



SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES) - REMOTE CONSULTATIVE MEETING

Consultative Meeting to be held remotely* on
Wednesday, 15th September, 2021 at 10.00 am

(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 9.45 a.m.)

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

H Bithell	-	Kirkstall;
E Flint	-	Weetwood;
B Flynn	-	Adel and Wharfedale;
A Forsaith	-	Farnley and Wortley;
C Gruen	-	Bramley and Stanningley;
Z Hussain	-	Roundhay;
J Illingworth	-	Kirkstall;
A Lamb (Chair)	-	Wetherby;
S Lay	-	Otley and Yeadon;
A Marshall-Katung	-	Little London and Woodhouse;
K Renshaw	-	Ardsley and Robin Hood;
J Senior	-	Morley South;
R. Stephenson	-	Harewood;

Co-opted Members (Voting)

Mr E A Britten	-	Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr A Graham	-	Church Representative (Church of England)
Mrs K Blacker	-	Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
Ms J Ward	-	Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

Ms C Foote	-	School Staff Representative
Ms H Bellamy	-	School Staff Representative
Ms L Whitaker	-	Young Lives Leeds

Note to observers of the meeting: To remotely observe this meeting, please click on the 'To View Meeting' link which will feature on the meeting's webpage (linked below) ahead of the meeting. The webcast will become available at the commencement of the meeting.

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1185&MId=11694>

*This is being held as a remote 'consultative' meeting. While the meeting will be webcast live to enable public access, it is not being held as a public meeting in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.

Principal Scrutiny Adviser:
Angela Brogden
Tel: (0113) 37 88661
Produced on Recycled Paper

A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</p> <p>To disclose or draw attention to any interests in accordance with Leeds City Council’s ‘Councillor Code of Conduct’.</p>	
2			<p>MEETING NOTE OF 7TH JULY 2021</p> <p>To note for information the note of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board consultative meeting held on 7th July 2021.</p>	5 - 8
3			<p>UPDATE ON THRIVING: THE CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY FOR LEEDS</p> <p>To consider and discuss a report from the Director of Children and Families which provides an overview of ‘Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds’, and the work that sits underneath the strategy.</p>	9 - 44
4			<p>COVID-19 UPDATE - LEARNING</p> <p>To consider and discuss a report from the Director of Children and Families which provides an update on the focused work being undertaken to support learning settings to support the learning of children and young people in Leeds, including work to reframe the 3As Strategy in the context of Covid-19.</p>	45 - 52
5			<p>OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT</p> <p>To consider and discuss a report from the Director of Children and Families on the two-day Ofsted Focused Visit to the Leeds Children and Families Front Door Service conducted on the 20th and 21st July 2021.</p>	53 - 62

To consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year.

Third Party Recording

Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts named on the front of this agenda.

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- b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.

Webcasting

Please note – the publicly accessible parts of this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the City Council's website. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed.

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SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES) - CONSULTATIVE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 7TH JULY, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors S Burke, E Flint, B Flynn,
A Forsaith, C Gruen, Z Hussain,
J Illingworth, S Lay, A Marshall-Katung,
K Renshaw, J Senior and R Stephenson

Co-opted Members (Voting)

Mr E A Britten - Church Representative (Catholic)

Mrs K Blacker - Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

Ms C Foote – School Staff Representative

Ms H Bellamy – School Staff Representative

9 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests.

10 Meeting note of 9th June 2021

RECOMMENDED – That the note of the meeting held 9th June 2021 be noted.

11 Youth Work Review and Future Vision

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented further information on the new youth work delivery model, informed by the findings of the youth work review, as well as a shared vision for future youth work in Leeds.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Mary Harland, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education
- Sal Tariq, Director of Children and Families
- Ruth Terry, Chief Officer Social Work

The Director of Children and Families introduced the report, highlighting the need for a clear vision and recognition of the impact of youth workers on the lives of young people across the city. Members were advised that there are

three strands set out within the future vision - a core offer of universal youth work undertaken by youth work services within the local authority, additional third sector provision for greater demand, and a small grant scheme for smaller organisations with alternative reach.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Communications.* Members acknowledged the need to maximise opportunities to improve communications with young people about services and schemes available and sought clarity on plans for future communications and engagement with young people. Linked to this, Members were advised that a comprehensive communication strategy will be developed as part of the action plan.
- *Small grant scheme.* Members were supportive of a more exploratory approach to the smaller grants scheme and requested examples of more diverse projects. Members were advised that ad-hoc flexible projects to date have included support for addressing youth violence and resilience programmes for young women and girls.
- *Quality assurance.* It was reported that a number of support functions had been identified as essential to the effectiveness and sustainability of the agreed model of delivery of youth work, with particular reference made to the importance of having a robust quality assurance process for all youth work provision.
- *Mapping of existing provision.* It was noted that a thorough mapping exercise of local authority and community run building assets would be undertaken. Members therefore requested that this information be shared with the Board in due course.
- *Sharing best practice.* Members recognised the success of a range of projects delivered by community organisations and queried the approach taken to sharing best practice. Members were advised that the first city wide youth work conference was held in 2020 and will now continue on an annual basis as an opportunity to celebrate and learn from the range of services and providers in Leeds.
- *Provision for travelling communities.* In response to a query, Members were advised that Gypsy and Roma Travellers are supported predominantly by the Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE), as well as intervention from council youth work teams on an ad hoc basis in response to new encampments in the city.
- *Timescales for implementation of the new model.* Members sought assurances that services are on track to meet the timescales for implementation set out in the report. The Director confirmed that he was confident that the new model would be fully implemented by April 2022. The Board therefore suggested that it would be timely for a further update to be brought back to scrutiny in March 2022.

RECOMMENDED – That the contents of the report, along with Members comments, be noted.

12 Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that summarised the inquiry work undertaken to-date by the Scrutiny Board in relation to exclusions, elective home education and off-rolling and presented further information to assist the Board in considering appropriate next steps.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education
- Councillor Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships
- Sal Tariq, Director of Children and Families
- Val Waite, Head of Learning Inclusion
- Dave Clark, Head of Learning Improvement

The Head of Learning Inclusion introduced the report, providing an update on the current trends for the beginning of the new academic year 20/21 where unverified data is now available, as well as plans to address concerning trends that have arisen throughout the pandemic.

Members discussed a number of matters, which included:

- *Suggested areas of evidence gathering.* Members expressed an interest to receive data surrounding permanent exclusion rates in order to explore any potential hotspot areas across the city. Members were also keen to receive data surrounding fixed-term exclusion rates to identify schools with particularly high rates. Other information requests related to elective home education rates; school behaviour policies; Education Health and Care Plans; links with youth work provision.
- *Suggested witnesses.* Members identified the need to ensure that head teachers / CEOs from a range of schools are given the opportunity to engage in future inquiry sessions. Members also felt it would be useful to hear from young people and their families who have chosen to home educate their children, as well as families whose children have been previously excluded. Linked to this, it was also suggested that the Board engage with young offenders to understand their experiences of school too.
- *Inquiry timeline.* The Chair suggested that November appeared to be the most suitable time for the Board to recommence the inquiry, to ensure that relevant data will be available and schools have settled into the new academic year. Members were agreeable to the timeline suggested.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser confirmed that terms of reference relating to the next stage of the Board's inquiry would be drafted to reflect the Board's comments and brought back to the Board's next formal meeting for consideration and agreement.

RECOMMENDED – That the contents of the report, along with Members comments, be noted.

13 Work Schedule

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented the draft work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

In introducing the report, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser explained that the latest version of the work schedule reflected the Board's discussion in June around possible areas of scrutiny work to undertake this year. Members were invited to consider whether they would like to make any further suggested changes to the work schedule at this stage.

The report also referred to the Board's draft report around tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families. As well as monitoring and helping to inform some of the immediate responses needed during the Covid-19 pandemic, the former Children and Families Scrutiny Board had used its final meeting in March to begin exploring what the potential long-term impacts of Covid-19 are likely to be on children and their families.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser explained that during the Board's June meeting, it was proposed that a draft report summarising the Board's views and potential recommendations arising from its March discussion - but also reflecting any developments since March - be considered and formally approved by the Board in July. However, given the consultative status of the Board's July meeting, it was now noted that the Board would not be able to formally approve its report.

The Chair explained that the Board's draft report had been circulated separately to Board Members in advance of the meeting and that Members had agreed to use the work schedule item as an opportunity to share initial views on the draft report so that these may be reflected as part of a final draft to be brought to the Board's next formal public meeting for approval. It was also explained that the draft report would be made publicly available on the council's website as supplementary information immediately following the meeting.

During the Board's discussion on the draft report, the Chair reminded Members that the work undertaken by the Board was primarily aimed at identifying key priority areas for the Board to maintain a watching brief or to potentially undertake further detailed work in the future.

RECOMMENDED –

- (a) That the draft work schedule be noted.
- (b) That a final draft version of the Board's report around tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families be brought to the Board's next formal public meeting for consideration and approval.

Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Date: 15th September 2021

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city and council's ambitions

- The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of 'Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds', and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has occurred during the pandemic. This report gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.
- In 2016, Children & Families started to develop a plan around mitigating the impact of child poverty across Leeds. In 2017/2018, a scrutiny enquiry on child poverty recommended that Children & Families integrated more of a central focus on child poverty. The first Child Poverty Impact Board met in 2018, and Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds was launched in 2019.
- The child poverty strategy has been co-created with children, young people, families with direct experience of poverty, third, private and public sector, schools, academics and other organisations.
- We know that the feeling of being in poverty, the feeling of being excluded and the feeling of being ashamed can impact a child for the rest of their life. We don't want this in Leeds. So, we are working together, as a city, to reduce the impact of poverty on young people. This is our moral imperative.
- This report provides information on poverty, which is a key city, regional and national challenge. This priority is reflected in all city strategies contributing to the *strong economy, compassionate city* including the Best Council Plan 2018/19-2020/21, the Inclusive Growth Strategy, the Joint Health and Well Being Plan and the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Executive Board report, discussed in December 2018.
- Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this work. Disadvantaged pupils are not a single group; characteristics such as Special Education Need and Disability (SEND), ethnicity, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) interact with disadvantage with varying impacts on progress rates, gaps with non-disadvantaged pupils and the long-term impact of disadvantage.

- Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 – 2020 have been developed to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 by helping the council to identify work and activities that reduce disadvantage, discrimination, and inequalities of opportunity.
- The work fulfils some of the best council objectives and priorities as defined in the Best Council Plan 2018/19-2020/21. These include; improving educational achievement gaps; providing skills programmes and employment support; improving school attendance and reducing the percentage of young people who are not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).
- The strategy aligns with local and city-wide strategies such as the Priority Neighbourhoods work, the Children and Young People’s Plan, Child Friendly Leeds, Future in Mind Strategy, and the Best City for Learning.
- This strategy directly relates to most of the Best Council Plan priorities:
 - tackling poverty, helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential
 - reducing health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles
 - making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in
 - improving the quality of lives and growing the economy through cultural and creative activities
 - providing homes of the right quality, type and affordability in the right places and minimising homelessness
 - keeping people safe from harm and promoting community respect and resilience
- This strategy relates to the council priority around the climate emergency. As the climate continues to change, extreme weather patterns across the globe will become increasingly common. The knock-on effects of these changes will be profound; however, it is hard to determine what specifically they will look like. What is certain is that there will be scarcity of various resources, such as food and energy, which could lead to price increases, which will have a disproportionate impact on people who live in poverty. We should seek to mitigate the impact of poverty and reduce insecurity and inequality around these basic needs to build strengthened communities for the future.

Recommendations

- a) That the Scrutiny Board considers and supports the strategic framework in place to mitigate the impact of child poverty, and the work being undertaken by the council and other partners in the key areas of activity.
- b) That the Scrutiny Board acknowledges the need to promote the work of the Thriving strategy across the city and in particular in each respective Member’s portfolio in order to highlight the impact of poverty on children and their families.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of 'Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds', and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has occurred during the pandemic. Appendix 1 of this report gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

2. Further detail is set out in Appendix 1 of this report in terms of the outcomes and outputs of each project linked to the Strategy for the Scrutiny Board's information.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

3. Extensive consultation has been carried out with regards to this strategy, with private, public, third and education sectors, children, young people and parents, universities and community groups.

What are the resource implications?

4. Each project has an individual resource implication. Where possible, a partnership approach has been implemented to pool resources from a variety of directorates and sectors across Leeds.

What are the legal implications?

5. There are no legal implications.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

6. None.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

7. As mentioned above, this strategy directly relates to most of the Best Council Plan priorities:
 - tackling poverty, helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential
 - reducing health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles
 - making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in
 - improving the quality of lives and growing the economy through cultural and creative activities
 - providing homes of the right quality, type and affordability in the right places and minimising homelessness
 - keeping people safe from harm and promoting community respect and resilience

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

8. This is an agreed corporate wide strategy which is ongoing.

b) How will success be measured?

