



Report of the Director of Children's Service

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 8th November 2007

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

Electoral Wards Affected: All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Background

1.1 At its September 2007 meeting the Children's Services Scrutiny Board received a detailed update report on work across the children's trust arrangements and children's services more generally. That report included an overview of progress against the Children and Young People's Plan for Leeds and looked in particular detail at work around two priority areas identified in the plan: Improving the assessment and care of children in need; and reducing the proportion of vulnerable groups not in education, employment or training.

1.2 Given that report was only produced two months ago, this update will not go into the same level of detail about the range of work being done across children's services. It will however provide a brief update on some key issues, including progress being made in preparation for the Joint Area Review and the ongoing work around increasing young people's participation. In particular, the report will continue the approach adopted in the last update of providing a brief overview of general progress against the Children and Young People's Plan and focusing particularly on two priorities with more detailed information. The two priorities being focused on in this report are:

- Reducing teenage conception
- Enabling the engagement of parents and young learners in early years and primary schools

1.3 It is important to note from the outset that work on reducing teenage conception is considered as part of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board's work plan

and that the majority of scrutiny work in this area therefore rests with that Board. However, providing an overview to the Children's Services Scrutiny Board contributes to providing a full picture of the work being done across services to address our CYP Plan priorities.

- 1.4 This report complements the performance report also being presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Board, which includes specific information about performance against the Children and Young People's Plan Priorities.

2.0 Update on our children's trust arrangements

- 2.1 A diagram providing a reminder of the children's trust arrangements in Leeds is attached at appendix 1.
- 2.2 Between the last update report to the Scrutiny Board and this one the Children Leeds Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB) have all met again.
- 2.3 At its October meeting the ISCB considered a half yearly review of progress against the Children and Young People's Plan. It also looked, amongst other issues, at Proposals for the future commissioning of services by the Leeds Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) and work being done to support families where parents have mental health and/or substance misuse difficulties. Broadening understanding and ownership of these issues amongst senior partners establishes a platform to take them forward more efficiently and effectively.
- 2.4 At its November meeting the Children Leeds Partnership made arrangements to invite young people to attend to comment on the structure and style of the meeting and participate in discussions. This is part of a wider strategy for the Partnership to engage more effectively with young people and responds in part to feedback from Partnership members about the importance of young people's involvement. The Young People's Participation Strategy was also presented at this meeting to strengthen shared ownership around engaging with those growing up in Leeds (at the time of writing this report that meeting had not taken place so a further update was not possible).
- 2.5 During September and October the latest series of Open Forum events have been used to raise awareness of and gather evidence for the Joint Area Review. These events were again based in different locations around the city and invited key partners within each of the five every child matters themes to contribute. They have been a valuable means of increasing the breadth of knowledge of how much activity there is to support children and young people across Leeds.
- 2.6 There have also recently been or are planned a variety of other events to help raise the profile of local children's services. Crucially, several of these have been organised in partnership with parents, such as a marketplace event open to all parents, but run by the North West SILC Parents Forum, attended by over 100 families and a Parent Participation Event being held on 27th November organised by the Children Leeds Parents and Carers Group. Children's Services were also significantly involved in the recent Member's Casework Roadshow held on 29th October.

Evaluation of Partnership Working

- 2.7 The auditors KPMG have recently completed a review of Leeds City Council's work with children and young people, focusing on partnership working. This review has contributed to understanding of progress within our trust arrangements and areas for further development. Significantly it found that Leeds has 'made considerable progress and is performing effectively' across all five areas where the review focussed, specifically: decision making; objectives and outcomes; leadership; controls and risk management; and engagement of partners, children, young people and local communities. The full review will be reported to the November Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

3.0 Wider Developments in Children's Services

Preparations for the Joint Area Review (JAR):

