

Report of: Director Resources & Housing

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 25th November 2019

Subject: Children and Families – Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Programme

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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

Summary

1. Main issues

- In recent years Leeds children’s services have been recognised as a model of improvement, innovation and success. This has improved the lives of children and families in a wide range of ways – helping more children stay safely within their family, improving attendance at school and reducing childhood obesity. The transformation of services across the city since 2010 has been praised by inspectors and confirmed by OfSTED with a rating of ‘Good’ in 2015 and ‘Outstanding’ in 2018.
- This progress has helped Leeds build a national role in reform and sector led improvement as a ‘Partner in Practice’ (PiP) with central government. Through the Leeds Relational Practice Centre (LRPC) Leeds has worked with over 80% of local authorities in England to promote good practice, has hosted visits from local and national government leaders from both the UK and countries as diverse as Turkey, Japan and Australia. In addition, leaders from Children and Families have supported intensive improvement through consultancy and support in eight Councils facing significant challenges.
- The continued success of Leeds in both its own work and its work across the sector (as reported to this Board in August) has been vital in building good relationships with central government and their continued investment in Leeds’ work. This report sets out a proposal for the leadership of the next stage of this

work and in particular, the management of Leeds' role in the Department for Education (DfE) 'Strengthening Families, Protecting Children' (SFPC) programme.

- Specific recommendations are made regarding the resourcing for adopting this programme. Linked to this is the need to ensure LCC's Children and Families Directorate maintains sufficient leadership capacity whilst taking part in this programme.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- These proposals are intended to provide a fit for purpose and sustainable senior management structure that creates capacity to deliver the SFPC programme. It also ensures critical leadership capacity and experience is kept in place in Childrens and Families. There has been consideration and focus around supporting the relevant aims of the Best Council Plan and Child Friendly Leeds.

3. Resource Implications

- The proposed new structure will be wholly funded from the DfE SFPC funding. Ensuring this programme is successful is important in securing continued support and additional funding from central government. The funding awarded is £8.24m over 5 years.

4. Recommendations

The Executive Board is recommended to approve the following proposals as set out in this report, namely to agree to:

1. Formally accepting the Department for Education's Strengthening Families, Protecting Children funding offer.
2. The establishment of a Strengthening Families, Protecting Children team including a Programme Director post, which will operate at Director level.
3. The flexible deployment of the current Director Children & Families to the post of Programme Director
4. The appointment of a temporary Director Children & Families, subject to the decisions of the Employment Committee
5. To review these arrangements in 12 months' time.

The Executive Board is also asked to note that, subject to the above recommendations being approved, the Chief Officer HR will, during December 2019, make the necessary arrangements to implement proposals 2 - 4. Furthermore, the Chief Officer HR will undertake a review of these arrangements in December 2020.

5. Purpose of this report

- 5.1 To recommend proposals to enable LCC to take a lead role in national improvement programmes and at the same time ensure that there is sufficient leadership capacity to maintain our own position whilst supporting other councils.

6. Background information

- 6.1 In recent years Leeds children's services have been recognised as a model of improvement, innovation and success. This has improved the lives of children and families in a wide range of ways – helping more children stay safely within their family, improving attendance at school and reducing childhood obesity. The transformation of services across the city since 2010 has been praised by inspectors and confirmed by OfSTED with a rating of 'Good' in 2015 and 'Outstanding' in 2018.
- 6.2 This progress has helped Leeds build a national role in reform and sector led improvement as a 'Partner in Practice' (PiP) with central government. Through the Leeds Relational Practice Centre (LRPC) Leeds has worked with over 80% of local authorities in England to promote good practice, has hosted visits from local and national government leaders from both the UK and countries as diverse as Turkey, Japan and Australia. In addition, leaders from Children and Families have supported intensive improvement through consultancy and support in eight Councils facing significant challenges.
- 6.3 The continued success of Leeds in both its own work and its work across the sector (as reported to this Board in August) has been vital in building good relationships with central government and their continued investment in Leeds' work.
- 6.4 When Leeds became the only core city to obtain an Ofsted rating of 'Good' in 2015, there was considerable interest in the Leeds improvement journey. Leeds received funding of £5 million from the Department for Education's Innovation Fund to develop 'Family Valued', an innovative approach to restorative and relational practice.
- 6.5 Leeds was also one of the first eight local authorities to be given 'Partners in Practice' status and received £9.6m from the Department of Education in 2016 for further innovation and improvement work.
- 6.6 In 2017 Leeds was asked to become the formal improvement partner for Kirklees Children's Services, assuming responsibility for managing and improving services and outcomes following an inadequate Ofsted inspection in 2016.
- 6.7 To support Children and Families work as a 'Partner in Practice'; Children and Families established the Leeds Relational Practice Centre to support its improvement work, promote relational practice and raise the profile of the authority.
- 6.8 Since the establishment of the Leeds Relational Practice Centre in 2017 the Centre has supported visits to Leeds by three quarters of local authorities in England. The centre promotes children's services sector led improvement through the power of relationship based practice. Leeds has also successfully supported a number of authorities with improvement, including Tower Hamlets, Havering, Manchester and Kirklees. Building on this further proposals for supporting national improvement programmes have been developed. These are detailed next, together with proposals on the resourcing and oversight of this work