9. The outcomes and outputs set out in Appendix 1 report the outcomes and outputs of each project.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

10. This is an ongoing strategy.

Appendices

11. Appendix 1 – Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds.

Background papers

12. None.

Appendix One

Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Summary

1. Main issues

This report will provide an overview of Thriving, the Leeds Child Poverty Strategy and the various workstreams that sit underneath the strategy. It will also detail our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing work, impact and next steps.

Latest Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) analysis published on 25th March 2021 found that 4.3 million children were living in relative poverty at the end of the 2019/20 financial year; a 12-year high; equating to 1 in 4 children in the UK. In-work poverty is increasing every year, with 75% of children growing up in poverty living in working families (Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), 2019/20). Poverty is estimated to affect 173,600 people across Leeds (after housing costs are deducted from income (DWP), 2018/2019). Child poverty is increasing, in Leeds and nationally, and it is having very serious impacts on children, the adults children become, and on the societies in which poor children live. Latest local data¹ for year end 2020 revealed 24% of children under 16 (36,496) in Leeds lived in poverty (before housing costs are deducted from income) which is an increase of 9% in a year. This compares to the national figure where 19% of children under 16 lived in poverty (before housing costs are deducted from income).

Poverty intersects with other demographics such as class, ethnicity, age, disability and gender; 46% of children who are from black and minority ethnic groups live in poverty, compared with 26% of children in white British families. Nearly half of those who live in poverty are either a disabled person or live with a disabled person², and the poverty rate for families with a disabled family member rose from 28% in 2011 to 30% in 2017³. Women are more likely than men to live in poverty, with 20% of women experiencing poverty compared to 18% of men. Forty-five per cent of single parents - of which 90% are women - are living in poverty⁴.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Over the next few years, we will start to see statistics that show the extent of poverty across the UK, and how this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Early indications appear to show that those who were previously experiencing poverty have been pushed deeper into poverty, and those who were previously living above the poverty line have been pushed into poverty. The pandemic has worsened existing inequalities, with vulnerable children facing severe and long-term impacts.

Prior to the pandemic, 3 million people in the UK were behind with one or more key household bills⁵. Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced household income, led to a rise in unemployment, resulted in significant increases in claims for Universal Credit, and led to six million people falling behind on bills⁶.

The benefit system has been crucial to the national COVID-19 response but has been under extraordinary pressure from an unprecedented wave of applications for Universal Credit (UC). In June 2021 the provisional figure for the total number of people claiming UC in Leeds local authority area is 74,349; this includes all claimants whether they are in employment or not and is 14.4% of working age population (WAP), which is lower when compared to 14.8% in England and 16.2% in West Yorkshire. There is a slight increase of 381 claimants on the previous month in May

¹ These figures are from the [DWP's Children in low income families measure](#) and are updated every year

² [Disability Rights UK](#)

³ [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

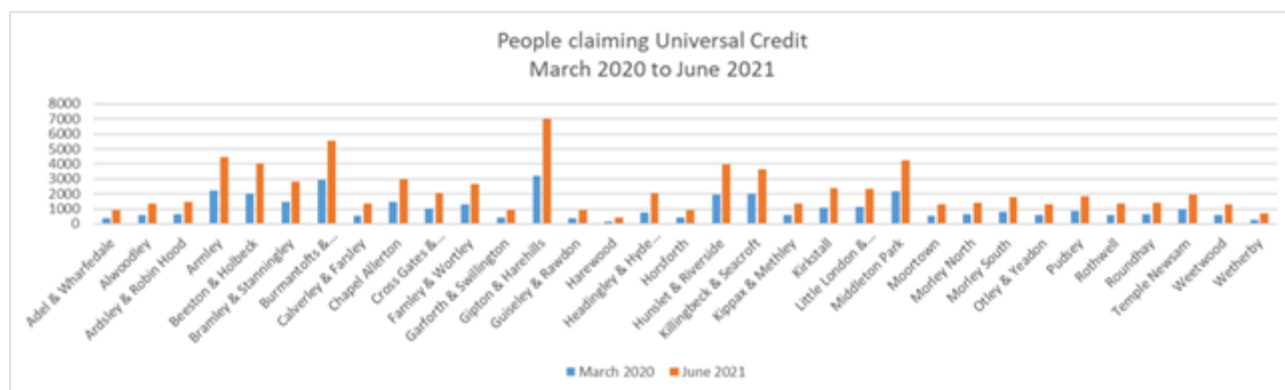
⁴ [Women's Budget Group](#)

⁵ [University of Birmingham](#)

⁶ [Citizens Advice](#)

2021 and an increase of 110% since March 2020. The number of people claiming UC in Leeds that were unemployed in May 2021 is 46,061, which is 8.9% of the working age population. This is a decrease of 1,000 claiming on the previous month in April 2021 and an increase of 95% since March 2020.

All wards in Leeds have seen an increase in people claiming UC due to not being in employment, with the highest impact on our poorest wards. The most affected wards are Gipton and Harehills, where claimants have increased from 11.2%, 2,210 claimants in March 2020 to 23.4%, 4,735 in May 2021, and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill wards where claimants have increased from 11.5% of the working age population, 2,068 claimants in March 2020 to 19.05% of the working age population, 3590 claimants in May 2021.



COVID-19 has had a severe impact on the Leeds economy. In Leeds there are currently 25,500 people on furlough, and when this ends by October there is an expectation that a proportion of these people will then be made redundant. The Universal Credit £20 top up is due to end in the autumn; with the consequential potential to push families further into poverty. Joseph Rowntree Foundation has warned that nationally the cessation of these national support arrangements will pull 200,000 children into poverty as we head into winter 2021.

In addition, a significant number of people have lost their jobs during the pandemic - Citizens Advice published in June 2021⁸ that 360,000 who lost jobs when the pandemic struck are still out of work. A further 2.4 million people on Universal Credit are still looking for work, with four job-seeking claimants for every vacancy. Under 25s were five times more likely to lose their job in the first lockdown than the rest of the working population. In total, more than 200,000 young people have been out of work for six months or more.

The number of children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals (FSM) has also increased substantially, from 25,874 children in March 2020 to 30,740 children in February 2021. The most recent report FSM figures from schools for summer vouchers (July 2020) is at 33,429.

The former Children’s Commissioner has estimated that, as a direct result of the pandemic, 300,000 additional children have been pushed into poverty nationally. She has written that COVID-19 has exposed and amplified the existing inequalities which face children “*Those children already facing the worst life chances have felt the greatest burden from the virus and our response to it... Unless we act now, COVID-19 will become an inter-generational crisis, with the impact of the economic fall-out on parents determining the future prospects of their children*”⁷.

⁷ [Children’s Commissioner, 2020](#)

⁸– [Citizens Advice June 2021](#)

1.1 Recent changes:

In May 2021, the board met for a workshop session to review and refresh the workstreams and to consolidate the membership of the board, following the departure of some key members. The board now has a strong membership and confirmed leads for each of the workstreams. The aims of some of the workstreams have been revised to provide a sharper focus on priority areas of work, as set out in this report.

2. Background information

2.1 Measures of child poverty

One of the difficulties in discussing child poverty is that there is not one accepted measure of child poverty. Different people define and measure poverty in different ways.

The government use two main measures, relative poverty and absolute poverty:

- Those who live in relative poverty have a household income of less than 60% of the current UK average - so households whose total earnings are currently less than £17,760 are living in relative poverty. One in five households in the UK have an income below the poverty line after housing costs, and 30% of children live in households below the poverty line after housing costs⁸.
- The government's definition of absolute poverty is not the same as other organisations' definition of absolute poverty. It is not an international poverty line, and it is not defined as being able to afford basic essentials. The government's definition of absolute poverty is those who earn less than 60% of the median income of 2010/11. So, households currently living on less than £13,166 after housing costs are living in absolute poverty.

However, poverty cannot just be measured in terms of household income. Because of this, in Leeds, we take a wider understanding, alongside the statistics. Poverty is about what you possess in comparison to what the society around you has.

2.2 Causes of Child Poverty

"Child poverty is not inevitable. In the past, child poverty levels in the UK have been significantly lower than they are today" ([Child Poverty Action Group](#)). There is a debate around the causes of poverty that tends to blame individuals for their circumstances. Some people point to addiction, worklessness and lack of aspiration as the causes of poverty. People who live in poverty, however, are not to blame for their poverty. Research shows that people who live in poverty do not do anything differently from those who do not live in poverty (Main & Mahony, 2018), they are trying to achieve the same outcomes with less resources, fewer opportunities, and more barriers to success. There is not a simple answer for what causes poverty, instead there are different aspects that often have some interplay between them: "Poverty rarely has a single cause. A range of factors including rising living costs, low pay, lack of work, and inadequate social security benefits together means some people do not have enough resources" (Child Poverty Action Group).

Living Costs

Increasing costs of rent have resulted in poverty rises in northern England and the Midlands (End Child Poverty). Price rises are outpacing wages, putting pressure on low-income households. Many of these are essential costs, such as food, energy and transport. Households on low income tend to be more reliant on public transport, so the increasing costs of buses, trains and coaches is

⁸ [Child Poverty Action Group](#)

restricting the access of people on low incomes to low-priced food, jobs and accessing healthcare and other services. Energy costs and food costs are increasing year on year, with increases in the prices of food and fuel costing the UK's poorest households an extra £130 per year in 2018 ([Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)).

Employment

"The long-term deterioration of the terms of employment for workers in the lowest-paid 20 per cent of the UK labour market has been a major cause of enduring poverty in the UK. Low wages, the high cost of childcare and part-time work all conspire to reduce incomes. Many low-paid jobs offer no opportunities to progress to better work and better wages. Others are insecure, with unpredictable hours and incomes" (Child Poverty Action Group). People who are not working overwhelmingly want to work, but face barriers to employment (Child Poverty Action Group), such as ill-health, childcare and caring responsibilities for family members. In the past, there has been a focus on strengthening the social security system to ensure that those who are in low paid jobs, or who aren't working, are provided with support so that they don't fall into poverty. However, ongoing welfare reforms are contributing to increases in child poverty.

Social Security

"In-work benefits, such as Universal Credit, are currently insufficient to overcome these labour market challenges and keep people out of poverty. In addition, the very high costs of housing and childcare increase families' risk of poverty. It is generally accepted that where people are out of work or don't earn enough money, the social security system should provide a safety net to prevent them falling into poverty. Unfortunately, this is not the case." (Child Poverty Action Group). The Economic Affairs Committee presented [evidence to the Government](#) showing that the five-week wait for the first Universal Credit payment had a damaging impact on adults and children. This wait is the main factor pushing people into deep poverty, entrenching debt and disproportionately harming women and disabled people. Universal Credit has been named as a key factor in causing soaring rent arrears and the increasing use of foodbanks.

A list of suggested actions that could be taken to lift families out of poverty can be found here: [Child Poverty Action Group](#), however ensuring decently paid jobs, providing good, accessible childcare, improving the social security system and having a central focus on tackling child poverty would all help. *"Modest increases in income reduce hardship swiftly and effectively. In 2001, child poverty was 400,000 lower than in 1999 and severe hardship among out-of-work families almost halved – from four in 10 to less than one-quarter in just two years"*(Child Poverty Action Group).

2.3 The Leeds Approach

In 2016, Children & Families started to develop a plan around mitigating the impact of child poverty across Leeds. In 2017/2018, a scrutiny enquiry on child poverty recommended that Children & Families integrated more of a central focus on child poverty. The first Child Poverty Impact Board met in 2018, and Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds was launched in 2019.

The child poverty strategy has been co-created with children, young people, families with direct experience of poverty, third, private and public sector, schools, academics and other organisations.

We know that the feeling of being in poverty, the feeling of being excluded and the feeling of being ashamed can impact a child for the rest of their life. We don't want this in Leeds. So, we are working together, as a city, to reduce the impact of poverty on young people.

This is our moral imperative

There are 7 workstreams which sit under the Child Poverty Impact Board:

1. Readiness for learning and school-aged education
2. Housing and provision
3. Empowering families and safeguarding
4. Financial health and inclusion
5. Transitions and employment
6. Best start for health and wellbeing
7. Green spaces

Our Ambitions

- We will be innovative, together, to break down the barriers that poverty creates.
- We will be brave, together, to revolutionise the way that Leeds works with children, young people and families who live in poverty.
- We will fight, together, to ensure that every child and young person who experiences poverty can thrive.

Thriving has **five fundamental principles**:

- 1) All work needs to be informed by the knowledge of children, young people and parents/carers
- 2) All projects need to work with a wide variety of partners
- 3) The focus is on changing structures, not individuals
- 4) We need to reframe the language and understandings that are used
- 5) Research is incorporated into every project

3.0 Main issues

This section provides an update on each impact workstream, the projects that sit within the impact workstreams and details responses to COVID-19, impact and next steps.

3.1 Financial Health & Inclusion

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every family to be equipped with the support, guidance and opportunities needed to live financially secure and stable lives.*** This workstream is led by Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare Communities and Environments.

The main projects are: Financial health and inclusion support directly to families; Increasing engagement in wider support and guidance to families to support financial health and inclusion; and Ensuring knowledge and understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and support.

