

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 13 September 2007

Subject: Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan

Electoral Wards Affected: All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Background

1.1 This report has two related purposes. Firstly, it provides members with an update on some of the key children's services work and developments since the last update report to the Scrutiny Board in April 2007. In doing this it pays particular attention to the ongoing development of our children's trust arrangements. Secondly, it draws attention to the priorities identified in our recently reviewed Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). In doing so it focuses specifically on the work being done on two of these priorities:

- Improving the assessment and care of children in need
- Reducing the proportion of vulnerable groups not in education, employment or training.

These two areas have been chosen for particular attention now because (unlike many of the other priorities) they are not picked up in detail in the Scrutiny Board's 2007/08 work plan. However, over the year, through these update reports and the wider Scrutiny Board work plan, Members will get an overview of the work being done across the *full range* of priorities identified.

1.2 The report therefore aims to provide the following:

- Brief background on the different elements of our children's trust arrangements – recognising that several members of the scrutiny board have not been involved in children's services scrutiny before it provides a short summary of how our children's trust model fits together.

- Following from this, an update on some of the main work that the different aspects of the trust arrangements have been involved in since the last update to scrutiny in April 2007.
- A broader overview of some key progress and issues in children's services work is then provided. This is put into context by looking at some of the main national and regional developments that inform our work in Leeds.
- An update on some of the main progress made in relation to children and young people's participation, acknowledging the fundamental importance of this work as highlighted previously by the scrutiny board.
- An overview of the approach and priorities identified in our reviewed Children and Young People's Plan.
- Focus on work we are doing on two of these priorities specifically and some of the key challenges in these areas.

2.0 Our children's trust arrangements – a brief overview

2.1 Set out in the 2004 Children Act is the requirement for each local authority to develop its own children trust arrangements – appropriate means of bringing together key and wider partners whose work impacts on children and young people so that they share intelligence, experience, resources and focus to improve outcomes. Our children's trust arrangements in Leeds have six main elements:

- Children Leeds Partnership
- Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board
- Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Open Forums
- Director of Children's Services Unit
- Locality Arrangements

2.2 Each of these six elements plays a different role contributing to improving outcomes for children and young people in Leeds. The diagram at appendix A demonstrates this:

The Children Leeds Partnership

2.3 As well as being an element of the children's trust arrangements, the Children Leeds Partnership is also a subgroup of the Leeds Initiative and as such provides advocacy and challenge to secure improved outcomes across the whole city on children and young people issues. It does so by bringing a wide range of partners together either through the main partnership, or subgroups of this to consult and contribute on key issues, strategies and developments. The Partnership is to have subgroups that help particular partners to best focus on priorities drawn from the Children and Young People's Plan. The Partnership is Chaired by the Lead Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Councillor Richard Brett and also includes a councillor from the administrating alliance and from the main opposition party.

The Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board

2.4 The Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board oversees key commissioning and budget issues. It is chaired by the Director of Children's Services and comprises 'relevant partners', as laid down in the Children Act, as well as other key partners. Its role is to commission services to meet the needs of young people, setting standards

for service and monitoring performance. It will oversee and monitor the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan through the Director of Children's Services Unit.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board

- 2.5 The Safeguarding Board is Chaired by an independent person (currently Judith Dodd), appointed by the Director of Children's Services. The day-to-day work of the Board is led by the Safeguarding Manager, Bryan Gocke. The Board's main roles are to set standards, identify best practice and investigate poor practice and complaints, for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Leeds.

Open Forums

- 2.6 Open Forums take the form of a series of events – either city-wide or local – open to those involved, or interested in the way that services are delivered for children and young people. They help ensure interaction with children, young people and their parents and carers is comprehensive and effective. They support communications, sharing best practice and learning across the city. Getting professionals working alongside each other can help to break down barriers and enable the 'wrap around the child' that is required to support local improvement. Previous events have taken the form of a 'marketplace' (see below), a conference and a session planned, organised and run by parents, carers and young people themselves.

The Director of Children's Services Unit

- 2.7 The Director of Children's Service Unit has been designed to be an integral part of the children's trust arrangements and not simply a section of the council. It takes a leading role providing and supporting effective forward planning, decision-making, risk analysis and performance management at strategic levels.

Locality Arrangements

- 2.8 Given the importance of making a difference at a local level and impacting on those services which affect outcomes for children and young people, the local aspects of the children's trust arrangements are crucial. The five Children Leeds Wedge Partnership Groups are developing and operating within the context of the broader Leeds Initiative District Partnerships, linking into the council's area committee structure so that there is good member engagement in children and young people's issues. A key area of development is to link the work of the wedge partnerships to more localised arrangements developing around clusters of schools and children's centres, which are key to improving outcomes and integrating services at the front line. The Locality Enablers within the Director of Children's Services Unit will play a key role in taking this work forward.