6.9 This report sets out a proposal for the leadership of the next stage of this work and in particular, the management of Leeds' role in the Department for Education (DfE) 'Strengthening Families, Protecting Children' (SFPC) programme.

7. Main issues

New Programme - Strengthening Families, Protecting Children

- 7.1 In the 2018 autumn budget, the Treasury committed £84million to the scaling up of three programmes from the first two waves of the innovation programme which had the strongest evidence of improvement. These were Leeds 'Family Valued'; Hertfordshire County Council's 'Family Safeguarding' and North Yorkshire's "No Wrong Door" approach.
- 7.2 The SFPC Programme was launched by the DfE to support the scale and spread of these three innovation programmes across 20 local authorities over the next five years. The programmes are intended to:
- Improve outcomes for children and families;
 - Improve practice across children's services;
 - Improve the effectiveness of local authority children's social work; and
 - Safely reduce the need for statutory social work intervention, particularly reducing the need for children to be looked after.
- 7.3 The impact of these programmes will be independently evaluated by the What Works Centre (WWC).
- 7.4 For the SFPC Programme, Leeds was asked to develop a costed proposal to support the roll out of 'Family Valued' in up to six authorities to enable them to implement a restorative approach to Children's Services.
- 7.5 The development of the Leeds proposal was informed by Children and Families experience of improvement work to date and, in particular, the experience of working in an improvement partnership with Kirklees, where leadership capacity had been drawn from Children and Families in Leeds. This approach was successful in supporting improvement in Kirklees whilst LCC Children and Families was able to achieve an 'Outstanding' inspection judgement from Ofsted. However, leadership capacity, particularly at Director and Deputy Director level was under considerable pressure at times.
- 7.6 The Leeds submission for the SFPC programme proposed the establishment of a core team that would be committed to delivering the programme full time. The team would be led by a Programme Director. Given the national profile of the programme and the reputational risk to the authority, and the fact that the Director would have to work alongside the Chief Executives, Director of Children's Services and senior leaders from partner organisations in implementing local authorities, it was decided to cost this post at Director level, three days a week.
- 7.7 To support the Programme Director, investment would be made in five areas:
- Programme Leadership and Strategic Support
 - Workforce Development

- Strengthened Social Work Leadership
- Practice leadership and development
- Investing in the Three As

7.8 The investment in new capacity is designed to create a core team that can lead and coordinate the SFPC programme whilst also creating extra capacity in key areas of the service in order to strengthen leadership in Leeds and share additional work of the SFPC programme across a larger number of experienced Leeds leaders and practitioners.

7.9 Since the awarding of the funding earlier this year, the SFPC monies have been used to secure a mix of interim and longer term programme staffing whilst wider consultation has gone on with staff, unions and partners. The last six months has been used to assess arrangements during the 'trailblazer' work with the first trial authority, Darlington. Now this is well underway there has been time for reflection and agreement on a long term structure to ensure that the programme can be fully supported and continued progress in Leeds protected.

7.10 Some of this process has commenced by adding additional posts to existing structures so resources could be called on to support the delivery of the programme, which would vary according to needs in other councils. Other more specific roles would also be created to work on a dedicated basis. If posts are filled internally it is expected backfilling will be required to guarantee capacity for Leeds. Alternatively if posts are filled externally, the option of time limited contracts will be considered, recognising however that the programme will run for four years. In total 20.2 fte additional posts will be created, and will be fully funded through the programme grant. The new arrangements are described below.

