



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Executive Board

Date: 2nd September 2008

Subject: Children's Services Update and Framework for the City's Next Children and Young People's Plan.

Electoral Wards Affected:

All wards

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Since the introduction of the Children Act 2004, children's services nationally and in Leeds have undergone a sustained period of change and development to make them fit to respond to the ambitions of the Every Child Matters agenda. The process has continued recently with the introduction of the first national Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures and a range of policy developments that support this. In Leeds the approach being taken to delivering improved outcomes for children and young people is increasingly taking shape through:
 - more consistency and understanding around our approach to strategic commissioning
 - stronger locality working and integrated service delivery and
 - the development of integrated personalised front-line response.
2. Another important period of development is now taking place. Leeds has made significant achievements in recent years, but we recognise that there is still a lot to do to deliver the standards of services and quality of outcomes we wish to see for all our children and young people. Following a positive Joint Area Review inspection, Children Leeds is looking ahead to the development of its new Children and Young People's Plan to be launched in 2009. In preparing for this it is important to consider the progress that Leeds' children's trust arrangements have made so far, the context in which we are working and the key local and national policy considerations that provide the background to the development of the new Plan. This is particularly timely. Firstly, because the government are currently consulting on proposals to

further develop and strengthen local children's trust arrangements, which could have implications for our work in Leeds. Secondly, because a number of significant policy developments are emerging that will continue to shape the development of children's services in Leeds and these need to be seen in the context of our wider approach and progress.

3. This report begins with a reminder of the recent development of children's services in Leeds, referring back to the requirements of the Children's Act, the unique trust arrangements Leeds developed in response and the first Children and Young People's Plan that underpins this. It then very briefly summarises some of the significant areas of impact that the approach in Leeds has helped to achieve as well as key priorities as we look to move forward. The report then looks ahead, with an overview of the current national context, focussing particularly on recent consultation around the next steps for children's trust arrangements. Next, the report considers the direction for children's services in Leeds and specifically progress and further developments relating to our strategic commissioning; locality working and integrated service delivery; and the development of integrated front-line response.
4. As such, this report provides an overview of the current context to developing the Children and Young People's Plan for 2009 and beyond. In doing so it also provides background information to inform considerations of other forthcoming policy developments. It outlines the direction of travel for children's services work and sets this within considerations of national and local developments, particularly the current consultation on the further development of local children's trust arrangements.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- Note the content of this report and consider it as part of the background to other key policy developments for children's services reports in the current and coming months.
- Note the government's current consultation on children's trust arrangements and the Leeds position relating to this.
- Note and endorse the process for consulting on and developing the Children and Young People's Plan for 2009 and beyond.

1. Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report has three broad aims:

- To provide an update on key areas of progress and further developments across children's services and the children's trust arrangements in Leeds.
- To provide the wider context for a number of significant children's services policy developments.
- To outline the process and progress of the review of Leeds' Children and Young People's Plan in preparation for the production of a new Plan for 2009 and beyond.

2. Background Information

Children Leeds: Our trust arrangements and Children and Young People's Plan

2.1 In 2004 the Government's Children Act placed a requirement on local partners working with children and young people to review and revise their approach so as to deliver more joined-up and coherent services.

2.2 Leeds introduced unique children's trust arrangements to reflect and utilise the size and diversity of the city. The 'six elements' (see appendix A) aim to encompass the vast array of services available locally and city-wide for children and young people, providing direction and support for their development, commissioning them strategically to target priorities and underpinning them with strong safeguarding and governance arrangements. The original rationale for the Leeds' model was outlined to Executive Board in a report in September 2006.

2.3 Underpinning the trust arrangements, and in line with the requirements of the Children Act, Leeds produced its first Children and Young People's Plan in 2006. The 2006 Plan runs for 3 years. It was formulated through extensive consultation across partners and stakeholders. The Plan identifies key priority areas of work where particular attention should be focussed so as to make the most positive impact on improving children and young people's lives in Leeds. It also sets out the broad approach and principles to shape how this improvement can take place.