3.1 Priority 1: Increasing engagement in financial health and inclusion support directly to families

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

The key areas of activity for priority 1 are the Healthy Holidays programme, the COVID Local Support Grant (CLSG) and Free School Meal uptake.

a) Healthy Holidays

Leeds City Council leads the Healthy Holidays programme in partnership with Leeds Community Foundation to provide enriching activities and healthy food to children living in poverty in the city. For 2021, the Department for Education has allocated Leeds City Council over £3.6 for delivery over the Easter, summer and Christmas holiday periods.

A successful Easter programme was delivered (data below) which due to COVID measures was a mixture of face to face, online or offsite provision. Summer provision is now underway with delivery of programmes from approximately 130 providers including schools, community hubs, and third sector organisations. Additional activities including swimming, visits to parks and visitor attractions are also being provided. Healthy and nutritious food is being provided by Catering Leeds, Fareshare, Rethink food, Hamara and Give a Gift.

b) COVID Local Support Grant

In June the Department for Work and Pension announced an extension to the COVID Local Support Grant (CLSG) until the end of September 2021, with Leeds City Council receiving £2.67 million. Since December 2020, Leeds City Council has received £7.61 million in total. The remit of the scheme is to provide support for food, fuel and essential items to vulnerable families and individuals. Guidance from the DWP states that a minimum of 80% of the funding should be spent on families with children, and a minimum of 80% on food/fuel. Since the funding was first announced in November 2020 the council has prioritised this spend for supporting children eligible for free school meals over the holiday periods. For the latest funding extension, 100% of the CLSG has been used for free school meals over the summer holidays, with additional funding of circa £520,000 being contributed by the council.

c) Free School Meals

The Health and Wellbeing Service have worked with the Council Tax and Benefits Service to support schools and communicate information relating to FSM and COVID-19. A new E-learning training course has been developed to support schools and replace the face-to-face training course previously offered. Full guidance on free school meals during the coronavirus outbreak is available [here](#).

Outcomes and outputs

a) Healthy Holidays

In Leeds Easter provision (some face to face, some direct delivery/ online) was delivered through:

- 31 third sector groups
- 26 school partnerships (representing 43 schools)
- 10 community hubs

In total, third sector organisations, schools and LCC community hubs reached:

- 2,513 children through face-to-face clubs
- 6,407 children through remote delivery
- 63,020 portions of food were provided
- 2,907 adults supported through schools and hubs

Following on from a successful Easter programme, 133 schools, third sector organisations, Breeze, Youth Service and council community hubs and libraries have received, through a bidding process, funding to run fun and free activities with a meal over the summer for Free School Meal eligible children and young people. This comprises 45 school partnerships, 50 third sector organisations, 27 community hubs and libraries, 5 Breeze camps, and 6 youth service programmes. Provisions will be supported to adapt flexibly to any outbreaks.

Additional activities and support have been embedded into the summer programme, with training on activities and food provided. A free swimming offer has also been created for eligible children to access swimming lessons. Sessions at Lotherton Hall and Temple Newsam are also provided.

Types of activities include indoor and outdoor sports, arts and crafts, music, trips away, cooking, cycling, dance, drama and yoga.

Key partners include Leeds Community Foundation, FareShare, Rethink, Catering Leeds, Hamara, Give a Gift, Streetgames, LS14 Trust, Breeze, Youth Service, Parks and Countrysides, Active Leeds, and a variety of other council and non-council partners.

Feedback from school provisions (Easter):

"During the last year COVID 19 had impacted on families in numerous ways. Families have lost income and have found this pandemic very challenging. It was good to see pupils during their break/ lunchtimes just sitting and talking to each other which for me and the team was very powerful, to start to engage with their friendship groups again. One parent e-mailed to say 'thank you for everything we have given her child, the opportunity to smile again and look forward to getting back to some normality. She came home with a smile on her face, which has not been obvious for a long, long time:'"

"Forty-seven per cent of our school community are entitled to free school meals, and many of these families experience food poverty on a regular basis. We have had a significant number of families say what a difference the food boxes and activity pack have made. One of our children remarked that they couldn't remember the last time they had a new book and getting the activity pack felt like Christmas."

"One mum who is a single parent with one child, on a debt management plan after fleeing from domestic violence. She is working but has been furloughed and doesn't qualify for any benefits. She is just keeping her head above water and has told that towards the end of each month she often goes without food and her child lives on dried pasta and bread, etc. She told us that the food provided through the Healthy Holidays Scheme was a godsend to her and meant she didn't have to spend any of her own money to provide food for herself and her child throughout the 2 week period of the Easter holidays. She was extremely grateful for this help. She also said that she and her child spent quality time together using the play equipment and games provided."

b) COVID Local Support Grant

Children and young people eligible for free school meals, living in low-income families or in families with no recourse to public have received support equivalent to £15 per week over the following holiday periods;

Holiday	Number of children and young people
Christmas (two weeks)	32,389
February (one week)	34,432
Easter (two weeks)	33,564
May (one week)	34,681
Summer (six weeks)	35,753

The following feedback and quotes have been collected from schools:

- *"I have to say this has been easy for schools and an amazing service. Well done!!!!"*
- *"Thank you all for your hard work on this. We really appreciate your efforts in making sure our families have enough food for over the Christmas break."*
- *"From what I have heard so far, parents are pleased with the contents of the hampers. Personally, I think it's been a really good system. Slightly frantic getting info to and from parents but much better than the voucher system from last lockdown so thank you! Everyone will be happy and fed!"*

- *"Thank you. Just heard from the family that they have received them and are extremely grateful!"*

The scheme also provided opportunities to link families into wider support networks. For example, a single parent on Employment Support Allowance was found to be receiving the lowest payment. The client emailed the school and additional support was provided, in this case providing a food hamper and referring the parent to the Emergency Support Network, so that they can be linked to ongoing support through third sector organisations.

Approximately 70% of the CLSG has been used to support children and young people with support over the holiday periods, with the remaining funding used to provide:

- Vouchers for food, fuel and essential items directly to low-income families with children under the age of 4 and care leavers.
- Assistance towards the cost of fuel to families and individuals claiming Council Tax Support.
- Support to third sector organisations and charities who support vulnerable families and individuals for food and essential items through the Leeds Food Aid Network and Leeds Baby Bank.

c) Free School Meals

There has been an accelerated increase in the number of FSM claims since March 2020. The number of FSM awards in March 2020 was 25,874 and by July 2020 was 28,378. A recent update from the Council Tax and Benefits service has demonstrated a continued increase, as of July 2021 the current number of FSM awards is at 33,429, which includes 177 asylum seekers.

Of those pupils entitled to a free school meal (FSM) at the January 2020 census, 78.5% took up the offer of the meal itself from their school, and therefore 21.5% missed out. Take-up is consistently slightly higher in primary schools than in secondary schools. Data is regularly collected to monitor take-up and the accelerated increase in FSM claims. The Health and Wellbeing team works closely with schools to encourage take-up.

Next steps

In terms of Healthy Holidays, monitoring and evaluation of the summer programme will be undertaken and will feed into the planning for the Christmas provision.

The Department for Work and Pensions have indicated that there will be no further extension to the CLSG after 30th September. As the numbers of children eligible for free school meals continue to increase, we will continue to monitor these figures closely and work with schools to encourage uptake of the benefit.

A key concern is that many of the current support schemes for families will end in September including CLSG, self-isolation payments, furlough and significantly the £20 per week uplift in Universal Credit payments. Many of these schemes have provided vital support to families who were struggling on low incomes prior to the pandemic. The board will make this a key priority through the autumn including the potential for additional meetings to focus on it.

3.2 Priority 2: Increasing engagement in wider support and guidance to families to support financial health and inclusion

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID:

In terms of engagement in wider support and guidance, current focus is on the Uniform Re-use scheme and gambling-related harm work. Work to address digital exclusion and link families to credit union is being developed (see next steps section).

a) Uniform scheme

Leeds City Council and Leeds Community Foundation have funded Zero Waste Leeds (ZWL) to bring a co-ordinated uniform reuse scheme to the city. The aim of the scheme is to reduce the number of uniforms sent to waste, reduce the stigma of wearing second-hand clothing and tackling poverty through encouraging more families to reuse and donate rather than to feel pressured to buy new uniform every term.

Phase one of the project (2019-20), saw ZWL create publicly available resources for uniform reuse in the city; the School Uniform Exchange Facebook page, the digital inspiration guide to setting up or getting involved in uniform reuse schemes and the digital map of existing schemes (both independent and school-led) in the city.

Phase two of the project focused on launching 'The Big Leeds School Uniform Giveaway', a bi-annual city-wide event consisting of pop-up shops run by community groups and schemes. In addition, a tailored Leeds School Uniform Exchange web platform with improved access and search facilities has also been launched, allowing the scheme to work towards becoming more user-led.

b) Gambling Related Harm

Recent analysis of the 2019/20 Leeds "My Health, My School" survey found that 26% of secondary-aged pupils had taken part in gambling activity, in comparison, 11% had smoked a cigarette, 7% had tried illegal drugs and 52% had tried alcohol. Of the secondary-aged pupils that had gambled, 59% did so with their parent/carer's knowledge. The most popular types of gambling were bingo (21%), skin betting (19%) and betting on sporting events (18%). The findings are in line with the findings of the 2018/19 results which were the impetus to initiate work to ensure schools, children and parents are aware of the issues surrounding underage gambling, particularly online, and the links to harmful behaviours. Although work with schools has slowed due to the focus on COVID-19, work has been progressing; most recently two new webpages on gambling issues have been added to the Leeds MindMate website, one for '[17 or under](#)' and another for '[18 and over](#)', both of which have been co-produced with young people.

Outcomes and outputs

a) Uniform Scheme

A total of 104 unique uniform exchanges are now operating throughout the city, and The Leeds School Uniform Facebook group has over 1,700 members.

Although 'The Big Leeds School Uniform Giveaway' suffered significant delays and barriers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are now 12 pop-up shops in locations across the city confirmed for summer 2021, with further shops and events pending. As well as providing good quality, free school uniform, the shops will provide a highly visible opportunity to promote the scheme and its aims to the public. The details of these events are available publicly online and have also been shared with cross-council colleagues and financial inclusion partners, particularly those supporting children and low-income families.

The new dedicated website platform was launched in March 2021 and recorded 1,623 views. This increased significantly to 5,141 recorded views in July 2021. The new website platform has also allowed for further evaluation and analysis of the digital presence of the project; since 21st June,

78% of views have been new visitors to the page, and 22% returning. In addition, approximately 130 people have been directed from the Leeds.gov.uk website.

b) Gambling Related Harm

Through working with the Voice, Influence and Change Team and the Leeds Safeguarding and Children Partnership, two focus groups and surveys of young people have been undertaken to inform this work. In total, 11 young people attended the focus groups and 130 responses have been gathered from the online surveys. One of the messages agreed by young people was that we should be talking about risks of gambling and gambling as part of gaming e.g. financial or mental health impacts, to counter-balance the 'fun' side. Quotes from young people as part of the "Youth Voice" online survey:

- *"Most of the time you spend a lot of money and don't get anywhere near what you spend back. Stats show only 13.5% of gamblers ever win. It is also highly addictive."*
- *"I think it's so normalised in today's age, especially amongst young lads who aren't exactly as open about their mental health, it's an escape. Thinking twice, knowing the risks ... it needs to be less normalised, and people need to learn from a younger age the effects of gambling and they need to see video docs just how people were taught about drugs and bullying."*
- *"Show shocking statistics about how gambling will affect people. Don't sugar-coat it because if you do, they might not take it seriously."*
- *"More highlighting of what gambling companies do to get you hooked - free daily giveaways and stuff like that."*

Next steps

- Work will continue to develop the Uniform Re-use scheme across the city, Zero Waste Leeds have received further funding from the council for phase 3 of the project. This will include further expansion of the existing project as well as employment of a part-time coordinator for sustainability and management of the project. Discussions are also taking place to look at extending this provision to back-packs and school essentials.
- In terms of the gambling-related harm work, the insight gathered over recent months will be used to inform future communications planning and training packages during 2021, with the aim being to be able to better engage schools once they return in September 2021.
- Other areas of focus for priority two are digital inclusion and the services of Leeds Credit Union for children, young people and families. The council is currently exploring further options for new initiatives which could provide digital devices for those in need. This will involve working with teams across departments, as well as alongside external partners such as Leeds Credit Union, Leeds Community Foundation and Zero Waste Leeds.

3.3 Priority 3: Ensuring knowledge and understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and support

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID:

This is a new priority with the aim being to ensure that the council and partner services supporting families have a good understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and the wider support services available. Further details on how this priority will be addressed are set out in the next steps section.

Outcomes and outputs

As this is a new priority the outcomes and outputs will be reported in the next reporting cycle.

Next steps

Work for this priority over the coming months will include:

- Establishing a clear and concise narrative using poverty statistics, data and local evidence.
- Working with colleagues in children's services to develop training and engagement material to promote routes to support for financial health and inclusion.