- 3.1 Preparations are now at an advanced stage for the forthcoming Joint Area Review. The main inspection will take place between the 3rd and 14th December 2007. The inspection aims to describe what life is like for children and young people in Leeds and crucially, to evaluate how well services in Leeds work to improve outcomes for those growing up in the city. The specific areas for investigation are: Safeguarding, Looked After Children, Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and 14-19 services in Leeds. In addition to the Open Forum events described above, a wide variety of work has been done to help services prepare for, understand and contribute information to the inspection. Specific officer and stakeholder groups have been established to plan for and address key areas of activity to support the inspection process (such as communications and logistics) and crucially, detailed work has been undertaken to gather the 100 cases from which the inspectors will choose 10 that they wish to investigate in greater detail. Initial meetings with the inspectors have taken place, providing an insight into the nature of the inspection.
- 3.2 Everyone involved in children's services has an important part to play in ensuring that inspectors get an accurate picture of Leeds. This includes Scrutiny members, who have a key role and who the inspectors may wish to speak to and join at their December Board meeting. A separate briefing for scrutiny members specifically on the Joint Area Review has therefore been arranged.

Developing a Joint Commissioning Approach:

- 3.3 At its September meeting the Children's Services Scrutiny Board were informed about the development of a 'joint preventative commissioning partnership' enabling partners to route expenditure through a single common system of commissioning against the delivery of a 0-19 universal offer for Leeds children and young people. The development of this work is particularly important at present given the broader moves towards more partnership working, the need to outline the commissioning of preventative services for 2008-11 and the implications for this work of the recent comprehensive spending review announcements.

- 3.4 Within this context, commissioning work is being developed to best align services with the Children and Young People's Plan priorities, specific Children Leeds Strategies and the broader development of the Strategic Plan for Leeds. As such the Joint Preventative Partnership has recently been drawing up a clear list of services with outcomes to be commissioned in the 2008-11 round. This work is now progressing through the development of a common procurement process across partners. Partners are also going through the existing commissioned services to identify any areas that are currently commissioned by more than one partner, with a view to moving towards re-commissioning through joint specifications. This process is being carried out in line with the principle that there will be no break in services. Any decommissioning will be done as a partnership, with re-commissioning targeted against outcomes. This approach is expected to deliver a more 'mixed economy' of service providers, with a greater role for the voluntary sector. The Joint Preventative Commissioning Partnership would welcome future opportunities to bring more information on the development of this work to Scrutiny early in 2008, recognising the importance of keeping stakeholders informed of these developments.

Children and Young People's Participation:

- 3.5 In addition to the positive involvement of young people in the Children Leeds Partnership, there are many other recent examples of how young people are taking a lead in shaping services. Just a few examples of this include:
- National Takeover Day: The Children's Commissioner has declared 23rd November the first 'national takeover day', on which public sector organisations and other businesses are being encouraged to 'hand over' the running of their services to young people for a day. In Leeds a number of specific initiatives have been set up to facilitate this, for example at the Herd Farm centre and the Young People's Sexual Health Action Group. In addition all schools have been contacted and encouraged to participate, with support provided.
 - National 'Time to Talk' consultation: During the autumn the government has been undertaking a national consultation on the future development of children's services with a view to developing a national children and young people's plan. Young people in Leeds have been particularly involved in this consultation process having participated in a discussion event held in Leeds, led by the Minister Ed Balls and with one Leeds school used for a 'dairy room' style consultation day with students. More details are in a briefing note provided separately to scrutiny members.
 - Young people's Involvement in the 'From Good to Great' Council leadership event: A recent event was held for the council's senior leadership. At this event each Director outlined his or her vision for the future progress of the city. The Director of Children's Services presentation was unique in that two young people from the Youth Council joined the Director on stage and outlined their views on how Leeds could become a great city. Their comments included promoting the recent young people's scrutiny review of bus transport in Leeds. This involvement sent out a

powerful message to all Council services about the importance of considering and involving young people in decisions that affect them.

- Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange Young People's Film: The Director of Children's Services and Executive Member for Children's Services recently attended an event organised by the Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) at which young people presented a film they had made to a diverse invited audience about their experiences of growing up in Leeds as gypsy or traveller children. The Director and Executive member then met with the young people to discuss the issues raised in the film.