Programme Leadership and Strategic Support

7.11 Creating additional capacity for programme leadership to manage a national programme working in six different Local Authorities across a wide area of the country is vital. To this end SFPC funding will be used to create the following posts;

- SFPC Programme Director (0.6 FTE)
- SFPC Professional Lead (0.6 FTE Director 60%)
- SFPC Programme Management (PO6)
- SFPC Programme Support Officer (PO2)

These posts will be focused on engagement with all layers of the local authority and undertaking an analysis of the areas of strength and development. Based on this analysis the team will lead and support implementation of the changes required in agreement with the participating authority.

7.12 Additional posts to provide improved support for the service's and other local authorities strategic priorities, with extra expertise for strategy, research, policy development and securing external funding as detailed below;

- SFPC and Strategy Lead (Dir 45%)
- Strategy and Improvement (PO2)

These roles will provide strategic support and policy development for Leeds and the authorities we are working with and manage the interface with the Department for Education for the work being undertaken.

Workforce development and the Leeds Relational Practice Centre

7.13 The SFPC approach is designed to 'adapt and adopt' Leeds' Family Valued Innovation Project in other Local Authorities to help them improve. Large scale workforce development was a key component of Family Valued – in Leeds over 10,000 staff in the Council and other organisations were trained in Restorative Practice. To meet these demands SFPC funds will be used to create the following posts:

- Restorative Practice Workforce Lead (PO6)
- 2 x Restorative Practice Trainers (PO1)

These posts will provide the wide scale training and development in restorative practices to embed the system-wide cultural change that will be required

7.14 This extensive workforce development programme as well as wider work organising the logistics of planning Leeds staff working across the country will require considerable coordination and planning. Children and Families already have the successful Leeds Relational Practice Centre which manages existing sector led improvement work for the Council and also runs a wide range of popular training and events. As such it is proposed to build on the skills and capacity with extra staff to enable the Centre to support the work of SFPC. The new posts will include:

- SFPC Practice Improvement Officer (PO2)
- SFPC Apprenticeship (A1-3)

These posts will be focussed on ensuring the organisation of the programme of work through strengthening families and the work of the LRPC more broadly. This will ensure that the demands on the team and on staff from Leeds supporting the work is effectively managed and scheduled.

Strengthened Social Work Leadership

7.15 The SFPC programme will require considerable input from senior social work leaders working with the partner LAs on reforming practice, policies and systems across all aspects of children's services. It is important that this work is led by Leeds leaders, who are immersed in the culture and practice of the city and understand the challenges of our own improvement journey. To achieve this without placing additional demands on staff, SFPC funding will be used to create additional capacity that free up existing leaders. The extra posts created will include:

- Deputy Head of Service – Children Looked After (Dir 52.5%)
- Service Delivery Manager – Kinship and Family Group Conferencing (Dir 45%)
- Lifelong Links Manager (PO6)

- 2 x Lifelong Links Coordinator (PO2)

Practice Leadership and Improvement

7.16 Alongside investment in sector led improvement, the SFPC monies will enable Leeds to bolster leadership and practice development to lead on the next stage of restorative working. This work builds on approaches Leeds has taken to develop skills that strengthen relationships with children, young people and families; helping to solve problems and repair harm. These new posts will benefit work in Leeds, add additional expertise to work with Partner LAs and free up time for existing leaders to work to support SFPC. The new posts include:

- 2 x Restorative Advanced Practitioners (PO5)
- Practice, Policies and Procedures Officer (PO4)

Investing in the Three As

7.17 Improving educational outcomes for vulnerable learners is a key priority for Leeds so the final use of SFPC funding is to create new posts to lead work in this important area; reflecting our Three As strategy. This approach will help with a local priority whilst freeing up existing staff to contribute more to SFPC work supporting partner LAs – e.g. sharing the progress and success of the Virtual Head-teacher and school in Leeds that has improved results and attendance for Children Looked After. The new posts in this area will be:

- Executive Head of Virtual Schools and SEMH Lead (Dir 60%).
- Head of Virtual School for Children in Need. (Dir 45%)

Proposals for Delivery

7.18 A priority for delivering the SFPC programme is that of leadership. The importance of high quality strategic leadership was recognised by the Department for Education who agreed to fund the post at Director level. Recruiting a suitably experienced leader, with a good understanding of the Leeds approach to practice and improvement, would be difficult. However, it is an option and the post would generate some interest.

7.19 An alternative option and the one recommended is that the current Director of Children and Families is flexibly deployed from their current role to undertake the role of Programme Director. The scope of the role would be extended to cover all the work of the Leeds Relational Practice Centre ensuring that all improvement work is coordinated. This structure would also mean that Children and Families are well placed to bid for future improvement work or to engage in sector led and funded improvement work should the Partners in Practice Programme end.