3.0 Our children's trust arrangements – recent progress

- 3.1 Each of the elements of the trust arrangements outlined above has made important progress over recent months, a summary of some of the key work conducted is below
- The **Local Safeguarding Children Board** has appointed its independent Chair, Judith Dodd and a Safeguarding Manager, Bryan Gocke. The Board is leading

on a range of work to raise the profile of safeguarding work and made positive progress across a number of areas. It has helped to develop and provide protocols and procedures to guide interagency safeguarding work. It has facilitated and delivered a comprehensive multi-agency training programme to promote and support safeguarding work. A wide range of partners have engaged in this programme, both as trainees and trainers. It has undertaken serious case reviews where required and identified areas for improvement in ways of working. By April 2008 the Board will also be responsible for reviewing all child deaths in Leeds. Although partner agencies cannot be directed by the Board to undertake particular actions, the Board can make recommendations to improve safeguarding. As such it is essential that partners are fully engaged in and signed up to the importance of safeguarding work

- The **Children Leeds Partnership** (CLP) continues to be well attended by partners and is providing a valuable forum for an open discussion of ideas and information sharing around key strategic and service developments, which can then inform wider partnership working. Its work has included focusing on CYP priorities, JAR preparations, and looking in detail at a range of emerging key strategies for children and young people, including the Family Support and Parenting Strategy, the Youth Crime Prevention Strategy, the Workforce Reform Strategy and the Anti-Bullying Strategy. At its September meeting it will focus on the work being done to develop effective locality working and hear the health perspective from the Director of Planning and Commissioning for Children and Maternity Services.
- The **Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board** (ISCB) is establishing a clear structure within its meetings to ensure it balances performance management, information on key service areas and commissioning work. It has considered issues that include monitoring and performance management looking at the early Youth Crime Prevention Strategy and considering its commissioning implications. It has also looked at the development of the Workforce Strategy and agreed that all partners will provide a link officer to work toward developing the strategy. The Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board has recently established a 'joint preventative commissioning partnership' enabling partners to route between £30 and £50 million worth of expenditure through a single common system of commissioning against the delivery of a 0-19 universal offer for Leeds children and young people. Effectively, partners will channel funding that they may previously have spent on a series of separate commissioning activities to look at joint shared priorities (feeding down from the Children and Young People's Plan) and how they can be targeted more effectively.
- In June, the latest round of **Open Forum** events were held in each of the five wedges of the city (as well as an additional evening event in the city centre) for anyone to attend to learn more about services in their local area. Using a 'marketplace' format, services were invited to attend and set up stalls that promote and inform about the work they do. Attendees included a wide range of council services, colleagues from health, the police, education, the voluntary and community sector and business partners and also elected members and the public, including young people themselves. As well as being an excellent networking opportunity, these events helped to build knowledge within local

areas of what work is going on and how this links to wider strategic developments (several citywide services have had stalls at every event).

3.2 Our **locality arrangements** are increasingly helping us to be more responsive to specific local needs by supporting coordinated approaches amongst partners. Over recent months the progress we have seen includes:

- In East Leeds the Children Leeds East Partnership and Schools Area Management Board are addressing exclusion through improved partnership across schools and more coherent multi-agency support.
- In South Leeds they are putting a lot of emphasis on implementing the “core offer” of extended schools and children’s centre. They have also identified local priorities to improve support to parents and families and to develop play and leisure, which they are tackling through improved interagency co-operation.
- West Leeds have decided, amongst many other things, to look particularly at what leads to inappropriate referrals to social care. The aim is to ensure a swifter and more preventative response to better help families and as such all services are looking at gaps in their provision and the routes to referrals.
- The North East area is building its capacity to deliver changes. The new North East Children’s Partnership has worked with Education Leeds’ Organisation Challenge Team to challenge all local parties to improve how they work together so that objectives in the local Children’s and Young People’s Plan will be effectively delivered.
- North West is also building its capacity to deliver on the local plan by improving the working relationship between the interagency North West Children’s Partnership and the Schools Area Management Board. It has taken a particular interest in potential inequalities in accessing the core offer of extended services and has asked Nick Frost from Leeds Metropolitan University to lead some research into this area.

Self-review and learning

3.3 The work detailed above indicates the progress being made to make our trust arrangements effective in helping to improve outcomes for our children and young people. We recognise the importance of reviewing the effectiveness of these arrangements and as such, recent work has brought partners together to review what we are doing well and areas for improvement. We had a ‘Governance Seminar’ in July 2007, which brought together the members of the Children Leeds Partnership (CLP), Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB) and Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to evaluate the progress of each group so far, the similarities and differences in their role and identify opportunities to improve their effectiveness. The event was organised in liaison with the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber and the Audit Commission. An Audit Commission representative presented at the event on ‘effective partnership’. There were a number of key messages from delegates at this event, including:

- Members of the different elements of the partnership have a good understanding of what their role is and how the body they sit on is distinctive from the other elements of the trust arrangements.
- More work needs to be done on areas where the different elements overlap to clarify the role each body plays, for example on performance monitoring.
- Partners can strengthen understanding of each others work through better communication, for example by spending more time in each others organisations.
- Partners can more widely share with colleagues messages that come out of trust arrangement meetings and how the trust arrangements input on important safeguarding work.
- Development is still needed around the style and nature of the various meetings that take place within the trust arrangements, particularly to achieve a balanced work programme across the elements.
- Crucially, the importance of using the trust arrangements to engage more effectively with children, young people and families was a recurring theme.