Looking Ahead: Measuring the Benefits of Our Approach:

- 3.6 As our trust arrangements and partnership working becomes more embedded in children's services practice, an important challenge is to demonstrate the value being added by new practices and arrangements. This value will need to be shown both in terms of the practical results it delivers – as stakeholders are already looking and able to do – showing how the formation of new partnerships, particularly at local level are improving outcomes for children and young people. Crucially, it will also need to be shown in financial terms, by demonstrating how partnership working and the different aspects of the trust arrangements (for example the added capacity provided by the Locality Enablers within the Director of Children's Services Unit) increasingly create more efficiency, less duplication of work and a more consistent approach right across services. This area of benefit realisation work is always a challenge for major programmes of change. Work is now underway to incorporate this into our monitoring and evaluation arrangements as part of the wider performance framework. Scrutiny members will be kept informed of work in this area and the findings of this type of analysis.

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

- 4.1 The information above briefly 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 September 2007. This section provides a reminder of the priorities detailed in the first review of our children of young people's plan (see appendix 2 for a full list) and talks about the work being done around these. As discussed above it focuses on two priorities specifically in doing this:
- Enabling the engagement of parents and young learners in early years and primary schools
 - Reducing teenage conceptions.

Our Approach:

- 4.2 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.

Our Progress:

- 4.3 The performance report that accompanies this paper provides supporting information giving an overview of progress across the various Children and Young People's Plan priorities. Progress on 78% of targets is good and we are addressing the areas where sufficient progress is not yet being made or evidenced. Below two of our priorities are discussed in more detail to enable members to explore these issues further.

Enabling the engagement of parents and young learners in early years and primary schools

- 4.4 In Leeds, increasing participation (and consequently ownership) of parents in work to improve outcomes for their children is one of the key values set out in our CYP Plan. Achieving this whilst children are still young sets a firmer foundation for ongoing involvement and in addition, various research highlights how parents are central to their children's early learning and how their involvement has positive outcomes for children, parents and the practitioners.
- 4.5 The importance of this is reflected in the CYP Plan priority to enable the engagement of parents and young learners in early years and primary schools and is being supported through the Parents as Partners in Early Learning (PPEL) project, which began in October 2006.

What is the PPEL Project?

- 4.6 The project began with an initial baseline audit of policy and practice relating to the involvement of parents in early education by a team of national advisors. The audit acknowledged a number of successful national and Leeds based initiatives and identified a number of barriers to parental involvement outlined by a cross section of parents and professionals. The audit report recommended a second phase of the project to build on the findings and embed parental involvement strategies across Early Years settings and services.
- 4.7 In April 2007 Leeds Early Years Service was awarded the PPEL project with an additional £300,000 of Sure Start funding until March 2008. Leeds is one of 41 local authorities that are piloting the project to develop and enhance work with some of the most disadvantaged parents and families in the 30% Super Output Areas. The project in Leeds has been designed as action research to inform local policy and practice and incorporates a number of activities across children's services. It has a structured monitoring and evaluation schedule which includes monthly reporting to a National Strategies consultant from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DSCF).

Local reporting takes place via existing meetings and the publication of a project newsletter for all stakeholders on a quarterly basis.

Activities

4.8 The PPEL project is varied and ambitious and incorporates existing or emerging partnerships with a number of children's services. The key activities have been placed into four categories with planning and delivery of activities taking place continuously throughout the project year.