4 **Best Start for Health & Wellbeing**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every Leeds baby from conception to age two to have the best start in life, especially those who are the most vulnerable.*** This workstream is led by Kathryn Ingold, the Chief Officer - Public Health.

4.1 Priority 1 Preparation for Birth and Beyond (PBB)

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

Preparation for Birth and Beyond courses have been offered virtually since September 2020. The courses are delivered by a multi-agency team including staff from the 0 – 19 Public Health Integrated Nursing Service, children's centre staff and maternity staff. The course is delivered virtually between 5 and 7pm. Eighteen groups (4 sessions for each group) have been delivered since September, with 110 mothers and 39 fathers/partners attending. The courses have recently been increased to 5 sessions, including one on post-natal care.

Providers are currently meeting demand for the Preparation for Birth and Beyond courses, by running back-to-back courses. In addition, requests to attend the course have increased, indicating that communication from midwives to families about the offer is improving.

We have reflected on learning from COVID and feedback from parents. Plans are in place for face-to-face training to return. These sessions will be offered in areas with the highest level of need, targeting priority areas. Virtual sessions will remain available for those who can confidently and easily access them. For those who cannot access virtual sessions due to lack of a device – a loaning service is available to ensure accessibility for all.

Outcomes and outputs

The virtual sessions, delivered between 5 and 7pm, have been evaluated. Feedback has been positive. One observation is that more fathers are attending when compared to daytime face-to-face sessions. In addition, those that attend are present at more sessions. The current course is being attended by 12 mothers and 9 fathers/partners. It is planned to continue the early evening sessions to enable to opportunity for more partners/fathers to attend.

Session 3 PBB feedback (May cohort)

What have you done to strengthen your baby's brain connections?

"I did feel silly, but I and partner have spent more time talking to my baby and now I'm getting used to it we really like doing it."

"We talk more to baby, but we noticed baby liked it when I sat in the sunshine in the warm weather."

"We have been talking and reading to baby."

"We sing to baby."

"Dad has started talking to baby as he wants baby to recognise him, he didn't do it before."

"I like stroking my bump and can feel baby is happy."

One thing that you have learnt that you did not know before?

"I did not know about the stages of labour; it was really helpful to know."

"About the benefits of breastfeeding."

"Breastfeeding and safe sleep has been really important to know about."

Five dads asked for breastfeeding for dads' leaflet and asked questions about how they can support breastfeeding.

Is there anything that you learnt that you would do with baby?

"What a breastfeeding latch looks like and how I can find video support to help positioning and attachment."

"I will try breastfeeding the information has been helpful as I was worried about it."

"Transition stage of labour."

"Labour stages were so important to know about I think I know what will happen now."

"All of the information has been really helpful."

Next steps

An annual timetable is currently being developed including a blended offer so that parents have the choice of attending either virtual or face-to-face courses.

Staff from the Infant Mental Health Service are providing additional training for practitioners who deliver PBB to increase their confidence in facilitating face-to-face courses.

4.2 Priority 2 Baby Buddy App

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

Baby Buddy is an app that is free to use. It provides evidence-based support and information which is accessible at any time. Currently, approximately 30% of pregnant women/parents in Leeds use the app. In the early stages of COVID-19 the app was updated to reflect relevant guidance and has continued to do so throughout the pandemic, providing a central point of evidence-based information for users 24/7.

Midwives and 0-19 practitioners share the app when doing home visits and contacts, and many also use the films to support content during the contact. During virtual contacts and PBB sessions the app is also discussed and demonstrated.

During the most recent PBB and Baby Buddy forum (June) the CEO of Best Beginnings, the company who developed the app, attended to give an update to practitioners which was well received and valued.

Additional capacity is required to promote the app in order to support more pregnant increase uptake.

Outcomes and outputs

Data from the last quarter shows that there were 845 users, the majority being mothers aged 20-35 with the highest proportion from East (Killingbeck and Seacroft, Crossgates) and South (Middleton, Morley) Leeds.

The most frequently accessed tools are the films which cover all areas of pregnancy, feeding and parenting.

Feedback from practitioner delivering virtual PBB – *“Baby buddy is an excellent resource and is well received by parents. We always use and signpost to the ‘understanding your baby’ films as a really helpful source of understanding about how parents can relate and understand their baby once they are born – it also helps them to understand why this is important during pregnancy and it seems to put the pieces together for them when we talk about brain development in the session.”*

A recent national study (2020) exploring experiences, attitudes, and needs of users of a pregnancy and parenting app (Baby Buddy) during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that 97.0% of respondents reported that Baby Buddy was currently helping them, with many commenting that its role was even more important given the lack of face-to-face support from health care and parenting organisations.

Next steps

Baby Buddy are launching version 2.0 in summer 2021. This version will cover from pregnancy to 1 year (currently is pregnancy to 6 months). This has potential to be more beneficial for parents and families extending it to a timeframe/age where services are routinely less involved.

Leeds practitioners and parents have been offered the opportunity to be involved with the beta testing phase of Baby Buddy 2.0. Once this is launched additional promotional activity will be required to help people navigate the changes and opportunities available in the new app.

4.3 Priority 3 Economic wellbeing pathway

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

The 0-19 Public Health Integrated Nursing Service has reviewed and updated the economic wellbeing pathway and uploaded onto the internal intranet to make it easier for practitioners to access. The pathway describes how the 0-19 PHINS and Early Start practitioners will support families to achieve economic wellbeing. This includes support to families to:

- Maximise income
- Manage debt
- Access support services
- Reduce fuel bills
- Develop financial literacy
- Access education and work

The pathway includes links to a huge range of support that practitioners can signpost to.

At the request of the commissioner the service has undertaken an audit to identify the number and nature of referrals made as a result of the service using this pathway.

In addition to the economic wellbeing pathway, additional COVID funding has been provided from LCC Public Health to pay for a COVID-19 Champion LCH 0-19 services. The post holder worked as part of the Clinical Triage Team offering more specialist advice and guidance on COVID-19 management to the wider service and provided telephone support to struggling families. The post holder also followed up requests from colleagues to ensure children and families identified during 0-19 service mandated and targeted contacts had the information and practical support they needed eg. provision of food, medicine, emotional health support or access to funding.

Outcomes and outputs

Cycle one of the audit of the Economic Health and Wellbeing pathway highlighted that around a third of expected referrals were not made. As a result, the pathway was updated and made more accessible. The audit was then repeated and 100% of expected referrals were seen.

The pathway highlighted families living in poor quality of housing in the city which was felt to be getting worse and impacting on health. The lack of council housing available make it a challenge supporting families.

O-19 PHINS service reported the following outputs delivered by the COVID co-ordinator:

- Co-ordinated, updated and promoted a valuable directory for the citywide support of families.
- Supported families with issues with regards to housing, accessing food support and directing to financial support.
- Provided listening and advice to families struggling with life and difficult circumstances.
- Distributed 300 food vouchers to those families most in need.

Next steps

The 0-19 service plan to provide all staff with training on the economic wellbeing pathway and repeat the referral audit over the coming 12 months.

The system for reporting activity delivered to promote economic wellbeing is being reviewed to ensure that information recorded is correctly coded.

5.0 Housing & Provision

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to support every family and young person living in social housing in Leeds to achieve a sustainable tenancy***

This workstream is led by Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer Housing, Resources and Housing.

5.1 Priority 1 – Joint Working Between Housing and Children’s Social Work Teams to Support Families in Council Tenancies

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

Initial meetings have been held between Housing Management, Leeds Housing Options and Children’s Services to identify opportunities for greater connection. To date, Housing’s engagement with Children’s Services has in the main been via Leeds Housing Options. Moving forward, a manager from Housing Management will be attending the Housing Working Group to identify opportunities for strengthening connections and wrap-around support for families in council tenancies – this will include connecting local housing and social work teams, identifying single point of access for practitioners to refer cases where a housing intervention is needed for a family, perhaps triaging cases and allocating to a relevant local team.

Outcomes and outputs – to include data and case studies and focus on equality and diversity when reporting

New priority – no data or case studies at this point. Success will be measured by evidence of increased collaboration in relation to particular cases. Case studies to be included in next report.

Next steps

Progress joint work between Housing Management, Leeds Housing Options and Children’s Services to identify key priorities, strengthen collaboration and connect local teams to ensure a more seamless approach.

5.2 Priority 2 – Refreshing the Rehousing Pathway for Care Leavers

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

As with priority 1, initial meetings have been held to identify opportunities for greater connection. Moving forward, Housing Management will be in attendance at the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure closer working, consistent approach to wrap around support of care leavers in new council tenancies.

Outcomes and outputs

New priority – no data or case studies at this point. Success will be measured by evidence of increased collaboration in relation to particular cases. Case studies to be included in next report.

Next steps

As with priority 1, make progress with the joint work to identify key priorities, strengthen collaboration and connect local teams.

5.3 Priority 3 – Supporting Families in Council Tenancies to Maximise their Income

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

During the pandemic our officers have noted the following trends:

- We have continued to support tenants to claim UC, although we have seen smaller numbers of new UC claimants than earlier in the pandemic. We have also seen an increase in 'advice' calls due to many tenants using the benefits system for the first-time following job losses during the pandemic. This has resulted in us supporting more tenants with New Style JSA/ESA, as many of these tenants meet the criteria for the new style legacy benefits.
- There has also been an increase in requests for support where debt is an issue, an increase in mental health issues reported and in children struggling without their normal routine and support systems, especially children in need who are vulnerable. We have sought to respond to these issues, making referrals for support where appropriate.
- We have made more referrals to external partners such as Green Doctor, Foodbanks and with Smallwood Trust, who provide grants for young families and DV victims.

Outcomes and outputs

April 2020 – March 2021 – we supported 5947 households of which 1929 households were with children – securing £4.11 m additional income of which £1.14m was for households with children

April 2021 – June 2021 – we supported 1222 households of which 415 were households with children – securing £493k additional income of which £140k was for households with children

Case studies

Case study 1 – Ms A – single parent with 6 children

The case was referred by the Housing Officer due to high rent arrears. Our Housing Officer Income (HOI) contacted Ms A who advised that 2 of her children had recently returned following a spell living with their father. Our HOI identified that since their return, the children had not been added to the UC claim, meaning that the tenant's UC claim was around £500 short each month.

Our HOI assisted with declaring all 6 children within UC claim, which increased the child element significantly and was able to obtain a backdated payment of child element of approximately £1100, due to the family's vulnerabilities and how the shortfall had made it difficult to feed the family.

Our HOI applied for DHP which was refused, as Ms A did not meet the criteria. Our HOI then completed a budgeting exercise with Ms A and some areas of expenditure were highlighted as having room for reduction in the medium term. Our HOI made an additional referral to Smallwood Trust who work mainly with young families and victims of DV. The Trust were able to award a one-off grant for £500 to assist with the reduction of rent arrears. The reduced rent arrears and additional child element has now made it possible for tenant to set up an affordable repayment arrangement with the Housing Office and the arrears are reducing.

Case study 2 – Mr and Mrs B – couple with 3 children

Mr and Mrs B were referred by their Housing Officer as had fallen into rent arrears. Our HOI contacted Mr and Mrs B, who advised that they were struggling with 'little money'. Our HOI immediately made a referral to the local foodbank for assistance.

As English is not tenants' first language it made some of the conversation difficult, however our HOI managed to access their UC account and realised that there had been an error in the setting up of their UC claim. Mr and Mrs B had provided details of their children, but they had put the details in the wrong section. This meant that since the start of UC claim no child element was being received and incorrect housing costs were being paid. This had been ongoing for 3 months.

We used our contacts with the DWP and in conjunction with the DWP's Social Justice Team, arranged for an interpreter to contact the family, who amended the details for them whilst explaining what they were doing, then escalated the case to a decision maker at UC with a request to backdate the missing child element and housing cost underpayments. By the Monday of the following week a backdated payment had been made into the tenant's bank account for nearly £2000 and ongoing UC put into payment at the correct rate.

Mr and Mrs B's rent account is now clear, with a managed payment in place at tenant's request.

Next steps

DWP Co-Location Programme

- We are working with the DWP to relaunch late September/October, and this will support links between the 7 Job Centre Plus sites across Leeds and LCC local area housing offices. The purpose is for LCC and DWP to work more closely together, identifying issues that may prevent UC claims being paid on time, and assisting each other to solve the issues when raised for the benefit of our tenants.

£20pw Benefit Uplift due to COVID

- It was announced in March 2021's budget that the uplift would continue for a further 6 months. If this ends in October 2021 many of our tenants and their families are likely to be impacted by £20pw/£87pcm. We will look at ways in which we can assist those families by revisiting and completing fresh benefit health checks and assessing any other avenues of support available at the time.

6.0 Employment & Transitions

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every young person and family to have the relevant skills and experience to access and secure well paid employment.*** This workstream is led by Martyn Long, Head of Service Employment and Skills

6.1 Priority 1 - Raise awareness for access to employability and skills provision to support people into work and/ or improve their skills.