2.4 Since 2006, the Plan has been reviewed on an annual basis (and re-launched publicly in June each year) to check that the priorities and approach remain as relevant and effective as possible. A significant review took place for 2007, building on the learning from the first year and helping to build understanding in advance of the December 2007 Joint Area Review Inspection. A more 'light touch' review took place in 2008 with a view to conducting a much more extensive assessment ready for 2009. Each year the reviewed Plan has been presented to the Executive Board for approval and signed off (to ensure ownership) by key partners from across Children Leeds.

2.5 Whilst over the last two and a half years the themes of many of our priorities have been consistent, the Plan has also evolved to respond to:

- the changing national context
- the emerging local context (e.g. the Leeds Strategic Plan)
- our learning from local initiatives and inspections and
- the changing nature of children's services work.

The priorities from the 2008 review of the Children and Young People's Plan are listed at appendix B. Working towards the new Plan for 2009 is an opportunity for a stock take of the impact made so far: the positives we can build on; aspects we must change and the direction that Children's Services across Leeds need to move in for significant improvements to outcomes to be made in the coming years.

Impact on Improving Outcomes

2.6 The impact of the arrangements and approach Leeds has adopted is reflected in the positive overall direction of performance across children's services work. In the 2008 Review of the Children and Young People's Plan good progress was identified against the priorities adopted in 2007. Over the year improvement has been seen in nearly 80% of indicators that reflect these priorities including for example:

- Improved health through more take-up of sport, higher breastfeeding rates and better access to child and adult mental health services.
- Improvements in some process indicators for children and young people's social care, good progress on road safety and anti-bullying, making children and young people safer.
- Improvements to GCSE results.
- More young people making a positive contribution, as reflected in the reduced number of young offenders and re-offenders and the increased numbers getting involved in Breeze activities.

2.7 However, there is still a lot more to do to realise the improvement in outcomes and pace of change we wish to provide for all children and young people. Particular impact on outcomes and priorities for Leeds include:

- reducing the number of teenage conceptions
- addressing the number of and outcomes for our looked after children
- improving school attendance
- reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training
- developing support for learning between the ages of 14 and 19.

2.8 These challenges sit within the context of wider national changes and priorities. To respond to these and give direction to continuing improvement in Leeds, our own strategic approach is being refined, refocused and restated to provide a clearer framework for building on our progress. It is particularly timely to do this now given that the government is currently consulting nationally on the impact of children's trust arrangements to date and the steps needed to develop them (see appendix C).

2.9 The next section of this report outlines this national context and indicates the 'direction of travel' in Leeds. In doing so it provides the background to both the review of our Children and Young People's Plan ready for 2009 and forthcoming policy developments.

Main Issues

3.1 In February and September 2007 reports were submitted to Executive Board providing overview updates on the progress being made within children's services in view of the introduction of the new children's trust arrangements. Both reports talked about broad trends, as well as specific initiatives that reflected the direction of work in Leeds. They discussed the transitional nature of the working arrangements to help embed the Leeds children's trust model. They highlighted the importance of reviewing and developing these at a timely opportunity to ensure they maximise the

positive impact of children's services work. Since those reports, Leeds has received a good Joint Area Review inspection praising its innovative children's trust arrangements and the pace of change across the city. Developments nationally and locally make it timely to provide an updated picture of how this work is moving forward.

The national context

3.2 In December 2007 the government published its first national Children's Plan 'Building Brighter Futures'. A summary report was presented to Executive Board in February 2008. In the Plan it makes clear that local children's trust arrangements are seen as the means through which services should be developing the way they work to improve outcomes. The government is currently consulting on how it can strengthen these arrangements, potentially by placing greater statutory responsibility on different partners, including schools, to work together more consistently. A table summarising the key aspects of this consultation and a brief overview of the Leeds position is attached at appendix C. A more detailed response to this consultation is currently being prepared. It is clear from this and other government guidance and information that commissioning is seen as the model through which more effective targeting of outcomes can be achieved. This is reflected, for example, in the launch of a three-year commissioning support programme for children's trusts later in 2008.