3.31 These outcomes are currently being considered by each of the three groups involved in the event and clear plans are being drawn up for how they will develop their work, particularly to engage with children and young people more effectively (especially in the case of the CLP). We are also considering how we continue this process of self- evaluation and learning with other similar events in the future.

4.0 Wider developments in children's services

4.1 The children's trust arrangements and the wider children's services approach are important not only for the way they support the specific priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan, but also crucially for the cultural change that they are underpinning. They both facilitate and encourage a coordinated approach across services, helping to meet the specific challenges Leeds faces and respond more effectively to the increasingly wide range of government initiatives related to children and young people. In particular, this approach is important because it enables the Director of Children's Services to influence across a broader range of services than a traditional model. Some noteworthy examples of this approach in practice are:

4.11 Supporting vulnerable children and young people: We have recently appointed a Programme Manager for Integrating Services for children with disabilities, jointly funded by partners in Children's Social Care, Health and Education Leeds. This role will help strengthen the existing good work around support to parents of disabled children by focusing on parent participation, improving information (such as a newsletter for parents of disabled children) providing early support and helping the affected young people and their families through key transition stages.

4.12 Initiatives within schools: Education Leeds was recently awarded £1.8m over 2 years by the Government Standards Fund Grant to provide pupils attending secondary schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) with computers and internet connection. These computers are targeted at those young people in the most deprived areas of the city and include children in care aged between 10 and 16.

- 4.13 We have also appointed Alan Rees as the head teacher of our 'virtual school' for looked after children. This development draws on best practice used by some other Local Authorities ensuring a level of co-ordination, management and accountability for our looked after children, consistent with that operated by a Head Teacher and Governing Body of a school.
- 4.14 Developing the children's workforce: In response to the national 2006 Children's Workforce Strategy, which proposed reform of the early years and childcare workforce by instigating graduate qualified leadership within it, Leeds Early Years Service took an immediate proactive approach to instigating this reform in the local workforce by approaching a local higher education provider, the University of Leeds and proposing development of an innovative 2 year, part time degree programme for senior staff within the sector. Partnership working between the two organisations led to the development of a programme specifically tailored to support the needs of this workforce, many of whom had not studied at higher level before, or for some time. The programme was also tailored to particularly encourage participation of individuals from the private, voluntary and independent sectors, as well as Leeds City Council staff. This has fostered sharing of good practice and a positive attitude to integrated working practice generally across the sector. This year, 25 students from various sectors have passed the first year of the course, and over 40 have been recruited for next year. This partnership will continue to develop, indeed efforts are now underway to develop a Graduate Trainee Scheme to ensure recruitment and retention of graduates in the local workforce.
- 4.15 Improving Access to Information: The implementation of the 'Family Hub' website is a significant step towards the development of more integrated information, advice and guidance for children, young people and their families. It allows users to find a wide variety of services in their area and links to the young people's 'Breeze' website. It is an important step in work towards the requirements of the Youth Offer. The website can be found at www.thefamilyhubleeds.org.
- 4.16 Common Assessment Framework: The Common Assessment Framework (CAF), originally piloted in the west, is now being rolled out across the city. It is starting to provide a single approach to assessment and identify common thresholds (or triggers) for different levels of need amongst children and young people so that there is a shared understanding across services working with those growing up in Leeds around the appropriate level of intervention required. These thresholds (or triggers) have been drawn up through detailed consultation and will be shared with staff through a significant training programme.
- 4.17 Budget Holding Lead Professional: The Budget Holding Lead Professional initiative is based on delivering a seven day response to needs identified by parents and children or young people at risk of social exclusion and not reaching their full potential. The needs will be those communicated to family outreach workers, learning mentors, personal advisors or other universal service workers who are specifically trained to engage with children, young people and their families, and who have received CAF, lead professional and budget holding lead professional training. This locality based group of lead professionals will have access to a devolved budget of up to £1000 for each child, young person or family to:
- Ensure children and families access services when they need them, improving outcomes

- Improve multi-agency working
- Reduce the likelihood of overlaps and duplication of work among practitioners, reducing the cost of interventions
- Identify gaps in service provision to inform commissioning

This is being coordinated on a locality basis by the Head of Children's Centre Services based in the designated area hub children's centre supported by their Management Board and accountable body. This radical approach to ensuring that we identify and respond to need, with a proportionate and timely response is at the heart of how the service transformation will continue.