- **Staff training and development:** Providing training and support in parental involvement strategies for children's centre and school practitioners is a basic principle of the project. Around 60% of the Children Centres now have at least one practitioner trained in the Pen Green Parents in Children's Learning (PICL) frameworkⁱ. It is expected that the remaining centres will identify staff for the final round of training and that those centres trained will start to use the established practitioner networks to embed the approach in their settings. Forty primary schools across Leeds have been targeted (based on their involvement in other initiatives and schemes) to pilot the Parents, Early Years and Learning (PEAL) trainingⁱⁱ. The training provides schools with practical and evidence based activities that they can easily implement to ensure parents feel valued as their child's first educator.
- **Enhancement of existing programmes:** The Surestart parenting academy (SPA) has been commissioned to develop crèche facilities for parents attending courses as this was identified as a barrier to engagement in services. The family outreach service will receive briefing sessions on the EYFS as part of their professional development and to further promote the importance of parental involvement in learning and development. Monitoring and evaluation of other existing projects has been planned as part of the project in order to gain a consensus of what parents are accessing and what enables them to support early learning.
- **Partnerships with health, voluntary, community and other sector agencies:** The pre-school learning alliance has been commissioned to deliver a series of family learning sessions to play and stay groups across the city. They are also piloting a quality assurance scheme for groups to further promote the importance of informal learning for children under 5. The speech and language service are involved in the project through the recruitment of 14 therapists to train in the Hanen programmeⁱⁱⁱ. This will enable speech and language therapists to offer consultations and workshops for parents whose children are at risk of language delay.
- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) specific activities:** The DCSF has published information for parents on the EYFS. The materials include a DVD and wall chart that can be used in groups or services or individually with parents. The distribution strategy for these materials includes using existing channels such as the Bookstart packs.

4.9 Across all the activities good practice and innovative ways of working will be disseminated through publications and events to recognise the achievements of our parents and practitioners.

Assessment

- 4.10 At the heart of the project and research activities is the aim to close the Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) attainment gap between the average (median) score of all children and those in the lowest 20% of achievers. The results from 2007 show the % gap at 38.2 with a target for 2008 of 34.5%. At this stage it is important to note that although the FSP results for children entering Key Stage 1 give the clearest indication that parental involvement has a positive affect on attainment and well-being, it is difficult to assess this within a short space of time.
- 4.11 As the project enters it's second quarter the monitoring and evaluation schedule has begun with the support of the project partners. The evidence needed to show the varied activities are having the desired impact on outcomes for children, parents and practitioners is being gathered through surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Forthcoming Challenges

- 4.12 Embedding positive support to parents will require a co-ordinated and sustainable approach. Following the project year 2007/2008 the aims and objectives of the PPEL will form part of the local authority Early Years Outcomes Duty (EYOD), specifically the "duty to support parents as partners in early learning" outlined in paragraph 17 and 18 of the Duty document. The key challenges faced in relation to parental involvement include:
- The capacity of the EYS to implement a strategy that offers opportunities for parents to actively support their child's development and learning.
 - The ability of the EYS to monitor and evaluate the impact on outcomes for children, parents, practitioners and the local authority that programmes have.
 - Practitioners ensuring parental involvement in early years *consistently* underpins efforts to improve attainment and well-being beyond the end of the foundation stage.
- 4.13 The schools and children's centres that are involved in the project are also involved in various other projects and initiatives, meaning that there are a range of services to local people to balance and prioritise. As such it is important that the project team can help the practitioners involved to identify clear benefits for their professional development, for their place of work and for their local communities from the activities within the PPEL scheme. The project team has conducted a number of small-scale consultations with Early Years Practitioners to provide information and support around monitoring and evaluating the scheme. This support will need to be continued in order for schools and children's centres to fully embed strategies to enable active and consistent parental involvement and in doing so make a measurable contribution to addressing the priority outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan

Looking Ahead

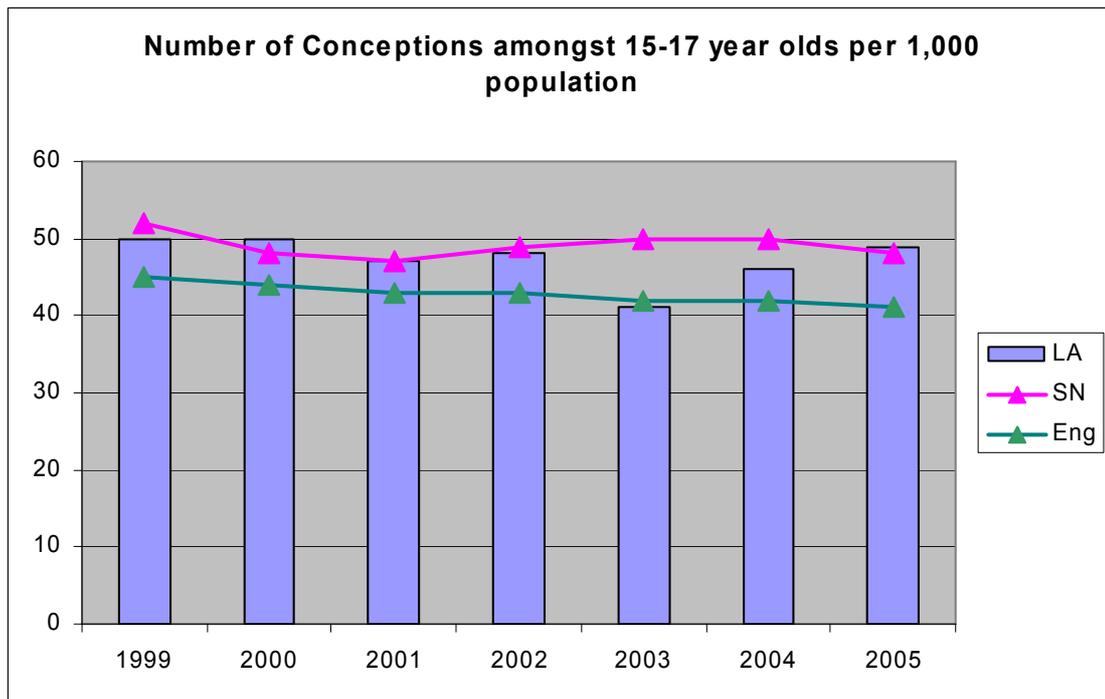
- 4.14 Following the announcement of the Early Years Outcomes Duty in September 2007 the PPEL activities form part of the strategic response to closing the attainment gap for those children in the lowest 20% achievement bracket at the end of the Foundation

Stage. The forthcoming introduction of the Family and Parenting Strategy for Leeds further emphasises the importance of supporting parents to support their children in working to improve outcomes. The work of the PPEL project aims to enhance positive outcomes for children through partnership with parents.

Reducing Teenage Conceptions

Background and Performance

- 4.15 Reducing teenage conception rates in Leeds has been identified as a priority as improvements in earlier years have been largely reversed during 2004 and 2005. Work has therefore been done to review the local strategy and agree changes to governance structures and commissioning arrangements. In addition, young people have been very actively engaged through groups such as the Young People's Sexual Health Advisory group (Y-SHAG) to work with the partnership in the ongoing redesign of local services, including:
- the establishment of the 'City-Wise Service' a sexual health service that is co-located with the main Connexions Access Point in the city centre, creating a virtual one-stop shop for young people; and
 - the Youth Service continuing to undertake valuable work in this area, particularly the C-Card programme for condom distribution that is in operation citywide.
- 4.16 It can be challenging to obtain up-to date figures indicating progress against this priority. Data on teenage pregnancy which forms part of the national data set is based on registration of births, terminations and population projections. The last data set was published in February 2007 and relates to the calendar year 2005. The trend chart below indicates the England average rates (Eng) and comparable local authority rates (SN- statistical neighbour) set against the Leeds data shown as a bar chart.



4.17 As the table indicates, the latest measurements available suggest that Leeds conception rates are currently on an upward trend. Work is underway attempting to forecast the rate that will be reported in February 2008 for the calendar year 2006.