3.21 The Children's Plan places a strong emphasis on wider support for parents and families as a means to help improve outcomes. It also focuses on targeting resources to those in the most vulnerable and hard to reach groups. These themes reflect our own learning in Leeds and have been drawn out in our latest Children and Young People's Plan. In addition, a number of wider national priorities and initiatives have come through the Plan and other government publications that are shaping work locally:

- Developing targeted youth support through for example: positive activities for young people (PAYP); and a strong focus on reducing youth crime through targeted intervention and support
- The 'Aiming Higher' Ten Year Youth Strategy
- Implementing the Care Matters White Paper (see the report to Executive Board 17th October 2007)
- Investment in play provision
- Development of the 'think family' approach.
- The National Challenge for schools and wider issues around school structural change
- The 14-19 agenda and structural change in relation to the Learning and Skills Council
- Proposed child poverty pilots
- A strong focus on workforce development, being led by the Children's Workforce Development Council and involving a variety of initiatives being introduced nationally.

3.22 The need to rationalise, balance and implement these various strands of work make it important that there is clear ambition and direction to underpin this. The direction that children's services in Leeds are taking provides a framework to achieve this.

Direction for Leeds

3.3 Leeds is improving the way it delivers services through a variety of interlinking developments at city-wide, local and individual level. This is reflected in the positive

impact discussed at paragraph 2.6, outlined in our recently reviewed Children and Young People's Plan and recognised in the positive assessment of our service management and capacity to improve within the Joint Area Review. Our various work since the launch of the original Children and Young People's Plan has followed an increasingly consistent pattern:

- Using **strategic commissioning** across the city as the vehicle to understand need and then work as partners to jointly target services and resources towards priority areas of work, with the Children and Young People's Plan and local planning process helping to reflect and guide this. This ties in with wider developments across the city – for example a strategic commissioning approach has helped to shape the development of the Leeds Strategic Plan.
- Strengthening **locality working and integrated service delivery** so that we use shared knowledge, skills and ownership to both inform strategic commissioning and target the issues and groups where we collectively can make the greatest positive impact within communities, using joint planning and shared ownership more effectively to achieve this.
- **Developing more integrated and personalised front-line response** to individual children, young people and their families, by using improved intelligence, understanding and information sharing to work together with families to identify their needs at an early stage, enabling the most appropriate support to be wrapped around meeting those specific needs.

3.31 There has been a range of success across this approach, but in looking ahead both in the short-term and in reviewing our Children and Young People's Plan for 2009 and beyond we consider these three themes provide a good framework to build on to ensure future success:

Strategic Commissioning

3.4 Strategic commissioning has been central to the development of children's trust arrangements in Leeds and is seen nationally as the means by which local partners will increasingly be able to collectively target support to those people and places with specific types of need. The unique approach Leeds has adopted within its children's trust arrangements, by establishing an Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB) to bring senior partners together specifically around the commissioning agenda was praised by the Joint Area Review inspectors.

3.41 The development of a Joint Preventative Partnership has intensified the focus on a commissioning approach by enabling partners to 'pool' budgets to secure the delivery of a 0-19 universal offer for Leeds children and young people. Through a clear framework, procurement process, timetable and support (particularly to the voluntary sector), this has enabled services to be commissioned that specifically address the priorities and needs identified in the Children and Young People's Plan.

3.42 The introduction of an 'Innovation Fund' with a financial input from partners including schools, the PCT and the local authority has also enabled groups at both city-wide and local level to bid for financial support on innovative new and developmental projects that target specific priorities. The associated decision making process for locality based projects included area based partners with a good understanding of local need to ensure projects approved were appropriate and responsive to those community needs.