- 4.18 The examples above provide a snapshot of the type of work, much of it best practice, that is increasingly being developed and delivered to improve outcomes – looking to take opportunities to share knowledge, capacity and skills to target individual needs as well as those of different groups of children.

The Wider Context: National and Regional Developments:

- 4.2 The work and developments detailed above sit within the context of some significant developments around children's services. These include the following:
- 4.21 The new national government departmental arrangements: These see the Department for Education and Skills replaced by the Department for Children's, Schools and Families (DCSF) and separately the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. This change has positive implications for the development of a coordinated children's services agenda, reflecting the important link between education and wider social policy. One important feature of the new Department is the notion of 'Dual Key' policy development – i.e. that on key shared issues, such as childhood obesity and youth sport, policies and budgets will only be approved once all the Departments involved have signed up. This is similar to the development of cross-governmental Public Service Agreements and strategies that are emerging from the ongoing Comprehensive Spending Review. This approach nationally will help reinforce local efforts to ensure all services fully consider implications for children and young people right across their work.
- 4.22 Following on from the changes to the government departments is the recently announced proposed changes to the funding of post-16 education away from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and into more local authority delegation. Indications so far are that 2010/11 would be the estimated year of transition for these arrangements. It will be important to be proactive in considering the implication of these changes particular in coordinating our work around the 14-19 agenda.
- 4.23 The publication of the White Paper Care Matters: Time for Change, in June 2007. This paper addresses a number of key issues around the support of children in care not covered in detail by Every Child Matters. This renewed focus by central government and the calls the report makes for the greater involvement of business will strengthen the work already being done in Leeds and reinforce the high priority being given to supporting some of our most vulnerable young people. The process of taking the Care Matters White Paper through parliament will begin in the autumn of

2007, around which time consultation on the practical implementation of the developments it outlines will also take place.

- 4.24 The ten year youth strategy -"Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities": Published by the government in July, this builds on the previous Youth Matters initiative and on Clause 6 of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act. The strategy focuses on empowerment, access and quality and includes a strong leadership role for local authorities and the third sector. The stated intention of the Government is to underpin the youth strategy by announcing, in the next Comprehensive Spending Review later this year, extra funding for youth services for the period 2008-11.
- 4.25 Relating to the above, work is continuing towards the transfer of the Connexions Services from a regional base to individual local authorities, helping to create an integrated youth support service (IYSS) in Leeds. This work incorporates the development of the Youth Offer, which will be published in November. More details of IYSS and youth offer developments are contained in a report on this Scrutiny Board's agenda providing the responses of the Director of Children's Services to the recommendations of the recent Youth Services inquiry.

Children and Young People's Participation:

- 4.3 In line with previous comments made by the Scrutiny Board we recognise the importance of our trust arrangements and their impact being accountable to children and young people. Therefore, key to assessing how well the arrangements are working is our ability to meet the challenge of engaging more effectively with children and young people themselves to help us shape services to their needs. There is a great deal of work underway in Leeds that involves children and young people: school councils, the youth council, volunteering schemes, the Children's Fund projects, Breeze, ROAR (Reach Out And Reconnect), Investors in Pupils and much more. However, we want to move towards a more systematic approach that will ensure that children and young people are active partners in making decisions, checking out what is working and shaping things for the future. Recent developments towards this goal include:
- A Children and Young People's Involvement Advocate in each of the five wedges - this role has been taken on by officers in addition to their usual range of responsibilities and looks to work across agencies with the wedge partnership to advocate for and support children and young people's involvement and participation. Wedge partnerships are beginning to establish participation subgroups to ensure that their work is informed by the views of children and young people.
 - The Children Leeds Strategic Partnership Group - this is a multi-agency group, chaired by the Strategic Leader for Partnerships and Participation brought together to provide the direction for children and young people's participation across the partnership. The group is working on producing a Children and Young People's Participation Strategy for Leeds. This will include the Participation Evaluation Tool (PET) and charter that are already in place, as well as the national Hear by Right standards. Leeds has been chosen to form

part of the National Youth Agency's pilot programme to support and establish the standards within children's trust arrangements.

- The 'Talking Leeds' DVD - A DVD of young people talking about growing up in Leeds is produced each year as part of Breeze on Tour. Young people from ROAR are conducting the interviews. This year the major focus is on being safe, but it will also help us to think about what sense of place and identity exists in our city.
- The 5.2.13 Crew - to ensure that the younger age range's views are represented and that they can also get involved. Children aged 5 to 13 are recruited through Breeze on Tour to become part of the Crew. They receive the 5.2.13 magazine, which is written and designed by children, and get invited to join in a wide range of activities such as reviewing different leisure activities from a child's perspective.

4.31 The examples above demonstrate the ongoing effort and commitment of partners across our trust arrangements in recognising both the importance and challenge of engaging with young people more effectively.