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

The Employment and Skills service offers a wide range of targeted employment support programmes and employer-led sector specific interventions alongside the universal information, advice and guidance offer available from Jobshops in Community Hubs. In June, pre-bookable slots of 45 mins were made available at Jobshops in Armley, City Centre, Compton, Deacon House, Dewsbury Road, Hunslet and Reginald Centre, this runs alongside the virtual/remote offer.

Employment and Skills is continuing to act as a "Kickstart Gateway", to help provide placements for young people who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. The programme will provide funding to employers to offer 6-month placements for eligible businesses. Three hundred and sixty placements have been approved from January to date, with 107 placements filled.

The service also delivers and commissions adult learning (post 19) in community settings to re-engage local residents in learning each year. This provision is targeted to the 20% most deprived SOAs with a focus on Priority Neighbourhoods. This includes Family English, Maths and Language (FEML) provision designed for parents (or other carers of children) with English and Maths needs, or is for families where English is not the primary language. Often these courses are linked to schools or children's centres, and 176 parents attended a FEML course during the 2020/21 academic year.

Over the last 12 months, new methods of delivery were developed to include blended learning e.g. digital delivery through mobile phones coupled with home-learning options, remote delivery options to include outdoor learning and the return to face-to-face learning when restrictions permitted with reworked delivery spaces to ensure COVID security. In addition, the service also developed home learning resource packs with a flexible approach to increase pastoral support with a particular focus on vulnerable learners and to include learners who are unable to access online learning.

Youth Engagement Project @ Leeds Arts Gallery. Two information sessions were held on 7th and 14th June, as a result of which 10 young people have started a 6-week pilot volunteer programme. These young people will build employability skills, develop and host creative programmes for visitors and explore employment and training pathways within the arts sector. In addition, young people will have the opportunity to complete an arts award. Of the 10 young people involved in the programme 8 are care leavers or children looked after.

Stronger Families aims to provide early help to families with a dependent child who have multiple barriers in terms of progression into work or accessing education or training to develop their skills. There are 11 partners who employ key workers for Leeds and Bradford and six partners who deliver tailored support to participants in the areas of debt, mental health wellbeing support, specialist IAG and employment support and advice and parenting support.

Outcomes and outputs

Parents can access a range of employment support services and data collected across Quarter 1 (April to June 2021) recorded a total of 1,753 new customers accessing the services, of whom 66% are from the 20% most deprived SOA's in the city. Twenty-four per cent had a child under 16 years of age and 12% were lone parents. While this information is requested of service users, a

number prefer not to provide this information. Supporting 9 children looked after and 88 care leavers, of whom 33 have been supported into positive education or employment outcomes including 6 internships with the Civil Service.

April – June 2021	No. of residents supported	Residents supported with a child under 16 yrs		Lone supported Parents	
		Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Jobshops	629	166	26%	86	14%
Employment Hub	1,124	263	23%	133	12%
Adult Learning	2,534	271	11%	88	3%

Recruitment activity has continued to take place during the pandemic and a total of 885 people were supported into work by the service in the period April – June 2021, of whom 45% are from the top 20% most deprived SOA's of the city. Jobs were secured across all sectors with the largest numbers in health and care, food retail, logistics, distribution, and transport, digital and technology.

In the academic year 2020/21, 2,534 adults started on a community based delivered or an online skills course through the Adult Learning Programme, of whom 55% of learners are from the top 20% most deprived SOAs in the city. Delivery of the 2020/21 programme commenced in September with 16 commissioned providers delivering online courses with an increased focus on digital skills and work focused courses. Since the start of the new academic year, September 2020, 824 courses have been advertised on the Leeds Adult Learning website.

CASE STUDY: An 18-year-old care leaver accessed support through the Employment Hub. Through extensive discussion, skill assessments and also looking at current opportunities raised his aspirations and identified elderly care roles as a job that he was interested in. Through CV, interview preparation and building confidence, secured and accepted a role starting in mid-August at a care home. Throughout the process of applying for jobs he had accommodation issues and has been living in temporary accommodation throughout this period which has caused considerable distress after having steady accommodation with foster carers for many years. He is now looking forward to the future of starting his new job, earning a wage and securing steady private accommodation with his girlfriend.

The Stronger Families programme has supported 1592 parents, of whom 66% have moved to a positive outcome. Two hundred and ninety-four gained employment, 533 parents engaged with education and training and 119 are activity searching for work.

"I have a much better relationship with my children now I'm able to spend more time with them and enjoy the time with them. I started distance learning I never thought I could do a course but {my Keyworker} believed in me and that meant a lot I have never had that before. My life has changed so much whatever I needed {my Keyworker} was there whatever problems I had are gone. I lost my mum quite young and never got to experience that motherly figure that just had your back. [My Keyworker} was like the mum I never got to have and I will always be eternally grateful and thankful for everything. I couldn't recommend the stronger family's program enough."

Next steps

Employment and Skills are waiting on two further submissions for funding; the first through LCR WYCA "Gainshare" will allow us to support any residents not currently eligible through ESIF programmes. This will include those on zero-hour contracts classed as employed, those at risk of redundancy and those in low paid, insecure jobs. The second is a further bid to ESIF to support

young residents (15-24) who are either NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. Currently there are two ESIF programmes that are due to finish in the next few months that are supporting these residents. An update is expected imminently on both submissions.

Leeds One Workforce Narrowing Inequalities Group (LOWNI) are working towards a model to engage, recruit and develop a health and care workforce from local communities with an event to focus on the Priority Neighbourhoods within the South of the City in September.

The Retail and Hospitality Sector are developing a programme with employers, Leeds City College and The Engine Room, to provide taster sessions and upskilling support for participants in order to allow them to access opportunities in the sector. The initial programme is set to be delivered in August 2021, with a one-week programme covering key skills in hospitality.

Red Kite View, the new children and young person's mental health unit in Armley, will be recruiting from July to end of September. A virtual jobs fair will take place on the 13th for the Health Support Worker and Assistant Support Worker role.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Jobs Fair is planned for 28th July at Leeds Market. Support is being provided by the service to encourage businesses to sign up and attend. The Employment Hub will also be represented to ensure residents are aware of the offer available for jobseekers.

Working group developed to identify education, employment and training opportunities from the Child Friendly Leeds business ambassador network. The ambition is to connect the identified opportunities with the services who are supporting children looked after, care leavers and NEET young people.

6.2 Priority 2 - Connecting parents / carers to Family Learning provision to enhance children's learning through activities, techniques and games delivered in schools

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

Many schools have been unable to accommodate face-to-face teaching and have been using community rooms for other purposes such as break-out rooms, isolation rooms and counselling support. There has also been the added pressure of staff being asked to cover lessons at short notice due to isolation procedures, further impacting delivery. Other barriers have included anxiety about COVID testing, ventilation in classrooms, mask wearing and a lack of access to ICT equipment at home. However, this has given us the opportunity to adapt delivery by using a blended approach to flex learning. Examples of this are:

- Learning in the community – Going on a Bear Hunt was a project delivered in partnership with Public Health and ran over April and May in LS12, with a target to reach 50 learners. The course was delivered over Google Classroom with tutors keeping in touch with learners over the phone and email. Learners made a story sack based on the book and filled it with fun, new activities each week to use with their children. Resources were either posted or collected from the local children's centre each week.

Remote learning was delivered using Google Classroom, electronic or paper work-packs depending on need, with 1-1 tutorial support provided. Delivery included:

- Phonics: Introduction to Phonics, Instrumental Sounds, Body Percussion and Rhythm & Rhyme
- Supporting Children's Learning: Games, Book Activities and Early Years
- Homework Support: English and Maths
- Learning Outdoors: Spring, Summer and Wildlife on your Doorstep
- Treasure Books
- School Transition (aimed at Year 6 pupils)

In addition to this, classroom delivery started again recently at Seacroft Grange School. Delivery included: Treasure Books (Going on a Bear Hunt – English focus, which ran from April to June), (Very Hungry Caterpillar – maths focus, which ran from June to present).

Outcomes and outputs

- Internal FEML provision – over this period, 53 learners enrolled on courses (69 enrolments). There was a retention rate of 98.6% and 100% of these learners achieved the objectives of the course.
- 35% of the parents enrolled on courses were from BAME communities and 100% of them achieved the outcome of the course.
- 17% of parents enrolled declared a learning disability, with 100% of them achieving the learning outcomes.
- 100% of parents were from the top 20% SOA or above.
- Learning in the Community – Going on a Bear Hunt: Target – 50, achieved – 75 (24 Adults, 51 Children).

Next steps

- Lockdown has had a huge impact on children, not just in terms of academic progress, but a large number of pre-school children have not developed the basic skills they need to start school. Development work is currently underway to ensure the delivery of learning which will support children to develop these skills alongside the academic learning such as phonics and maths.
- Work is underway to strengthen existing relationships with localities' teams. This will help to ensure that we are delivering targeted learning in the right areas.
- Term one of next year's delivery will focus on taster sessions in order to engage with as many families as possible, with a full curriculum review underway over the summer and in term 1. This will ensure the curriculum remains relevant and takes account of the challenges of the previous 16 months.
- Work is underway to develop a social media presence for Family Learning, which will form part of a wider development plan for this area of work, to ensure we are targeting the families who are most in need.

6.3 Priority 3 - Ensuring career information, advice and guidance supports young people to move into Education, Employment or Training (EET) from school

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

- A Leeds careers network for Careers Leads in Leeds which meets termly. The session discusses good practice, share data, information and key messages.
- Start to Apply and Apply in Leeds – a platform to find out about careers opportunities in Leeds and a single way of applying to more than one destination.
- On-going work to develop provision for the growing numbers of 16+ learners to ensure there are good quality learning places for all pupils in this age group.
- Leeds City College along with Leeds Pathways Support Team work with schools and Learning Providers in Leeds to identify the most vulnerable year 11 learners early in the calendar year. This annual piece of work is named 'The moving On Project': young people are identified, and a signposting event takes place where the young people can be supported into the most appropriate learning for them. This last two years the event has been virtual: providers such as Progressions pitch their offer to schools; Learning Curve specialise in learning for those young people who want to progress into the uniformed services. Focussing on fitness and basic skills young people will develop in the areas the army will be looking for as an example. Schools will see this presentation and decide which

- of their students would fit this avenue rather than a mainstream college pursuing 'A' levels.
- The Virtual School partnership with Leeds City College (Children Looked After Progression Champion) providing a range of advice, guidance, planning and transition support to looked after children moving into Leeds City College learning Pathways.
- Positive outcomes from a small pilot of a partnership with the Pathways team and the Employment and Skills Hub looking at looked after children at risk of becoming NEET.
- Virtual School on-line learning to support June's social care practice theme Pathway Planning <https://youtu.be/JGxemvGsu1k>
- Virtual School/Go Higher West Yorkshire partnership - "Care to Go Higher" training delivered to 10 foster carers, 5 personal advisers and 3 residential practitioners supporting young people with advice and guidance about pathways into higher education, breaking down barriers and myths and increasing awareness of the support available to care leavers in higher education.
- Virtual School Consultant for Previously Looked After Children support, training and advice to kinship and SGO services.
- Virtual School links with third sector/voluntary providers providing employability skills, mentoring etc.
- Employability activities to schools include virtual mock interviews (John Smeaton Academy and Leeds East) a virtual apprenticeship presentation at Lawnswood school and a careers fair supported by employers at Woodkirk Academy.
- CEIAG (careers education information, advice and guidance) network event for careers practitioners across the city – agenda items included an update on T Levels, the revised CDI framework and a presentation by colleagues in Children and Families Services about sustained destinations.
- Three editions of the CEIAG newsletter have been published. The June edition was dedicated to the support available for NEET young people.

Outcomes and outputs

A pilot was launched in April 2021 which is delivering, monitoring and evaluating IAG support for an 'at risk' identified children looked after (CLA) cohort. There are 13 young people who have been referred into the project, they have been identified via the Virtual School and are all in year 11. Of the 13 young people identified, 7 are being supported by the Employment Hub service and 6 supported by the Pathways Team. Evaluations and outcomes from the project are due to be collected and summarised in September 2021.

An updated version of the Start in Leeds careers guidance platform has been launched – the site currently has 41,593 registered users with 20,713 students actively using the platform.