- 3.43 More generally, the children's trust arrangements in Leeds have enabled services to build on the good partnerships that previously existed to give more coherence and focus to their work. At a citywide level the Children Leeds Partnership and Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) have enabled a wider range of partners to shape and engage with debate, policy and training – a point highlighted in the Joint Area Review. This has included the regular involvement of young people at Children Leeds Partnership meetings, often focussed around specific priority themes, such as anti-bullying, attendance and new arrivals.

Next steps for strategic commissioning

- 3.44 Partners are currently developing a Strategic Commissioning Framework for Leeds, which is being overseen by the ISCB. This will provide guidance to bring more coherence and consistency across our arrangements. It will also provide the basis for more effective planning and commissioning relationships between children's services and wider local services and partnerships by linking in to the Strategic Plan and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Crucially, a single Strategic Commissioning Framework will enable *local* partnerships and services to take forward commissioning within their areas in a way that ties in to the citywide approach, with a focus on avoiding duplication and achieving best value.
- 3.45 Further work will also be required to embed commissioning more consistently across the way different teams and strands within children's services operate. This will involve looking at the focus of existing roles and arrangements and increasingly turning these towards a strategic commissioning approach. As such skills and processes for strategic commissioning will increasingly inform aspects of workforce development and broader cultural change.
- 3.46 Enhancing the effectiveness of commissioning will underpin work to review and progress our children's trust arrangements, both in light of the outcomes from the current government consultation and to meet the specific challenges facing Leeds. It will also inform the development of new local arrangements to respond to the national agenda, for example around the education and training support available to those aged 14-19.

Locality working and integrated service delivery

- 3.51 Locally, the development of increasingly co-ordinated support based around the citywide network of extended services, clusters of schools and children's centres is helping local services to deliver more joined-up and targeted support to both individuals and families. The multi-agency clusters, supported by cluster co-ordinators are increasingly sharing learning and ideas with one another to help develop overall progress across the city.
- 3.52 At a wedge level Children Leeds Partnerships have developed significantly in 2007, using their collective capacity and expertise to develop local plans, support clusters and deliver added value in key areas that support and drive integration. This has helped support the identification and targeting of local priorities, demonstrated for example in particular areas of success around school attendance and the priorities detailed at 2.6. The local integrated working approach has been key to the growing use and effectiveness of the Common Assessment Framework. Also the Education Leeds Area Management Boards have continued their focus on inclusion and increasingly the AMB's have linked closely with Children Leeds Partnerships. Locality enablers are linking with Council Area Committees and the development of Area Delivery Plans to implement the Leeds Strategic Plan.

- 3.53 A recent Children Leeds Governance Seminar made a further important step in developing a shared approach to taking forward local arrangements. This involved partners from right across Children Leeds and included elected members. It focused on the different levels of decision making relating to children's services locally and the opportunities to make these more coherent and responsive to local needs. It produced important learning in terms of strengths, gaps and different levels of understanding around local governance. The key messages from the event will be disseminated across partners and shared in a report to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee (see paragraph 3.55).
- 3.54 Further learning locally has also come through a significant pilot initiative – the Leadership Challenge. This has focused on working in a specific cluster in the North East of the city to develop an approach to improving outcomes based on a 'results Based Accountability' methodology that draws clear links between local leaders (including elected members, who have been closely involved) and their responsibilities for work to target particular needs. Learning has identified a key role for local elected members in a networking and leadership role to champion the needs of children and young people. There has also been important learning in terms of levels of engagement with different partners, the benefits of the common assessment framework and the different types of inequality that impact on outcomes. The learning from this helped to inform the commissioning framework discussed in paragraph 3.44 above and is influencing city-wide developments of a more effective local approach.