Work Underway and Current Strengths

4.18 There is a range of work being undertaken across children's services to address issues around teenage conception. In view of the challenges faced, The Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership undertook a review of their strategy in Quarter 4 2006/7, refreshed for Quarter 1 2007/8. The following strengths were identified:

- While teenage conception rates currently do not appear to be reducing, rates for Chlamydia and gonorrhoea are reducing.
- The C-Card scheme is well-embedded in Leeds and delivered by both the statutory and Voluntary Community and Faith sectors. As part of this, 90,000 condoms were issued in 2006-07 and 4,000 more young people joined the scheme.
- Chlamydia screening (the C-SWAP scheme) is increasing every quarter.
- The FastTest service, offered jointly by Leeds PCT and Terrance Higgins Trust for 16-25 year olds is in place
- The Young People's Pharmacy Scheme is in place.
- City-Wise Sexual health services (based at No 1 Eastgate) offers access to all young people weekdays and evenings.
- The Young Peoples Sexual Health Action group (Y-SHAG) is an active participant in the planning and delivery of CASH and City-Wise Services. Y-SHAG are issuing young people friendly leaflets for health education purposes.
- Work is progressing to reach the 48-hour access target to GUM services for March 2008 and as at 16 October 2007 this target was being achieved across providers.
- Termination services are readily available and access is excellent.

Areas for Improvement

- 4.19 At the same time the review identified the following areas for particular improvement in order to help reduce conception rates:
- Data collection needs to be improved between agencies to be more timely and analyse for changing 'hotspots'
 - Prevention work needs to be more effective in addressing the links between substance misuse prevention (especially alcohol) and teenage conceptions.
 - Communications with parents, young people and especially vulnerable groups needs to be improved.
 - Improve secondary school SRE/PSHE across all high schools – establishing strong commitment to this in all high schools
 - Improve targeted work within *all* vulnerable groups, especially BME communities and at risk groups
 - Strengthen workforce training across all key staff groups
 - Raise aspiration across all groups of young people. This should be underpinned by implementation of the Education Leeds 14-19 Strategy and NEET programme.
 - Strengthen work with parents. This should be underpinned by the implementation of the Family Support and Parenting Strategy, more family support and parenting education.
- 4.20 Work is already taking place across different elements of children's services to address these areas. The key challenge is to improve the consistency and co-ordination of this work so that it more effectively reaches those young people and families where it can have the greatest benefit. The children's trust arrangements and partnership focus in the way children's services are now working provide a framework for this as demonstrated through the revised commissioning arrangements now in place and discussed below:

Strengthening of Commissioning

- 4.21 In September 2007, the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB) approved a new commissioning tier in relation to the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership. A Commissioning Executive was approved with a membership of commissioners tasked to develop commissioning plans against the strategy and commissioning against these plans. Crucially, the executive will work both to commission using joint funding and also seek to align mainstream partner service commissioning. The intention is to commission evidence based interventions, to avoid duplication, to target services more effectively and to significantly improve contract and performance management.
- 4.22 In addition to this arrangement, a virtual support team consisting of Sarah Sinclair, Director of Planning and Commissioning for Children's and Maternity Services, Martin Ford, Head of Commissioning for Children's and Maternity Services and Kiera Swift, Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator has been created to provide oversight and support across both the partnership and the commissioning executive.

Moving forward with the National Support Team for Teenage Pregnancies

- 4.23 In November 2007, Leeds will be visited by the National Support Team for Teenage pregnancies. It is expected that the support team will help to identify areas where improvement in strategy, engagement and service provision could be undertaken. An action plan will be developed, responsibility for which will be divided between the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership and the Commissioning Executive.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This report has provided a further update on some key areas of progress across children's services and in particular on work around two priorities in Leeds Children and Young People's Plan. Taken together with the other performance information being presented to Members and the other update reports over the course of the year the scrutiny board will receive a broad overview of the full range of priorities and the initiatives in place to address these.