	Deprivation Rank	Young People who are NEET ^{1 2}		Young People whose status is 'not known' ^{1 2}	
Time Period	IMD 2019	As at 31/03/2021		As at 31/03/2021	
Leeds		395 (2.4%)		854 (5.2%)	
Cluster	1= most deprived; 22= least deprived	No.	%	No.	%
2gether	7	35	2.9%	64	5.3%
Aireborough	19	8	1.1%	24	3.3%
ARM	17	9	0.7%	34	2.6%
Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton	4	22	2.6%	45	5.4%
Bramley	3	24	3.1%	36	4.7%
Brigshaw	14	10	1.8%	45	8.1%
EPOS	22	<5	0.5%	21	2.7%
ESNW	16	5	1.0%	12	2.5%
Garforth	18	<5	0.7%	12	2.9%
Headingley - Kirkstall partnership	10	11	2.1%	18	3.5%
Horsforth	20	5	1.3%	9	2.3%
Inner East	1	49	3.8%	80	6.3%
Inner West (ACES + Farnley)	6	35	4.1%	49	5.7%
J.E.S.S	2	49	4.4%	59	5.2%
Lantern Learning Trust	8	5	2.0%	9	3.6%
Leodis	15	5	1.4%	6	1.6%
Morley	11	16	2.0%	39	4.8%
Otley/Pool/Bramhope	21	8	1.8%	12	2.8%
Pudsey	12	20	2.1%	32	3.3%
Rothwell	13	14	2.1%	38	5.8%
Seacroft Manston	5	43	4.3%	61	6.1%
Templenewsam Halton	9	10	1.7%	32	5.4%

Next steps

- Review annual service offer for schools – apprenticeship presentations, employment brokerage support etc.
- A joint letter with Children and Families Services will be sent to all year 11 parents to provide details of information and support available to Year 11 leavers.
- An online Next Steps event will be uploaded onto Start in Leeds around results time in August and will remain on the site until September. The pages will include current college and 6th form vacancies along with where to go for support and guidance including jobs and apprenticeships.
- Development of a new Leeds Apprenticeship Hub website.
- Early-stage planning for the Leeds Apprenticeship Festival 2022.
- The Virtual School is also in the process of bidding to secure additional funding from the DfE as part of a pilot to strengthen capacity for young people in care and care leavers throughout years 12 and 13 with specific aims of increasing sustained EET pathways and attendance/engagement, increasing the quality and visibility of CEIAG in PEPs and Pathway Plans and ensuring secure EET transitions when young people leave care, reach the end of year 13 and beyond.

7 Empowering Families & Safeguarding

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to change the structure around social care to better support children, young people and families living in poverty.*** This workstream is led by Farrah Khan, Head of Service / Principal Social Worker, Children and Families Service.

7.1 Priority 1 – Connecting services to better support families

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

The Families First team and 3 Early Help Hubs have been working with clusters, schools, health, third sector around supporting families and recognising indicators of poverty.

The hubs are a responsive service, outcoming referrals for support within a 24-hour period to ensure that support and advice is timely.

They work closely working with the welfare support team, assisted through the DfE PIP Grant. Multi-disciplinary teams benefit from working together within the hubs ensuring a “think family work family” approach is applied.

The hubs and Families First team also take lead for the Relationship Matters (RPC) Programme supported through hubs and Early Help more broadly. There are recognised links between parental conflict, worklessness and poverty. The Families First team are also working with the housing team to notify of inappropriate private rented accommodation when working with families. Part of this work also involves working with West Yorkshire Fire Service to ensure that all homes are provided with free fire alarms.

Supported the development of the food network at the outset of the pandemic; good links made with 3rd sector organisations which have continued throughout the pandemic.

Bronze meetings continuing to take place to better join up services and consider emerging trends and needs within localities.

Stronger Families Programme has been extended for a second time as a result of the pandemic due to concerns around unemployment levels and barriers to parents obtaining education, training or employment.

The combination of the strong infrastructure that the local authority brings and the diversity and community engagement that third sector brings to the table are really strong ingredients and the best of both worlds. From the outset we recognised that support needed to be rooted in the local community where there was local knowledge and intelligence to add value to this work. Not only do third sector partners know their communities well, but we know that those who are socially excluded are far more likely to engage with a local agency than someone from the local authority who may be perceived differently.

The wealth of knowledge, resources and skills that the partners bring to the table provides a rich tapestry to support families and improve outcomes. It allows for the sharing of ideas, peer support, sharing knowledge and all the added value of the wider work that the third sector partners are involved in, which can often be a pathway to encourage parents onto the programme. The breadth of the local authority enables the programme to be part of a wider landscape of support in addition to broad expertise regarding workforce development, governance, national policy and also links with the wider employment strategy. This has supported a strong interface with the Supporting Families programme and strong partnerships with DWP colleagues as those relationships were already established prior to the programme. This has enabled a good interface between the two programmes but also a strong pathway into support from DWP.

The Families First Team have worked closely with colleagues at Zero Waste Leeds in driving the development of the Uniform Scheme.

Update from Zero Waste Leeds:

"101 exchanges and counting - and that includes 72 schools.

We've employed a project coordinator, Tracy and she's doing a good job of keeping in touch with the schools and encouraging more exchanges - she's currently looking at LS8, 9,10,11,12,13 and 14 and working out where the gaps (and which schools in those areas do have an exchange) and then we'll target them.

There will be some pop-up shops over the summer: Harehills, Morley, Seacroft, Pudsey and we're looking at taking tables at some Breeze events.

We've got some leaflets promoting our website and the events if you know anyone who would like them - all the HH schemes are taking them and LCC Hubs etc.

We're also working on Together for Sport - a similar idea to the uniform exchange where we will encourage donations of sport kit and get it to the kids who need it so that they can take part in HH activities over the summer and just generally play sport, join clubs etc."

Outcomes and outputs

Stronger Families Impact assessment completed this year found that:

81% of families came from the most deprived areas of Leeds and Bradford.

Stronger families have worked with 863 parents who had issues with debt. The average person referred had £7418 worth of debt. Most debts arise from high energy costs and falling behind on payments, and a few are due to long-term illness and unemployment. Most people are social tenants or renting from private landlords. In total Stronger Families have helped people to deal with £1,595,000 worth of debt.

SF Feedback from a parent:

'There was one week I had no money or food. She didn't know but came with a food parcel and Morrison's voucher. She has supported me in applying for college courses. She has emailed them when we were unsure of deadlines and printed different forms I have needed.

I am starting college in two weeks. I have my daughter every day and twice a week overnight (to be full-time in a staggered way. My keyworker continues to support me with my low mood and prompts me to seek my GP's advice.

I would say to anyone with children who's struggling to get in touch with Stronger Families/ Barca. You have to put the work in but so long as you know they are on your side, it's so much less lonely to have support.

My daughter and I still have a way to go but I couldn't have done this without my keyworker's continued support. My daughter has also had someone to talk to. I hope I can volunteer or work in a job to help people eventually as this support has been our lifeline more than a handful of times.'

Case Study:

xxxx is 16 years old girl arrived to the UK two years ago and went to xxxxx Academy. xxxx missed few years of education due to war in Syria and being misplaced and moving places. She was determined to compensate all the time she lost from her education and worked really hard, but she needed extra support. The tutoring project allowed us to support xxxx in different ways as she

was offered one to one as well as group tutoring to improve her English and prepared her for the college interview where she was accepted, and this was great news for xxxxx and us. xxxxx was shy at the start and slowly she began to ask more questions and become more specific in what she needs to work on such as how to analyse "GCSE selected story" and that reflect on how she become more confidence and having a clear target for her education journey. xxxxx also attended math lessons and she showed a massive improvement steps and she is considering retaking her subjects as she feels she is more capable. The last two years were extremely challenging as xxxxx did not just face and has to learn how to settle in a new environment and learn a new language but also the pandemic brought extra challenges where education was online and school were overwhelmed with all these challenges. We have also assure xxxxx and she knew she can ask the team anything related to her education and we remembered the day where she was expecting phone call from college and it has not happen and then the next day till everything was sorted and she secured a place at xxxxx College from September.

We are pleased for xxxxx and we will follow her journey with the commitment she showed, positive attitude and determination we have no doubt that she will reach her goal.

Her tutor said: "my support as an ESOL tutor and proving EAP (English for Academic purpose) will linguistically prepare them to be the best they can be in their future education and life choices."

Xxxx: "I am very thankful for the support and guidance, it helped me a lot and improve my level."

Next steps

Following discussions with the Health Visiting (HV) team, there are a number of families living in poverty and struggle to access basic safety equipment such as plug socket covers, and cupboard locks.

The process for HVs at present is to refer to the children's centre to see if there is available funding - if there is this can often take a few weeks to process and order needed equipment.

We have agreed with the HV service that we will use Sastipen funding from Public Health to create 'baby safety packs' these will include the above items and a baby gate. These packs would be stored at the HV offices so they can be given to families in need immediately.

The Early Help Hubs are starting a monthly forum to help raise understanding of Early Help and support. Third sector organisations and small community groups will be invited to the forums to share their work. This will also provide a forum to share ideas and collaboration opportunities.

The Families First team are planning "myth busting" sessions over the summer holidays targeting YP who are care leavers around the COVID vaccine. They will also be accompanied by health colleagues to deliver the vaccine locally in Hunslet.

7.2 Priority 2 – tackling inequality in accessing services and support

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

There is a clear disparity in families who are from Black or Minority Ethnic groups between access of EH services and families referred in relation to safeguarding concerns to children's services.

Audit work undertaken by the LSCP showed Leeds followed the national trend of over representation of Black and Minority Ethnic children subject to child protection plans.

A supervision guide around understanding culture and identity has been developed for all team managers to use in supervision to support practitioners in understanding culture and identity to help tackle biases.

Master classes on Culture and Identity have been part of the core training offer for social workers and EH/Family support workers. January's practice theme was Culture and Identity.

The GRT Team are now part of Families First and have worked closely with health colleagues to target the uptake of the COVID vaccine in communities where there can be reluctance to engage with services. This has resulted in a proactive door-to-door offer of the vaccine and increased uptake by 57 adults in Harehills.

Families First Team are hosting a service awareness/welcome to Leeds session for 47 new asylum-seeking families from Afghanistan arriving in Leeds in July and August.

Care experienced parents are also more likely to have a pre-birth assessment when they are pregnant. The work of the Futures Team who work with YP under 25 who have had a child removed from their care highlights the over representation of care experienced parents having a child removed.

Work done through the Voice and Influence team with YP who are both care leavers and parents showed how young people felt judged by practitioners from a range of services for their childhood experiences. At the deputy director's development session in May messages were shared from YP via recorded videos with team managers across children's services.

Outcomes and outputs

We have a survey now translated into the 12 most spoken languages in Leeds to get feedback on support received.

Feedback received by the Voice and Influence Team and Futures Team will be incorporated into the development of the revised pre-birth assessment and support offer.

Case studies will be shared with consent on the new offer hoping to launch by December 2021.

Next steps

Teams across children's services are undertaking the Cultural Cohesion Quality Mark. This is a programme that teams undertake to help build learning and cultural competency. This is aimed at increasing awareness of people's own biases that impact on decision-making.

The development of a revised Pre-Birth Assessment and Support Offer for Care Experienced parents.

Further master classes on Culture and Identity and inequalities to be delivered as part of the core training offer, as well as training workshops on these themes.

Audit work across children's services to show improved understanding of Culture and Identity and the impact of inequality in assessment and plans.

7.3 Priority 3 – Workforce Development

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

The workforce development offer has been fully virtual since the start of the pandemic and has not changed due to high number of infection rates in Leeds.

However, the positive side of this has been improved uptake of training and briefings sessions as well as accessing recorded webinars.

The Tackling Poverty Framework for Practitioners working with children and families in Leeds was launched in December 2020 and is hosted on the [LSCP website](#) to allow for accessibility for practitioners across the city.

The launch of the framework was part of a practice theme of Poverty Awareness across children's services. This included training, briefing sessions and master classes throughout December. This will now be repeated annually every December.

Understanding poverty is now a core part of training offer for social workers and family support/EH workers in Leeds.

Outcomes and outputs

Feedback from staff was very positive and there is more understanding of the work of third sector and other departments in the council amongst workers.

A survey was done to understand the workforce's understanding of poverty which has informed the training offer.

Next steps

Plan Poverty Awareness Month for December 2021.

8.0 – Readiness for Learning

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of children and young people who live in poverty.***

Author: Update from Kelly Newby and Karen Jessup

Current Priorities

8.1 Priority 1 Early Years - Take up of free nursery places for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

- There has been identification of families not taking up two-year-old offer for free early education entitlement (15-hour free offer when meeting specific criteria). Community plan for supporting at home has been actioned. Golden ticket approach has been implemented which means every parent who has a child who is eligible for a place receives a letter with a golden ticket which they take along to their preferred provider. Home learning activity packs have been produced by the children's centre teachers and these are being distributed by children's centre family outreach workers to all families who are eligible to take up a 2-year-old place; during the visit a discussion takes place to encourage take up. This has the Early Years (EY) steering group oversight. (Key link Jayne Ford and Rebecca McCormack).