Next steps for locality working and integrated service delivery

- 3.55 A huge amount has been achieved through our multi-agency partnerships so far. However, to strengthen this work in a way that ensures both the consistency so that effective arrangements are in place right across the city, but also the flexibility to respond to specific local needs and contexts, more development is needed around both the structures and cultures that underpin the Leeds approach. Key to this is creating a stronger sense of shared local leadership and accountability around the delivery of a range of priorities. Work in recent months has looked at the arrangements currently in place in different parts of the city to achieve this and sought to identify a model that can be more responsive to the requirements of locally focused strategic commissioning. The key being stronger links between citywide and local priorities, a clearer framework for democratic accountability and creating a stronger sense of shared local responsibility. More details on this work will be provided in the coming months and a report on progress around developing local children's services arrangements has been requested by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee for October.
- 3.56 The role of schools and wider partners in local integrated working is a key area of development. The 14-19 review and the proposed model for this will have a significant impact on giving different schools both the imperative and the framework to work together more closely. More generally, the ongoing developments around different models of schools, such as Trusts and Academies and the implications of the National Challenge will all impact on the need to develop flexible, effective local models to engage a full range of partners in initiatives that improve outcomes. Likewise, the current children's trust arrangements consultation envisages a more involved role for health partners (particularly GP's) and children's centres, all of which further increases the focus on developing effective local integration of services.

Developing more Integrated, Personalised Frontline Response

- 3.6 Integration and personalisation have been a key feature of children's services work for some time, and a big priority in recent Children and Young People's Plans. Much of this direction is expected from Government through the Reform programme – such as Common Assessment Framework, ContactPoint (an ICT system), and a workforce reform agenda to support a more integrated response to children and young people's issues. However, we also know from our extensive local participation work that this is what children and young people, parents and carers want too – someone to listen to them and work with them to find the solutions that will help their circumstances and ultimately improve their outcomes.
- 3.61 We are now half way through the major reform programme that commenced with Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004. In Leeds we have made significant progress with developments to support integration and personalisation. The Common Assessment Framework is being used across the city as a shared tool for a wide range of professionals to use to work with families to identify and respond to needs. The Budget Holding Lead Professional has added an additional dimension to deliver even faster and more responsive services to some families in need. There have been a lot of integrated training and development programmes delivered on a multi-agency basis over the last year, including common core induction for children's services, Common Assessment Framework training, peer support, and management support for integrated working.
- 3.62 All of this work is supporting the major cultural change that is required within the reform programme, so that professionals work better together to listen and respond to need as it arises. Our development journey from the West Project into city-wide rollout of these developments continues and we have had a range of pilots and programmes underway this year that are being evaluated and that will facilitate ongoing learning.

Next steps for integrated, personalised frontline response

- 3.63 The work done so far provides a platform for further development work to meet the ongoing challenges we want to enable outcomes to improve further and faster. We are using the learning and evaluation from our work to date to inform our next steps. We will be doing even more this year to enable and support even more use of the solution focused Common Assessment Framework and preparing for the impact of the national ECAF system. This will support more speedy and consistent responses to need and address cross-border issues. We will be delivering even more integrated training and development to support the workforce in the changes that are required and we will be using ContactPoint to support changes in the way that professionals share information during this next year.
- 3.64 We will be using all these tools and techniques to ensure that we deliver successfully on the requirements for Targeted Youth Support, which is a significant priority for us in the city this year. The need to deliver more personalised services also informs the Placement Strategy being presented to Executive Board. We will also be using a more structured approach to programme management as a way of achieving further coherence for the remainder of the reform programme.