5.0 The Children and Young People's Plan: Priorities and Progress

5.1 The information above addresses the first purpose of this report, to provides members with an update on some of the key children's services related work and developments since the last update report to the Scrutiny Board in April 2007. This section provides a reminder of the priorities detailed in the first review of our children of young people's plan and talks about the work being done around these. As discussed above it focuses on two priorities specifically in doing this:

- Improving the assessment and care of children in need
- Reducing the proportion of vulnerable groups not in education, employment or training.

Our Approach:

5.2 We want every child and young person in Leeds to be happy, healthy, safe and successful and free from the effects of poverty. In June 2007 we published a review of the Children and Young People's Plan that re-affirmed this ambition and how it would be achieved in terms of the approach to be taken and the priorities that would help guide children's services work. The approach is based on:

- *Personalisation* of services to each individual child and young persons needs.
- *Participation* of parents, carers and young people themselves in developing and supporting services.
- *Partnership* working across all those involved with children and young people so that we realise our aims together.
- *Prevention* of problems for children and young people at the earliest possible opportunity by building resilience, safeguarding and through effective early intervention and support.

5.21 The priorities of the Plan are set out in the table attached at appendix B. Under the arrangements to commission services to help achieve the priorities, members of the Children's Services Leadership Team are 'hosting' particular priorities with a view to taking a strategic lead and overview to ensure work on them is effectively co-ordinated, resourced and understood. Hosting is more than just leading on a piece of work, it is also about taking the work forward on behalf of partners working with children and young people and making sure that everything we do is done through a partnership approach. This provides a clear line of ownership that links senior management to the practical work being done to address these issues, but also ensures those at the front line get a clear leadership message encouraging them to work flexibly, imaginatively and in coordination with others.

Our Progress:

5.3 A wide variety of work is being carried out across the full range of Plan priorities, many of which will be picked up by the Scrutiny Board during the year as part of its workplan. The below draws attention to two of these areas particularly to demonstrate the progress and ongoing challenges in these areas.

Improving the assessment and care of children in need:

Background:

5.4 Between 2002 and 2004, Leeds reorganised all of its field social work teams into being either Assessment or Care Management teams. There were two main drivers for this change:

- Firstly: the implementation, in 2002, of the new National Assessment Framework, which had been published in 2000. For the first time, this set best practice standards for the content and method of conducting assessments, of which there would be two types:
 - Initial Assessment: These should be completed within seven working days of the receipt of a referral. The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether the subject is a "child in need" (of targeted services that ensure their proper care and development). That conclusion may be quickly reached in some cases, though the child must always be seen as part of the assessment.
 - Core Assessment: If the child goes on to have this more detailed analysis of their needs (and how to meet them) then it should be completed within a further 35 working days.
- Secondly: as it helped the Department to manage the varying (and potentially competing) demands of dealing with new work, while paying proper attention to those children who already have care plans, including looked after children. The quality of the work in the first few weeks of a new case can have a very long term effect on outcomes for children.

Performance

5.41 Meeting the requirements in respect of the timescales for assessments has always been challenging. In the past in Leeds there was a time when the success rate was

between 30% and 40%. However, over the last two years there have been steady improvements and performance now stands at 76% for initial assessments and 68% for core assessments (with the comparable figures for last year being 73% and 58%). This improvement is the result of commitment to clear action plans and has been achieved in the context of the challenge of meeting growing demands with stretched capacity.

- 5.42 However, as acknowledged by the CYP Plan priority, further increases in performance are needed. As such, this is the intention of plans that underpin the 14 priorities contained in the first (and recently published) Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care Service Improvement Plan.

Issues and Actions:

Meeting our challenges:

- 5.43 When the government introduced the Assessment Framework, it was supported by a suite of forms and paperwork to complement those already in place and known as the "looked after children materials". These were not mandatory and local authorities had the opportunity to use their own paperwork. Leeds chose to do this.
- 5.44 The government then recently introduced the Integrated Children's System (ICS), a framework for assessment, care and record keeping around children in need and their families. This system provides the criteria against which our own system, the Leeds Electronic Social Care Record (ESCR) can be measured. As such, an external review of the ESCR system has been conducted in which it met the vast majority of the criteria and was judged as one of the better in-house systems in the country. The review identified the need to develop work to produce a number of reports deriving from the 'looked after children materials' described above and as such we moved to adopt the paperwork that relates to this. Staff have been actively engaged in working to implement these changes and recognise this will support better quality assessments and planning for children, especially those who are "looked after".
- 5.46 There are 27 forms (often known as "exemplars") and a timetable is being drawn up to introduce the majority of them by April 2008. This will form part of the continued development of ESCR into a tool that will genuinely support social workers.