Outcomes and outputs

- **Two-year-olds take-up**

Leeds currently has a take up of 65.8% (Spring term 2020/21) & 72.2% (Summer term 2020/21) of eligible children for 2-year-old free places in early education. There is particular concern for take up in some areas of Leeds

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| • Beeston – Spring term 20/21 62.7% | Spring term 20/21 62.6% |
| • Harehills - Spring term 20/21 44.1% | Spring term 20/21 47.7% |
| • Burmantofts - Spring term 20/21 55.3% | Spring term 20/21 65.1% |

- **Three and four-year-olds take-up**

Take up of 3 and 4-year-olds is at 97%. This is reasonable, as compared to statistical neighbours. However, this hides the variation in areas for eg:

- Beeston take up of 3-4, 89% (49 children)
- Harehills 81%, (219 children)
- Burmantofts 79%, (83 children)

Next steps

We want to increase:

- Take up of 2-year-olds across the city to 90% by three years
- Take up of 2-year-olds in high needs clusters to 90% by three years
- Take up of 2-year-olds open to CiN and CP Plan to 90% by three years
- Take up of 3 and 4-year-olds in the highest needs clusters (6) to 100% by three years

This will be actioned through a focus on data, liaison with social workers regarding the importance of this essential resource, development of a one-minute guide which is currently being published, and an Early Years one-page plan which will notify DWP families four times a year. In addition, there will be targeting of 170 CIN, CP and LAC children aged 2-4 not taking up early learning offer through social workers, Early Help Hubs RES teams, Early Start teams.

8.2 Priority 2 – Emotional Health and wellbeing/ Mental Health

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

- DfE Wellbeing for Return to Education - Grant delivered a free joint offer between services to schools and clusters. Worked with partners in health to avoid any duplication and offer a response to support specific mental health needs arising locally.
- Recovery curriculum and resources for CYP with Special Educational Needs (SEN) – developed and delivered free online.

Outcomes and outputs

- DfE evaluation report submitted to national grant provider.

Phase 1

- Access to a 3-hour training WfER package for all schools. The training provided pre-recorded content and two breakout room activities and supported discussion. Following the training schools were given access to the pre-recorded YouTube file which they could use in school and the PowerPoint file which also gave them access to trainer notes. Schools were offered supervision for their implementation to deliver the training in school. After the dates which had been offered schools can still access the content of the training online (link to the training package on Leeds for Learning).
- **146 staff members** from **101 education settings** trained.
- **92%** of participants that gave feedback rated the training as **good or excellent**.

Phase 2

- Within the cluster meetings led by the EP, activities from the Wellbeing for Education training were used. These activities enabled staff to explore staff well-being, a case study, or the concept of trauma within an online small group meeting.

Phase 3

- Staff who accessed Phase 1 training (and could show this by having completed an evaluation) had access to a 3-hour implementation. Staff were invited to a virtual small group workshop which gave space to consider how they have implemented the training and to support them to plan next steps through using the PATH framework.

- All settings can access additional training online training on extended school absenteeism, emotion coaching and meaning-making about understanding why children may be behaving as they are.
- Evaluation in progress.

Currently developing phase 3-part b for autumn term for all schools.

Online resources access to date

Pages	Provider	Public Views
Overview: Wellbeing for Education Initiative	Wellbeing for Education	2160
Webinar Resources: Wellbeing for Education Initiative	Wellbeing for Education	942
Learning Inclusion	Wellbeing for Education	24

Next steps

- The Mental Health Support Teams initiative is expanding into clusters with high levels of deprivation. A national-funded pilot is rolling out MHST to clusters over the next 3 years with the first two coming online in January 2022. Emma Hughes is the contact with Jayne Bathgate Roche Lead Commissioning Officer - CCG.
- Continued offer to all schools to support targeted mental health needs in response to the pandemic within the schools' context. Embedding of universal and systems support in the education context until March 2022

8.3 Priority 3 – The 3 As strategy - working with schools to improve attendance, achievement and attainment.

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

- The Director of Children and Families' Services has created a centralised single point of access for schools and settings to contact with queries regarding COVID-19. In addition to enabling schools and settings to access all the support available to them through a single point, outgoing communication has also been strengthened. The director has been sending regular bulletins to schools, settings, partners and other stakeholders to guide them in providing the best possible support to children and families across the city and also to support in the implementation of government guidance within the Leeds context of COVID-19.
- Throughout the pandemic, Bronze meetings have taken place for primary, secondary and special schools, led by the Head of Service for Learning Improvement and other senior officers from the Learning Improvement Service. The meetings have offered leaders of schools and settings from across the city the opportunity to discuss key and current issues about the pandemic. The sessions have been attended by relevant officers from the local authority, e.g. health and safety, human resources, communications, the attendance service etc. Their presence has enabled attendees to ask questions on a wide variety of subjects and to regularly receive an immediate response.
- With the pandemic having such an impact on the lives of children and young people in the city and the settings they attend, there is a need to amend and update the 3As strategy. Local authority colleagues have begun the process of making these amendments, initially through consultation with learning settings from across the city and for all ages from 0 – 19. Four consultations took place, each focusing on an age range: early years, primary, secondary (including special schools and alternative provisions) and post-16. The sessions

- were called the Big Learning Conversations.
- The SEND and Inclusion Strategy consultation with families, schools, children, young people and other partners has been completed. See priority 4.
- The new Deputy Director for Children and Families is now in post.

Outcomes and outputs

- The additional communication channel between the Director of Children and Families, and the Children and Families' leadership team, with schools and settings across the city has seen a strengthening of these relationships.
- Schools, including academies, and settings across the city have expressed their gratitude for the support provided over the course of the pandemic by officers and elected members of the council.
- Bronze meetings have been well attended and the direct and regular communication between the leaders of learning settings and a variety of officers from the local authority has strengthened relationships and developed an understanding of the pressures we have all been under during the pandemic.
- The Big Learning Conversations were well attended with dozens of senior leaders from across the learning landscape participating and contributing to determining what the city must focus on as we move forwards.

8.4 Priority 4 – Support for Vulnerable learners

Update on recent activities including impact of COVID

- Risk assessment system for all Children and Young People (CYP) with Education and Health Care plans (EHCP) shared with schools, with expectation of school responsibilities. Protocol for identifying CYP if needed to the local authority for support.
- In addition, there has been support to alternative providers for developing risk assessments.
- Training links established between Area Inclusion Partners (AIPs), Admissions and attendance team. These support improvements with fair access protocol for swifter access back into school.
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) panel continues to operate to provide an immediate advisory service

SEND and Inclusion Strategy

- Consultation with partners completed.
- There is a pilot on fixed term exclusions in progress.
- Educational Psychologist (EP) support provided to Early Help Hubs and signpost during the period of the pandemic to strengthen SEND offer at Early Help level.

Outcomes and outputs

- Work is ongoing regarding strategy development.
- Change to fair access protocol. AIPs take a stronger lead role.
- See employment and skills priority for vulnerable year 11 and Virtual School work.

Next steps

- SEND and Inclusion Strategy launch in autumn. The strategy will encompass the SEND and Inclusion focuses for disadvantaged groups and draw on key data on poverty and other vulnerability. It will report to the SEND Partnership Board.
- This will cross reference with employment and skills priority for vulnerable year 11 and Virtual School.

9.0 Green Spaces

The Poverty Impact Board has identified a new priority – equitable access to green spaces across Leeds.

Research ([PHE Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020](#)) notes that access to green space has a positive impact on physical health such as self-assessed general health, cardiovascular mortality in adults, weight management, mental health, stress management and associations with a favourable birth weight.

This research also shows that access to green space has a positive impact on mental health – reduced stress, emotional well-being and improved resilience. For children and young people, the benefits of having access to green space are influenced by developmental stage and both the type of green space they have access to.

Evidence of the impact on health related to COVID-19 ([BMJ](#)) outlines that exposure to green spaces may strengthen resilience and support mental health in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Outdoor recreation in green spaces has emerged during the present pandemic as an essential tool to combat distress.
- Exposure to green spaces facilitates recovery from physiological stress and improvement of cognitive performance. This aids in strengthening mental resilience by dampening the body's stress response.
- Green spaces may stimulate physical activity and improve physical resilience.
- Purposeful or pro-environmental behaviour and the anticipation of seeing interesting species may activate positive emotions and improve emotional resilience.
- Gathering outdoors, even at a safe distance, improves social cohesion and helps people to feel connected to the outside world, thus reinforcing social resilience.

The most economically deprived areas have less available good quality green space. People exposed to poor quality environments are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes than people who enjoy good quality environments. Unequal provision of good quality green space means those who are at greatest risk of poor physical and mental health may have the least opportunity to reap the health benefits of green space.

Nationally one in eight British households has no garden, the percentage of homes without a garden is higher among ethnic minorities, with Black people in England nearly four times as likely as White people to have no outdoor space at home. Source: [ONS](#).

There is a lot already happening in Leeds and the Child Poverty Impact Board has agreed that influencing access to and provision of green space in Leeds will become a new priority.

10. Conclusions

Experiencing poverty has a significant correlation to poorer outcomes across a wide range of life indicators. This is a problem that is growing, both in Leeds and nationally, and it is clear that a radical approach is needed to reduce the impact of poverty.

In Leeds, we believe that a young person's life chances should not be impacted by their background or the area in which they live. We want to ensure that poverty presents no barriers for our children and young people, and we want all people to have access to the same opportunities, regardless of their background. We believe that all children and young people should have the freedom to choose their pathway, and that we can work together as a city to tackle any limitations that poverty may place on these pathways. This is a moral imperative.

We also know the challenges that are faced, both by the people who live in poverty, and by the services who work across the city. We need to focus on mitigating the impact of poverty on children and young people whilst we work as a city to improve the structures around people who experience, or are at risk of, poverty.

For this reason, we need to continue to work as a city, to share our understandings, knowledge and practice, to learn about the day-to-day impact of poverty for children and young people and then to work with children and young people to tackle this impact.

Covid-19 Update – Learning

Date: 15th September 2021

Report of: The Director of Children and Families

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- As the city continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, this report provides the Children and Families Scrutiny Board with an update on the focused work being undertaken to support learning settings to support the learning of children and young people in Leeds.
- The report summarises the most recent changes to the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance, at the time of writing, with regards to changes in how learning settings should be operating e.g., risk assessments, test and trace.
- In addition, this report offers an update to members to reassure that local authority officers have continued to provide support and resources to children, families and learning settings, as detailed at previous board meetings, throughout the summer and will continue to do so in September and beyond.
- Finally, as board members will be aware, [The Best Council Plan](#) has the aspiration for Leeds to be a child-friendly city. The [Leeds Children and Young People's Plan](#) (CYPP) explains this child friendly approach in greater detail and sets out eleven priority areas of work and three key obsessions. The third obsession is to *improve achievement, attainment, and attendance in learning settings*. To deliver on this obsession, the [3As Strategy](#) was developed in 2018.
- There will be significant, immediate, and longer-term impacts of Covid-19 on the health, wellbeing and learning of our children and young people. It is recognised that some groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and the decision has been taken to reframe the 3As Strategy in the context of Covid-19.
- Within the reframed strategy, there will be a focus, within the priorities, on young people with SEND, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from BAME communities, and also to seek to understand and remove the barriers to their success in learning.
- Once completed, the new set of priorities will be established, the 3As Strategy will be refreshed and the appropriate actions taken in pursuit of achieving those priorities.
- This report summarises the information captured during the consultations with learning settings across the city, which took place in July 2021.

Recommendations

- a) Scrutiny Board members are asked to have a full and informed discussion around the information in this report. Local authority officers will be present at the board meeting to provide appropriate inputs and to respond to questions.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 With many children and young people returning to learning settings at the beginning of the academic year, the Scrutiny Board meeting on 15th September provides a timely opportunity for board members to be informed of the current DfE guidance into how settings are now operating and how the local authority is supporting them.
- 2 During the pandemic, Scrutiny Board has received regular updates from Children and Families Services on the numerous avenues of support being offered to children, families and learning settings. In addition to the information provided in this report, officers will have the opportunity to verbally update board members of the main areas of focus at the time of the board meeting.
- 3 The impact of the pandemic has been significant, and it is recognised that some groups have been disproportionately affected. Consultation with learning settings on reframing the 3As Strategy will be influential in shaping how Children and Families Services directs resources moving forwards in response to the challenges brought about by Covid-19. As such, the Scrutiny Board meeting on 15th September provides an opportunity to inform board members of the information captured during the consultation sessions with learning settings in July 2021.

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

What impact will this proposal have?

- 4 The Government's Covid guidance has a significant impact into the way that learning settings operate. The most recent changes to the guidance for schools, including early years settings within a school, is summarised here:
 - a) There is no longer the need to keep children and staff in discrete bubbles that do not mix.
 - b) Settings are no longer expected to undertake test and trace for close contacts of positive cases and inform them to isolate. This will be done by NHS test and trace. NHS test and trace may contact settings to assist them in identifying close contacts in 'exceptional circumstances'.
 - c) Close contacts of positive cases are no longer required to self-isolate if:
 - (1) they are fully vaccinated
 - (2) they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
 - (3) they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
 - (4) they are not able to be vaccinated for medical reasons
 - d) All close contacts that are not symptomatic are advised to have a PCR test (unless under the age of 5) unless they have had a positive PCR in the last 90 days.
 - e) Face coverings are no longer required to be worn in settings by children or staff – however officers have advised that persons still have personal choice, may need to continue to wear one as part of an individual risk assessment and that visitors may still be asked to wear them. This is in line with the government expectation and recommendation that persons wear face coverings in enclosed crowded spaces where they may be within the proximity of people they would not normally come into contact with.