4.0 Taking this direction forward: The development of the Children and Young People's Plan 2009 and beyond

- 4.1 It is against the context set out above, in terms of both the national influences and the developing local direction that the Children and Young People's Plan for 2009 and beyond will be developed.
- 4.2 Arrangements for developing the new plan aim to involve all local services partners and children and young people in line with the successful work in 2005 that involved thousands of children, young people, parents and frontline staff. This time this will be easier as it can build on existing arrangements and the valuable information gained in the recent annual CYP Plan Review and also the feedback from inspections in the Joint Area Review and Annual Performance Assessment. Partner engagement and ownership of the Plan will be crucial, both in terms of the value this adds to our work locally, but also in view of the national steer towards more shared responsibility across partners (see appendix C).
- 4.3 The timescale for developing the plan is set out below:
- January – June 2008. CYP Plan 2008 annual Review – analysis on outcomes and progress to date. Consultation with partners, staff and Elected Members to inform review
 - June – September 2008. Consultation for the bigger CYP Plan 2009 and beyond review. All partner agencies asked to provide input through existing forums and Boards.
 - September - October 2008. Workshops with elected members, Children Leeds Partnership, Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB) to agree key outcomes and improvement priorities locally and centrally.
 - Working with a variety of focus groups of children and young people, identified through our partners to established a more detailed understanding of their issues and views, supplementing this with a strong element of young people's involvement in a special CYP Plan '09 and beyond Children Leeds Partnership meeting in October.
 - October 2008 – December 2008. Further development of plan. Emerging priorities used to inform budget, commissioning and operational planning. These in turn provide detail for action plans in the CYP Plan '09.
 - January 2009 – March 2009. Consultation and approval of CYP Plan 2009 and beyond. To include Scrutiny Board, Children Leeds Partnership, ISCB, Executive Board and Full Council.
- 4.4 This timetable will provide a better opportunity than in the past to align the emerging themes and priorities coming through the consultation with planning for budgets and service plans into 2009.
- 4.5 As part of the consultation a major Open Forum was held to launch this process in January 2008 and a full consultation pack is available on the Children Leeds website.

5 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

5.1 There are no specific implications for Council Policy and Governance.

6 Legal and Resource Implications

6.1 There are no specific legal and resource implications.

7 Conclusions

7.1 This report provides a reminder of the background to developments in Children's Services over the past two years. More importantly, it has identified key themes in the way that children's services is moving forward – around strategic commissioning, strengthening locality working and integrated service delivery and developing more integrated, personalised front-line response. It is important to consider this context now for three reasons in particular. Firstly, to inform thinking around current and forthcoming key developments in children's services work; secondly in view of the government's current consultation on progressing children's trust arrangements and thirdly as the background to the development of our CYP Plan 2009.

7.2 The development of the CYP Plan 2009 and beyond will be based on some extremely positive progress over the past two years, as identified in the Joint Area Review and reflected in improvement to performance in many key areas. However, many important challenges remain, both in terms of specific outcomes for particular groups and individuals, and in pulling together the various strands of interlinking work taking place across children's services at present.

7.3 It is clear from what has been achieved so far that working in partnership across different agencies and increasingly changing cultures and values so that this becomes a 'given' within children's services, is the best way to achieve the improvements we want. To help progress this further and to take forward the approach outlined in this report an ongoing focus on developing our working arrangements is needed. The CYP Plan 2009 will help to drive this and that is why the engagement of stakeholders across the spectrum, including elected members, is so important to make it a success.

8 Recommendations

8.0 It is recommended that members:

- Note the content of this report and consider it as part of the background to other key children's services reports in the current and coming months.
- Note the government's current consultation on children's trust arrangements and the Leeds position relating to this.
- Note and endorse the process for consulting on and developing the Children and Young People's Plan for 2009.

9.0 Background Papers

The Children Act 2004

Leeds City Council Executive Board Report – 20.09.2006: Council Change Programme

Leeds City Council Executive Board Report – 09.02.2007: Children’s Trust Arrangements – Update on Progress