Dealing with incoming work:

- 5.47 In the past year there were 9076 calls about children's social care cases to the contact centre, which were referred on to the social work service. Of those, 4669 (51%) went on to have an initial assessment and, of those, 1148 (25%) a core assessment. The proportion going on to assessment in Leeds is comparable with other Authorities, indicating that referrals are generally appropriate. However, this process is the subject of attention in various ways:
- Reflecting our desire to work with partners to identify opportunities for improvement, a significant piece of research is being conducted by Leeds Metropolitan University, intended to track the process, with particular reference to those cases that do not go on to the next stage.

- The work with the university will help to inform a project already well under way between the social care service and the contact centre. Although the relationship between the two is already very effective, it may still be possible to institute changes (possibly including basing some social workers in the contact centre) to further improve it. This work closely overlaps with changes being planned for the Emergency Duty Team, which could include extended “opening hours”.

- 5.48 There continue to be a large number of children and young people within the social care system and as such a range of work across children’s services partners is being done to address this issue collectively. To support this, a multi-agency group has recently been established to investigate how the partner agencies of the Social Care service may contribute differently to work with children who may be described as “on the edge of care”. This in turn complements other work being done to produce criteria to help determine whether, when and how cases may require the involvement of more specialist services. There is strong commitment from those working in this area and more details of the outcomes of this work are expected shortly.
- 5.49 In the meantime, area teams in the West of the city have recently begun using Multi Agency Planning (MAP) meetings as a way of responding to some new referrals. These have proved particularly useful in cases of teenagers seen by their parents as “beyond control”. These are cases where admission to care tends to be less effective and also where return home is not easily achieved. However, much better outcomes are being realised by bringing together officers from a variety of agencies to discuss the needs of the family. This produces quick, planned and coordinated input from different professionals. Not only is this keeping families together but also addressing the issues that gave rise to the referral in the first place.
- 5.50 Similar approaches are being used in other parts of the city. In the East, for example, they are aligned with work on cases of anti-social behaviour. These various methods are soon to be audited and evaluated, so that we can determine what best practice we should seek to establish consistently across the city. This work may be informed by the outcomes of a bid we have made to pilot intensive intervention in certain types of case under the heading of MST, Multi-Systemic Therapy.
- 5.51 In addition, the work relating to the Budget Holding Lead Professionals for Looked After Children (see above) will enable social workers to quickly and innovatively mobilise resources, either to ensure better outcomes for looked after children, or to prevent them becoming looked after at all.
- 5.52 Thus, whilst the issue of improving the assessment and care of children in need has been identified as a priority because of the particular issues and challenges around it, there is a thorough understanding of what the main factors that can support improvement are and a range of actions underway to ensure that this takes place.

Reducing the proportion of vulnerable groups not in education, employment or training (NEET):

Background

- 5.6 Over the last fifteen years the numbers of young people who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) nationally has remain around 10% of all young

people. In November 2006 in Leeds, the percentage of young people, aged 16-18, was 9.0% and is falling year on year. In addition there were around 7.7% of young people for whom we had no known destination (Not Known) some of these may be NEET. The local PSA target for Leeds, for 2010, is to reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds who are NEET to 6.8%. This will be a challenging task for Leeds partners.

- 5.61 Connexions nationally, identified target groups of young people who are more likely to become NEET. These identified groups are: Teenage Mothers; Young Offenders; young people Leaving Care and young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD). These four target groups have been prioritised for interventions to reduce NEET over the last 3 years by our Partnership. The case studies below provide some examples of the work that happens with these groups to reduce the proportion who are NEET.

Issues and Actions

- 5.62 Leeds has had a NEET strategy since 2002. In April 2007 a NEET Coordination Officer was appointed, situated in the Education Leeds 14-19 team. The NEET Strategy and Action Plan is currently under annual review, before a final version is agreed by the 14-19 Strategy Group and Connexions Local Management Committee Operations Group in October.
- 5.63 Further analysis will be carried out of the NEET cohort to identify other groups that are over-represented. Investigation is to take place over the next 8 months of the following groups: young people from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities; young carers; refugees and asylum seekers and young people who are homeless.
- 5.64 The transition to an Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) in Leeds means that providers of services to young people will go through a period of change in contracting and management arrangements. This process requires careful leadership to ensure that it does not negatively impact on delivery of services to young people, and therefore the number of young people who are NEET. If Leeds is to further reduce the number of young people who are NEET a wider ownership of the target is needed, in particular by schools. There exists a strong partnership but this needs extending and consolidating.

Addressing young people's issues: Case Studies

- 5.65 Amanda became a young mother whilst at school. She was referred to a Learning Mentor from the Education Leeds Health Initiatives Team. During Year 11, Amanda said that she was thinking about going to College. Her Learning Mentor then made a referral to one of the Connexions Personal Advisers (PAs) working with Teenage Parents in College. The PA was able to meet Amanda, her Mum and her Learning Mentor. The Connexions PA helped Amanda to look at the options available to her and the financial support her and her Mum could receive. With the support of the PA and her Learning Mentor Amanda applied to College. Amanda received help to look at different childcare options for her son, and for Amanda and her Mum to apply for the right financial support. As a result of this coordinated support from the Connexions PA and the Learning Mentor Amanda was able to enrol on a Level 1 Hairdressing course at College. Amanda has received ongoing support from her Connexions PA to address financial and childcare issues so she can remain in College.