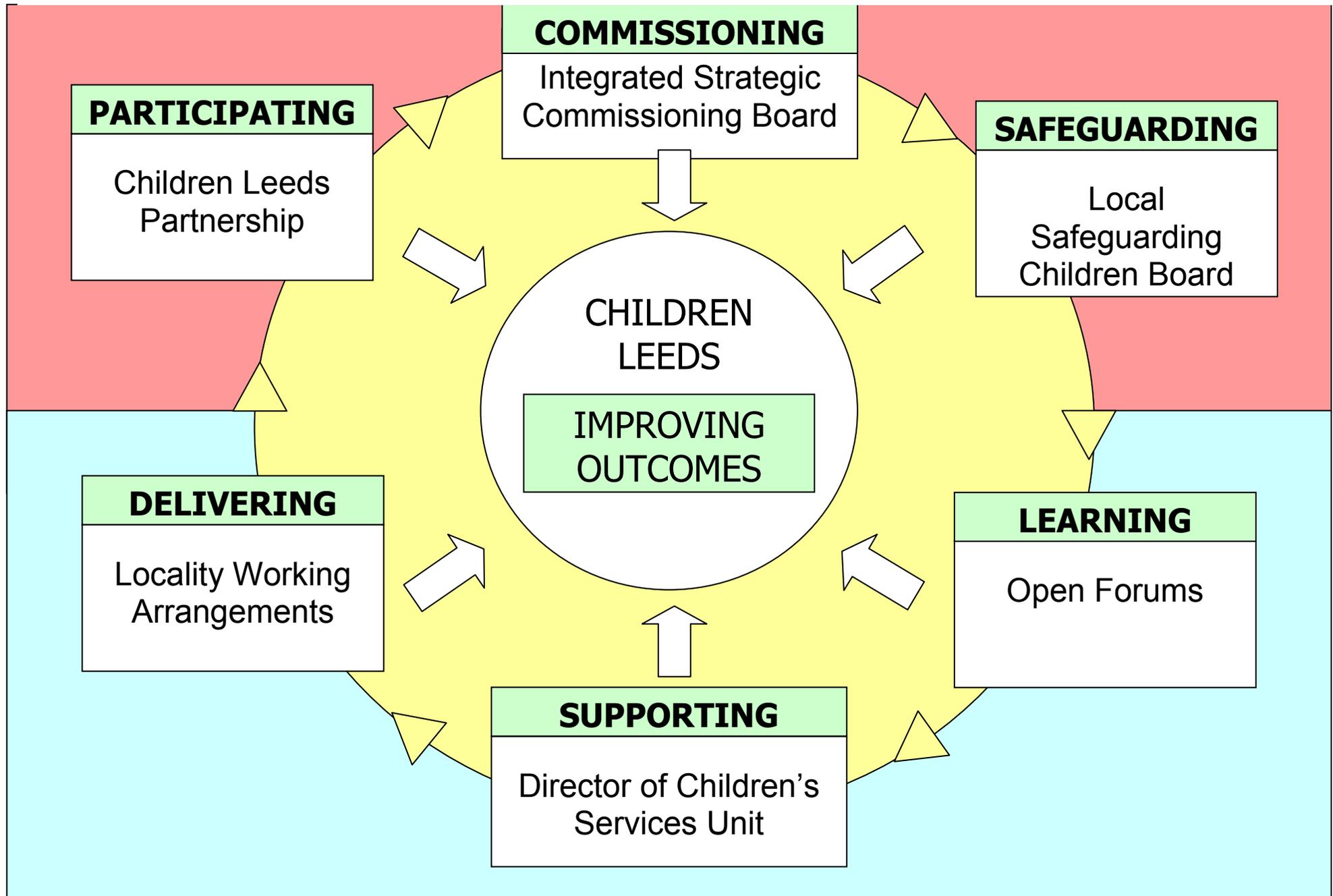
6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that members note and comment on the content of this report.

Notes:

- i Pen Green is a Early Years research centre in Northamptonshire that has developed the PICL framework for practitioners and parents to plan activities for children using audio-visual media.
- ii PEAL is a National Children's Bureau(NCB) training programme that has traditionally been delivered in Children Centres and nurseries to promote parental involvement in learning and development.
- iii Hanen training is designed for caregivers of children who have early language delay. The Hanen Centre in Toronto, Canada, first developed these family-focused interventions to empower parents to directly help their children develop their language use.

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