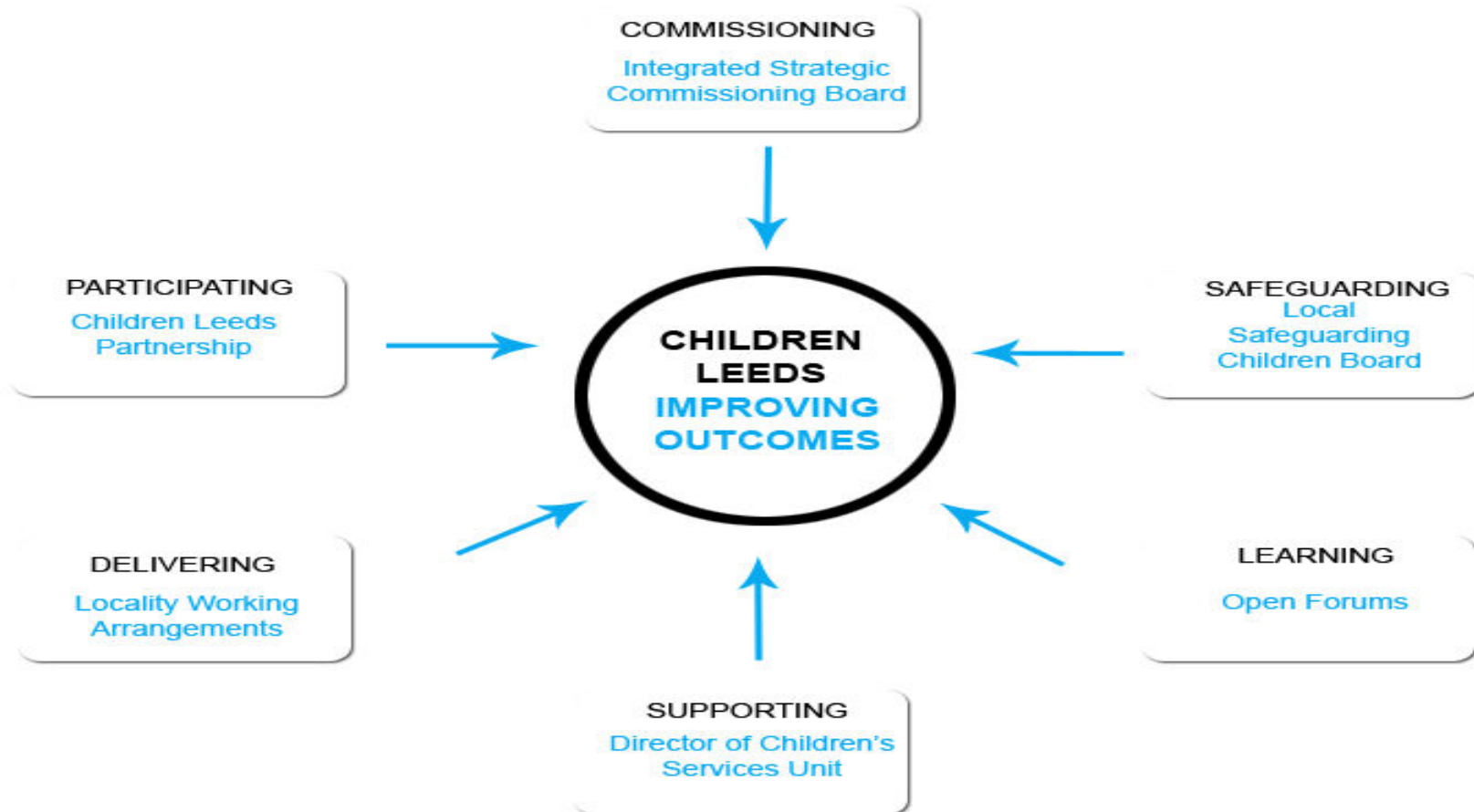
Leeds City Council Executive Board Report – 11.09.2007: Children’s Services and Children’s Trust Arrangements Update Report

Leeds City Council Executive Board Report – 17.10.07: Time for Change

Leeds City Council Executive Board Report – 08.02.08: The Children’s Plan: Building Brighter Futures

Leeds City Council Executive Board Report – 11.06.08: The 2008 Review of the Children and Young People’s Plan