- 5.66 Ben was in Care in Leeds and had recently turned 16. He was contacted by the Connexions PA working with the Pathway Planning Team whilst he was awaiting allocation to a Pathway Planning PA. Ben was living with foster carers. He had not attended the Alternative provision arranged for year 11 with any consistency. The Connexions PA offered Ben advice and guidance about all the options available to him. He decided he would like to attend the e2e programme and his Connexions PA took him to meet the staff at e2e. With the support of foster carers Ben started to attend e2e. After a few weeks Ben's attendance started to wane. The staff at e2e alerted the Connexions PA and Ben's foster carers and they were able to find out that Ben was struggling with literacy, this had led to a crisis of confidence. By assuring him that this could be addressed on the programme his Connexions PA and foster carers were able to get Ben to meet with the programme manager and adjust the work he will be doing. Ben now knows he can raise issues with the programme manager at any time. He has started to attend again.
- 5.67 Dan was referred to the Connexions PA based at the YOS by his YOS worker. Dan was on bail whilst he waited for his hearing. During this time the PA worked with Dan and he started to take part in an e2e programme, where he was undertook an Arts Award. When his case was heard Dan received a custodial sentence and was sent to Wetherby YOI. During his time at the YOI Dan worked with a Connexions PA based there. The PA at Wetherby YOI and the PA at the YOS kept in regular contact with each other and undertook joint meetings with Dan as he neared the end of his sentence. They were able to arrange for Dan to return to e2e when he was released from custody. The Arts Award programme Dan had been taking part in had ended but his PA and support worker at e2e were able to find a way for him to complete the Arts qualification he had started as well as improving his basic skills. Dan is still taking part in an e2e programme and hopes to move in to employment. He receives ongoing support from his YOS worker and Connexions PA.
- 5.68 Chris went to a special school for Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), his Connexions PA first met him in April 2004 whilst in year 10 in school. Initially he wanted to do a course in bricklaying. During year 11 he applied to college but due to a chaotic home-life and homelessness he was unable to attend College. His PA took him to the housing office and eventually he secured a supported council tenancy. Once he was settled he accessed the e2v programme followed by e2e. Chris wanted to start College so his Connexions PA suggested the idea of Preparation for Progression, to improve his confidence as well as his literacy and numeracy. Chris agreed to this and he applied to College with support from his PA. He started in September 2006 and said it transformed his life. Chris is to continue in to the second year of the course in September 2007.
- 5.69 Being NEET is not something that sits in isolation for young people. It is the result of a number of different factors, the factors involved will differ between individuals. A significant reduction in the number of young people who are NEET in Leeds will not be achieved solely through specific, targeted work but through the interventions of a large number of services to reduce social exclusion. The right balance must be found for the allocation of resources between preventative work with young people, to reduce the number who become NEET, and remedial work with 16-19 year olds who are NEET. As a priority in our Children and Young people's Plan, it is clear that the