7.20 To remain within the funding allocated by the DfE the current Director would reduce their hours and become the Programme Director. This would provide a development opportunity for one of the existing senior leaders in Children and Families to gain experience in the role of Director. It would also have the advantage of providing service continuity and resilience. There is sufficient capacity and depth of leadership within the Directorate that would enable any gaps to be filled from within the Directorate, providing positive development opportunities.

- 7.21 During the period of the temporary appointment for the acting Director, the Programme Director would not be responsible for the day to day management of Children and Families. This would be the responsibility of the acting Director. However, the Programme Director would be available to provide mentoring and support to the member of the leadership team acting up and if necessary the arrangements reviewed. It is recommended that any arrangement is for a minimum 12 month period to be reviewed then.
- 7.22 In bringing together a new delivery programme, it is proposed assurance arrangements are covered by the Executive Board Member for Children and Families and Deputy Leader (Resources and Strategy). They would be supported by the Director of Resources and Housing to ensure:
- Leeds is meeting its external obligations to the DfE and partner councils
 - resources are effectively used between LCC and the SFPC teams
 - A review of the overall effectiveness of arrangements is held – with an annual report on the work of the Unit and interim review compiled.
- 7.23 It is proposed that a go live date of 3^{1st} January 2020 is aimed for to allow sufficient time to:
- Finalise oversight arrangements to ensure agreements with the DfE are met
 - Hold an Employment Committee for a temporary DCS appointment
 - Commence recruitment to other posts
 - Agree delegation arrangements for the new Project Director role

Corporate considerations

8. Consultation and engagement

- 8.1 Consultation on these proposals have been based on discussions with Executive Board portfolio holders. Consultation with the Trade Unions around the proposals, posts and recruitment has commenced and will continue.

9. Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 9.1 Due regard has been given to equality, diversity and cohesion when developing these proposals. A copy of the equality impact assessment screening document can be found at Appendix II of this report.

10. Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 10.1 These proposals are intended to provide a fit for purpose and sustainable senior management structure that creates capacity to deliver the SFPC programme. It also ensures critical leadership capacity and experience is kept in place in Childrens and Families. There has been consideration and focus around supporting the relevant aims of the Best Council Plan and Child Friendly Leeds.

10.2 Climate Emergency

In line with the Council's commitment to reduce the carbon impact of its work every effort will be made to maximise use of low carbon travel to partner Local Authorities and reduce high carbon travel.

11. Resources, procurement and value for money

- 11.1 The SFPC funding award is £8.24m over 5 years.
- 11.2 The proposed new structure will be wholly funded from the DfE SFPC funding. Ensuring this programme is successful is important in ensuring continued support and additional funding from central government. The staffing proposals within the report will cost approx £1,148k in the first full financial year, the annual cost (excl any future pay awards) will rise each year to a maximum of approx. £1,238k per annum where all posts have incrementally reached the top of their salary band. Additional commitments against the funding total approximately £400k pa and include training, travel, consultancy and spend on a problem solving court. These commitments and the cost of the proposed structure can be met from the agreed annual grant funding.

12. Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 12.1 The report will be subject to call in.

13. Risk management

- 13.1 Planning for this programme has been informed from the outset by a determination that SFPC commitments should not reduce the focus on the Council's primary duty to the children of Leeds. The proposals in this report ensure that Children's Services is strengthened in key areas to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on the city, whilst ensuring that the SFPC programme succeeds.

14. Conclusions

- 14.1 The structure proposed within the report provides the strength and capacity to effectively support and develop other local authorities within the parameters of the SFPC funding. The structure and posts will also ensure that high standards and levels of service within Children and Families are still maintained.

15. Recommendations

The Executive Board is recommended to approve the proposals set out in this report namely to agree to:

1. Formally accepting the Department for Education's Strengthening Families, Protecting Children funding offer.
2. The establishment of a Strengthening Families, Protecting Children team including a Programme Director post, which will operate at Director level.
3. The flexible deployment of the current Director Children & Families to the post of Programme Director
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5. To review these arrangements in 12 months' time.

The Executive Board is also asked to note that, subject to the above recommendations being approved, the Chief Officer HR will, during December 2019, make the necessary arrangements to implement proposals 2 - 4. Furthermore, the Chief Officer HR will undertake a review of these arrangements in December 2020.

16. Background documents¹

None

17 Appendices

Appendix I Structure Chart (existing and proposed)

Appendix II Equality Impact Screening Document

Appendix III Programme Director Job Description

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.