry Evidence Gathering, Briefings