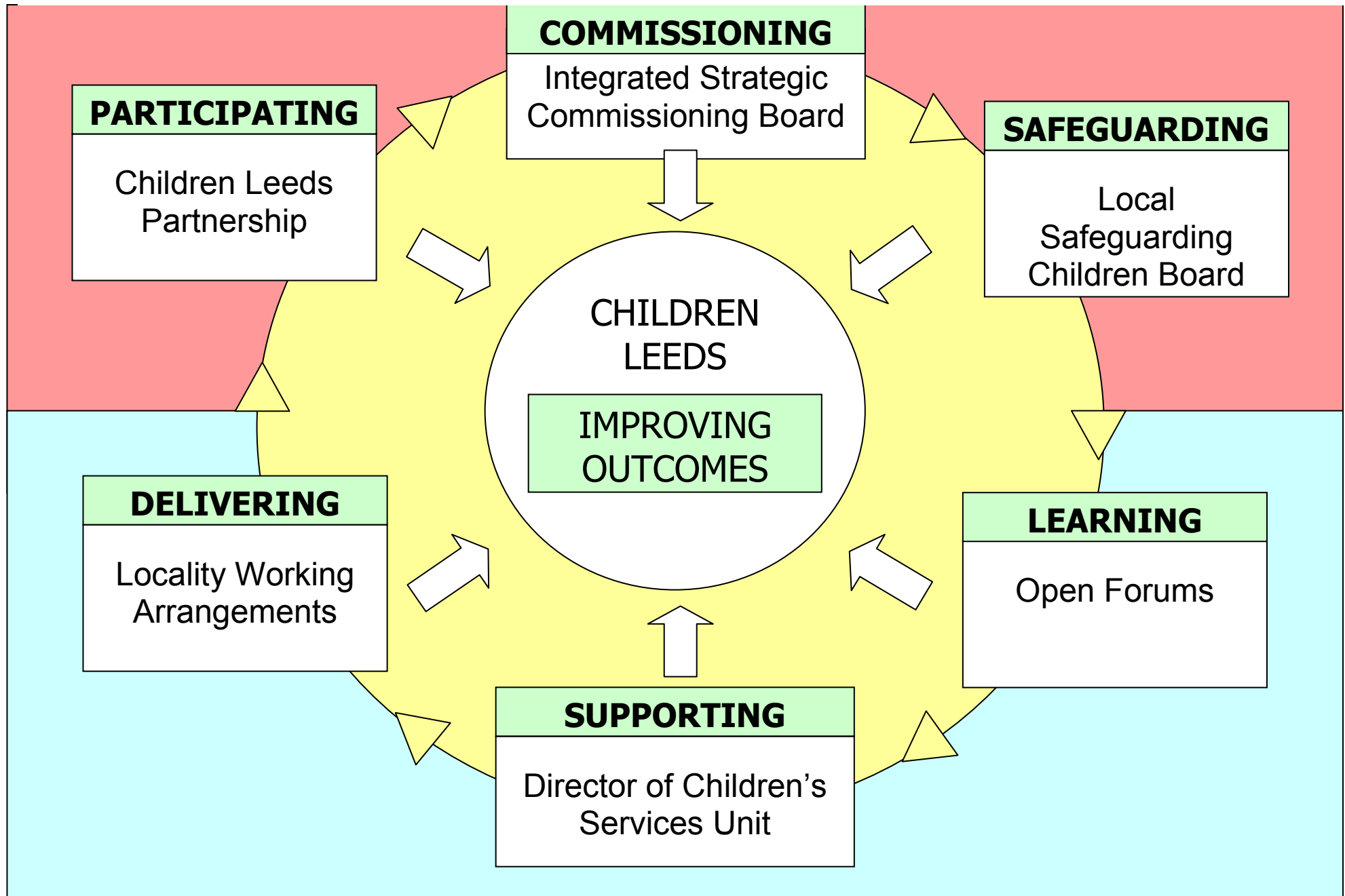
will, recognition and opportunities are in place to achieve the type of coordinated approach required.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Members:

- Note and comment on the ongoing progress of children's services work in Leeds particularly the development of the children's trust arrangements.
- Note and comment on the work taking place in relation to the two highlighted priorities from the reviewed Children and Young People's Plan.

LEEDS CHILDREN TRUST ARRANGEMENTS



Appendix B

LEEDS CYP PLAN PRIORITIES

Our review has highlighted the need to be clearer about priorities to ensure there is better collective understanding, ownership and action on the issues that count. The revised list of priorities refreshes and clarifies that set out in the full Children & Young People's Plan last year and is intended to form a relatively stable set of priorities. It describes a number of longer term very broad priorities and feeding into each of these a more targeted shorter term priority. It also specifically addresses the cross-cutting 'narrowing the gap' theme. This long term/short term approach is important because it shows how we can have an immediate impact on outcomes and at the same time invest in developments for the longer term.

The list is set out below, grouped into two sections: the first for improving outcomes and the second for improving services.

Every Child Matters Outcome	Priority	Long term priority	Short term priority
Stay safe	Safeguarding	Embedding a safeguarding culture	Improving the assessment and care of children in need
	Safe communities	Strengthening community safety and cohesion	Reducing bullying
Be healthy	Emotional wellbeing	Promoting emotional wellbeing for all	Improving services for children, young people and families with additional mental health needs
	Activity and obesity	Reducing obesity	Raising activity
	Sexual health	Improving sexual health for all	Reducing teenage conception
Enjoy and achieve	Secondary progress	Improving educational outcomes for 11-16 year olds	Targeting underachievement
	Early learning	Improving readiness to learn	Enabling the engagement of parents and young learners in early years and primary schools
Make a positive contribution	Positive opportunities	Enhancing positive opportunities in and out of school	Reducing antisocial behaviour and offending
Achieve economic wellbeing	Qualifications and skills at 19	Raising qualifications and skills levels for 19 year olds	Reducing the proportion of vulnerable groups not in education, training or employment
ALL	Narrowing the gap in outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people		

Priorities for Improving Services

Every Child Matters Outcome	Long term priority	Short term priority
Service management	Extended services for every neighbourhood	Roll out of extended services in schools and children's centres
Service management	Parenting support for all	Proactive, tailored support for families facing the most severe challenges
Service management	Personalised, joined up support for all	Moving towards integration through the roll out of the Common Assessment Framework, Budget Holding Lead Professional and Individual learning plans