LEEDS CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS



Leeds' Children and Young People's Plan Priorities 2008

Children and young people in Leeds to be:

- Active and eat healthily
- Happy and resilient
- Able to make healthy choices about sex and relationships
- Safe in their families and safe in care
- Safe in their communities
- In school and achieving
- Able to make a good start in learning
- Engaged in positive activities
- Succeeding in learning or work
- Able to succeed, whatever the barriers
- Supported by excellent, integrated services

Delivering the Children's Plan: Strengthening Children's Trust Arrangements Legislative Options Consultation

Proposed Change	Summary of Proposal	Leeds Current situation / Potential response
Extending the 'duty to co-operate'	<p>Currently a number of partners across children's services are bound by a statutory 'duty to co-operate' with the local authority in arrangements that aim to promote co-operation between children's services providers. Currently, front line education providers aren't named amongst these partners (though work on the children's agenda clearly engages with them) under the proposal they (including Academies) would be, with suitable arrangements made to represent a cross-section of school views. This would also increase the onus on existing partners to work more closely with schools, particularly around early intervention.</p> <p>Views also sought on better engagement with GP's and Children's Centres.</p>	<p>Schools are already actively engaged in many aspects of local and city-wide children's trust arrangements as demonstrated through for e.g. representation on CLP, emphasis on the cluster model as a means of progress in localities, engagement with key initiatives and pilots such as the Leadership Challenge. However, levels of engagement vary so introducing the duty to co-operate offers potential benefits. Before a response can be made further consideration is needed of the practical implications of achieving fair and equal involvement of all different schools, particularly in a city as large and diverse as Leeds.</p>
Children and Young People's Plans	<p>Although partners should be engaged in the production of an area's Children and Young People's Plan, the current 'legal' position is that these are a local authority led and owned document. Under the proposal the partners named under the duty to co-operate would have shared responsibility for the Plan. Under such an arrangement the Plan must show the added value of a partnership approach. It must be in place and published by 2010. Guidance relating to such Plans would be more specific than in the past about the required areas it should cover, these include details of specific work on early intervention and prevention and arrangements for joint commissioning.</p>	<p>More detailed consideration needed, but in principle Leeds would welcome moves that bring more shared responsibility around ownership of the CYP Plan. This would be an extension of the high levels of engagement that already exist across Children Leeds. The timescale may be an issue – if we produce our new plan for 2009 under current arrangements we would not anticipate doing a major review as early as 2010. As such, full engagement of partners for the 2009 Plan becomes even more important.</p>
Statutory Children's Trust Boards	<p>There is currently no legislative requirement to create a children's trust board, although most LA's have done so as a means to strengthening partnership arrangements. The success of these Boards so far nationally is judged to be inconsistent, so the proposal suggests creating the Boards on a statutory basis with a number of clearly defined functions and responsibilities as well as 'core membership' to include schools and the VCF Sector.</p>	<p>Leeds already has strong trust arrangements as recognised in the JAR and would welcome efforts to strengthen the duty for partners to participate in these. However, Leeds' separation of the CLP and ISCB are quite unique and we feel central to the success our trust arrangements have had so far. We would therefore caution against prescribing a <i>single</i> Board as the right approach for every authority and have made initial representation to this effect.</p>
Removing barriers – extend opportunities to 'pool' resources	<p>Currently the local authority and named relevant partners are the only groups given powers through the Children Act to pool funding and share staff, goods services, accommodation or other resources with the aim of improving well-being. The proposal invites views on whether it is desirable to extend these powers to private and third sector bodies to potentially break down some of the barriers that currently restrict better partnership working.</p>	<p>Leeds has good engagement with the private and voluntary sector across its trust arrangements. There is, for example a voluntary sector representation on the ISCB and several on the CLP. In principle these proposals offer the potential to usefully strengthen their engagement with initiatives aimed at pooling resources. However further consideration of the details and implications are needed prior to a response.</p>

