

Report of the Head of Scrutiny

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 15 September 2016

Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry Draft Terms of Reference – Children's Centres

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Summary of Main Issues

Leeds City Council has an ambition to be the best council in the UK: fair, open, compassionate and welcoming with an economy that is both prosperous and sustainable so all our communities are successful. The City's vision encompasses the aim to be a Child Friendly City by 2030. The methodology for delivering this vision is defined in The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2015-19 from good to great which details five headline outcomes. These outcomes are:

- All children and young people are safe from harm
- All children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life
- All children and young people choose healthy lifestyles
- All children and young people are happy and have fun growing up
- All children and young people are active citizens

The CYPP also highlights the importance of Leeds Best Start Plan, which is a preventative programme from conception to age 2 years. This programme aims to ensure a good start for every baby, with early identification and targeted support for vulnerable families. It is stated that Best start impacts on all the outcomes and priorities in the CYPP.

At its meeting on the 16 of June 2016, the Scrutiny Board considered potential sources of work for the 2016/17 municipal year. Following discussion with the

Executive Board Member (Children and Families) and representatives from Children's Services the Board expressed a desire to undertake an inquiry which would consider the value of Children's Centres and how they deliver the aspirations defined in the CYPP. The Board also wish to understand how the services provided through Children's Centres impact on the lives of children, particularly in their early years, and improve the lives of their associated family. The Board will also be focusing on the strategic and operational intention for sustaining Children's Centres in Leeds.

2. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) is recommended to:

Note the information contained within this report, make further recommendation to update the terms of reference where necessary and agree the terms of reference for the inquiry.

Note that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information during the inquiry should the Children's Services Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the draft terms of reference for the Scrutiny Boards inquiry into Children's Centres.

Terms of Reference

2. Scope of the Inquiry

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board at its meeting on the 16 of June 2016 resolved to undertake an inquiry looking at Children's Centres. The Board wish to understand how services provided through Children's Centres:

- a) impact on the lives of children, particularly in their early years,
- b) improve the lives of their associated family,
- c) deliver wider economic and social benefits.

- 2.2 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:

- The strategic and operational approach to making a positive difference in the lives of children and their families through the provision of Children's Centres
- The roles and responsibilities of Leeds City Council and Partners in the provision and resourcing of Children's Centres and the effectiveness of those partnerships.
- The range, quality and impact of services provided by Children's Centres, including the recognition and sharing of good practice,
- Aspirations for the development of Children's Centres and exploring opportunities to secure a sustainable future.

- 2.3 Additional guidance has been sought from Andrea Richardson (Head of Learning for Life, Children's Services) in order to recommend areas of focus for the inquiry.

3. Desired Outcomes and Measures of Success

- 3.1 In conducting the Inquiry the Board wishes to understand the areas defined in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2. If during the course of the inquiry it is evident that improvements are required the Scrutiny Board will seek to clarify what is being done to change things to ensure better outcomes.
- 3.2 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.
- 3.3 Following the inquiry the Scrutiny Board will publish its report which will identify clear desired outcomes. These will be reflected in the recommendations made. The

director or organisation to whom the recommendations have been made will be responsible for monitoring the impact of each recommendation and for advising the Scrutiny Board accordingly as the board reviews progress.

4. Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member

4.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.1 where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.

5. Timetable for the inquiry

5.1 Preliminary discussion was undertaken by the Scrutiny Board at the July 2016 meeting. It is anticipated that the inquiry will take place between October 2016 and will be completed before May 2017. Information will be gathered using a range of methods including meetings and visits. The length of the inquiry and range of evidence to be collected is however subject to change by agreement of the Board.

6. *Submission of evidence*

Introduction, Aspirations and where we are now

- Legislation and Statutory Framework for Children's Centres
- Ofsted
- Best Start Strategy, 0-5 Strategy and role of the 0-5 Partnership Boards
- Facilitating Voice and Influence, the role of Advisory Boards
- Family Hubs: The Future of Children's Centres
- Known challenges, sustainability and risk
- Relationships with partners, clusters and schools

The Value of Children's Centres

- Overview of the offer – what do Children's Centres provide.
- The funding model and associated benefits, challenges and risk.
- Children's Centres V's Other Provision, what's makes Children's Centres different/unique.
- What have Children's Centres achieved, what is their value*
- The national picture and known impact of service changes elsewhere (positive and negative)

Making a difference, recognising good practice, building resilience for a sustainable future.

- Operational perspective - Children's Centre visits to speak to practitioners with a focus on
 - Best Start & Preparation for Learning*
 - Families First & Safeguarding*
 - Parental Support & Employment*

- The strategic perspective – Representatives Leeds City Council, Health Services, Education and other partner organisations with strategic responsibility within their organisation.

Exploring Opportunities

- Future funding, value for money
- Improving outcomes, quality of service, efficiency and use of resources
- Sharing good practice
- Capacity for growth and utilising assets
- Opportunities for trading, commercial opportunities
- Other business models, learning from other organisations/authorities.
- A Development and Sustainability Plan

7. Witnesses

7.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Members of the Childrens Trust Board
- Members of the 0-5 Partnership Board
- Elected Members
- Health Services – Public Health, LCH and CCG's
- Third Sector and Voluntary Organisations
- Stakeholders, Partners and Support Groups
- Director of Children's Services and Children's Services Officers
- Children's Centre, Health and Education Practitioners.
- Cluster Representatives
- Parents and Carers

7.2 The Board will always seek to include the views of children and young people and their parents and carers as evidence to its inquiries wherever possible and practicable.

8 Corporate Considerations

8.1 Consultation and Engagement

Where the board deems it appropriate to undertake in consultation in order to conduct the inquiry or gather necessary evidence consultation could be undertaken.

8.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.

8.2.1 Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.

8.2.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.

- 8.2.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 8.2.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

8.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

This inquiry will assist in achieving outcomes and priorities as defined in the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2015-2019 and the Child Friendly City Priority Plan.

8.4 Resources and Value for Money

There is no resource or value for money implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified impact will be reported in the final inquiry report.

8.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

None

8.6 Risk Management

There are no risk implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified risk will be reported in the final inquiry report.

8.7 Recommendations

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is recommended to:

- 8.7.1 Note the information contained within this report, make further recommendation to update the terms of reference where necessary and agree the terms of reference for the inquiry.
- 8.7.2 Note that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information during the inquiry should the Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence.

8.8 Background documents¹

None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.