- f) Social distancing is no longer required; however, schools have been advised that staff should distance where possible from visitors or persons they would not normally come into contact with, in line with the Government's expectation that people still try to minimise contacts.
 - g) Hygiene, ventilation, and cleaning controls are still in place, so these remain in the sample Covid-19 risk assessment for schools.
 - h) Settings are expected to have an Outbreak Management Plan which details the measures they may need to re-instate, on advice from Public Health or Government, and an action plan for doing so.
- 5 At previous Scrutiny Board meetings, officers have provided details of the support being offered to learning settings during the pandemic. During consultation at The Big Learning Conversations, participants were extremely positive about the support they have had from the local authority during such unprecedented challenging times. Of note has been the support offered through the Health and Safety Team and how effective the communication has been from the Director of Children and Families Services.
- 6 As we move into September, there are plans to continue the regular bulletins which will come from the newly appointed Deputy Director for Learning. Similarly, the regular support meetings, led by senior officers within Children and Families, will continue to offer a space where leaders of learning settings from across the city can ask questions directly to a wide variety of supporting local authority officers. The single point of access for contact with Children and Families Services Directorate, the DCS Alert Inbox, will also continue to offer a direct route into the local authority for those settings informing the team about Covid cases and to seek quick responses to Covid related queries.
- 7 The Schools' Health and Safety Team has provided the following update on the support being offered to schools and early years settings in schools:
- a) The whole school sample Covid-19 risk assessment has been reviewed, had union consultation, and was issued to schools before the end of last term. There are a few minor amendments needed following guidance changes over the summer and an updated version will be issued at the start of next term. None of the changes materially affect how schools are to operate, at the time of writing.
 - b) An amended Covid-19 risk assessment and Safe Systems of Work document has been produced to enable Children Services' staff, working in and with schools, to return to 'normal operation' and resume many of the services, in September, that had been put on hold or greatly reduced e.g., face to face training, home visits, school visits, face to face meetings etc.
 - c) A sample Outbreak Management Plan and Action Plan has been produced and was provided to schools at the end of last term. This follows the government contingency framework. The framework was updated, in the week commencing 18th August, to require action plans which had already been included. Some minor changes are required, and the sample plan will be updated at the beginning of next term.
 - d) Schools have been sending in their notification of positive cases and this will continue to be requested, as this allows the local authority to identify potential outbreaks and provide support in a timely manner without waiting for contact from Public Health England (PHE). This data will continue to be fed into Leeds City Council Public Health's city wide Covid case tracking system, HP Star.
 - e) Weekly Outbreak Management meetings will continue with Leeds City Council Public Health, Health and Safety, Environmental Health, Early Years and Adult Services colleagues and the Local PHE Team to identify potential outbreaks and settings of concern and what support and / or action is needed.

- f) Fortnightly meetings of the Test, Trace & Outbreak Management – Early Years & Schools group will continue to identify guidance and support needed across the board for those settings and pro-active work that can be undertaken. This group includes colleagues from Leeds City Council’s Learning Improvement, Public Health, Early Years, Health and Safety and Communications Teams.
 - g) Pro-active and reactive Covid support audits will continue, and the audit has been updated to reflect the new guidance.
 - h) Regular bulletins from the Schools Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team (and the Director of Children and Families) will continue.
 - i) Regular joint meetings with school leadership and Leeds City Council officers will continue to allow issues to be shared and discussed and a consistent approach adopted.
 - j) Telephone, email, and onsite support will continue to be provided.
 - k) Legislation and guidance changes will continue to be tracked and any necessary document / advice changes will continue to be communicated as before, via the risk assessments reviews, bulletins, flow charts, letters, emails etc.
- 8 Each early years’ setting, school, academy, and college will have its own priorities and development plans. The refreshed 3As Strategy will provide details of how the council’s Children and Families Services Directorate will focus its work to shape, influence, support, and challenge learning settings in supporting children and young people’s learning.
- 9 Children and Families Services will maintain its existing partnerships with other directorates and look to develop new partnerships where appropriate within the local authority as well as with external organisations, in pursuit of achieving the priorities of the refreshed 3As Strategy.
- 10 The resources being mobilised in pursuit of achieving the refreshed priorities will not solely come from colleagues working directly in learning but from across the Children and Families Services directorate and beyond.
- 11 Reframing the 3As Strategy is in its consultation phase and officers have already had the opportunity to run consultation sessions with learning settings across the city, called The Big Learning Conversation. Leaders of learning settings gave their views on a vast range of priorities. This report gives details of the overall sense of the priorities and aims, which have reinforced the strategic view of Children and Families Services Leadership Team. More detail of these consultation sessions can be found in the Consultation and Engagement section of this report.
- 12 The finalised priorities of the refreshed strategy will be selected to be areas of focus where Children and Families Services can have most impact in supporting learning settings in supporting children and young people’s learning in the context of Covid-19.
- 13 The substantial impact of the pandemic on families in Leeds has meant that it has been necessary to refresh and reframe the priorities within the 3As Strategy. Along with looking at outcomes data, the following themes have been drawn from The Big Learning Conversations with leaders of learning settings from across Leeds, with comments from the leaders themselves:
- a) All children make the best start to each stage of their learning.**
 - i. *“Early years is key. Learning starts at birth”*
 - ii. *“Focus on transitions. Nursery to school, primary to secondary and on to post-16”.*
 - b) Schools are supported to reduce the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions.**
 - i. *“Exclusions remains a priority and should be focused on to what we are doing to include”.*

- c) **All children have opportunities to take part in sports, arts, and positive activities.**
 - i. *“Children have been deprived of arts and extra-curricular activities over lockdown, all of which are essential to young people’s development”.*
- d) **Children and young people educated outside mainstream schools and settings receive support and succeed.**
- e) **All children and staff working in learning settings are supported with their wellbeing.**
 - i. *“Further focus on mental health and wellbeing is needed, for staff as well as for children and young people”.*
 - ii. *“Staff are burnt out and there is a need for a focus on staff wellbeing”.*
- f) **The needs of children and young people from BAME communities are understood and they are supported to do well.**
 - i. *“There are inequalities for BAME communities which require immediate focus”.*
- g) **All children in Leeds are proficient readers.**
 - i. *“It has to be about storytelling, language development, story books and images, and developing vocabulary”.*
 - ii. *“Reading skills are key to quality lifelong learning”.*
- h) **Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families receive timely and appropriate support which enables them to thrive.**
 - i. *“The SEND Strategy is key. We need, as a city, all children to be accessing the right places for their needs – provide the opportunities for learning that those children need including specialist where needed”.*
- i) **The needs of disadvantaged children are met, and they are supported to do well.**
 - i. *“We have to be focusing on the disadvantaged and children with Pupil Premium. There’s got to be a sharing of best practise around this from school to school and how we can make better use of this funding”.*

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 14 Consultation to reframe the 3As Strategy began with events for learning settings across the city and for all ages from 0 – 19. Four consultations took place, each focusing on an age range: early years, primary, secondary (incl special schools and alternative provisions) and post-16.
- 15 The sessions were called The Big Learning Conversations.
- 16 The sessions were led by the Director of Children and Families Services, via Zoom, and were well attended. During the sessions the participants were split into breakout rooms and explored the following areas:
 - a) As a result of the pandemic, participants were asked what areas of the present 3As strategy they found to be the most important and have the most impact in transforming children’s lives?
 - b) Participants were asked for their views on additional areas which should be included in the reframed learning strategy in the context of Covid-19.
 - c) In their work with children and young people, participants were asked how the local authority can best support the education community.
- 17 The information captured from the breakout rooms was collated and cross-referenced and the key themes are detailed earlier in this report.
- 18 In addition, and in response to the ‘business as usual’ away from the refreshed strategy, Bronze Meetings have taken place for primary, secondary, and special schools, throughout the pandemic, led by the Head of Service for Learning Improvement and other senior officers from

the Learning Improvement Service. The meetings have offered leaders of schools and settings from across the city, the opportunity to discuss key and current issues about the pandemic. The sessions have been attended by relevant officers from the local authority, e.g. health and safety, human resources, communications, the attendance service etc. Their presence has enabled attendees to ask questions on a wide variety of subjects and to regularly receive an immediate response.

What are the resource implications?

- 19 Given the significance of the financial implications of Covid-19, arrangements are in place for the Council's Executive Board to receive separate and more detailed reports regularly. The Council's Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board maintains oversight of the financial management strategy in accordance with its remit.
- 20 The Covid-19 pandemic is unprecedented and as such, Children and Families Services has redeployed resources to areas of need with the highest priority. Similarly, the reframed 3As Strategy will set out its new aims and resources will be deployed appropriately to ensure support can be given where the most impact can be made for children, families and learning settings across Leeds, with a focus on those who have been disproportionately affected.

What are the legal implications?

- 21 This report has no specific legal implications.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 22 The risks related to Covid-19 will continue to be monitored through the Council's existing risk management processes.
- 23 Children and Families Services has business continuity plans across 20 key areas of the directorate and many of these plans inform the critical responses to Covid-19.
- 24 Children and Families Services Leadership Team and the Learning Leadership Team will monitor the progress of the refreshed 3As Strategy and the actions which sit below it and will regularly assess the risks associated with the implementation of the strategy.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- 25 Providing the right support at the right time, the local authority enables children, families and learning settings to succeed. This in turn will have the potential to have a significant positive influence within the Inclusive Growth Strategy for Leeds as children and young people who enter apprenticeships and into working life will add their wealth of talents in contributing to the city's economic growth.
- 26 Work continues to promote energy efficiency and eco-awareness with schools, students and with families. There are likely to be environmental impacts associated with the pandemic that will become clearer over time. It is important to focus on the longer-term impacts of Covid-19 on the climate emergency. Where current changes how work is undertaken, how schooling is delivered and where support is offered to children and families, there are potential opportunities for carbon saving efficiencies. This potential is being balanced against the determination to continue to deliver high quality services.
- 27 The Health and Wellbeing of staff within learning settings, as well as the children and young people who attend them, will undoubtedly be amongst the refreshed aims of the 3As Strategy. Through consultation with learning settings during the Big Learning Conversations, it was evident that the mental health of people across the city has suffered because of the pandemic. Mental

and physical health are intrinsically linked and learning settings have already created plans in how to improve the wellbeing of every child, young person, and adult within their learning community. Children and Families Services is investigating the best ways of supporting settings to support their staff and the children and young people who attend their settings.

Timescales and measuring success

How will success be measured?

28 Once the consultation process has been completed, each of the newly refreshed aims within the 3As Strategy will have measurable targets to determine the impact of the work being undertaken by the local authority.

What is the timetable for implementation?

29 The 3As Strategy runs until the end of 2023, however, each of the measurable targets, once approved, will have its own timeframe for completion, implementation, delivery, and monitoring.

30 It is proposed to bring regular updates to the Scrutiny Board in order that members can see progress being made against the approved aims of the refreshed strategy.

Appendices

31 None.

Background papers

32 None.

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Ofsted Focused Visit

Date: 15th September 2021

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in?

Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?

Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report follows the recent two-day Ofsted Focused Visit to the Leeds Children and Families Front Door Service conducted on the 20th and 21st July 2021.
- The report and its proposals support the ambitions and priorities for the Children and Families Directorate, the Council and the city as a whole as set out in the Best Council Plan, the Children and Young People's Plan, Inclusive Growth Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Ofsted inspectors identified a number of strengths in Social Work practice and Early Help in the Front Door Focused Visit, they highlighted three recommendations for practice improvement. Inspectors found no areas of serious weakness and no examples of children being left unsafe. The three recommendations for improved practice are:
 - The quality and consistency of assessments to ensure that key information and family history is gathered and analysed to inform decision-making, and the quality of children's plans.
 - The quality and impact of management oversight and supervision to ensure that decisions are timely and well recorded.
 - The quality and independence of audits to ensure that they provide learning to support improvement in social work practice and provide senior managers with an understanding of the quality of that practice.

Recommendations

- a) Scrutiny is asked to note the findings reported by Ofsted inspectors in the Leeds Front Door Focused Visit letter.
- b) Scrutiny is asked to note that the Children and Families directorate have developed an Improvement Action Plan in the light of the recommendations from the Focused Visit and that the plan will be monitored closely by the Children and Families Senior Leadership Team.
- c) Scrutiny is asked to consider its role in monitoring the progress of the recommendations made by Ofsted following the Focused Visit.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. This report is being put forward to inform scrutiny of the outcome of the recent two-day Ofsted Focused Visit to Leeds Children and Families Front Door conducted on the 20th and 21st July 2021.
2. The visit was carried out under section 136(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA) as part of Ofsted's 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services' Framework (ILACS Framework).
3. The delivery model was adapted to reflect the COVID-19 context. Inspectors were on site and held face-to-face discussions with some local authority staff. Inspectors also used video calls for discussions with local authority staff, managers and leaders.
4. Ofsted two day Focused Visits evaluate an aspect of service, a theme or the experience of a cohort of children. Unlike a full standard or short Inspection of Children's Services Ofsted two day Focused Visits do not result in a graded 'judgement' or full inspection report; rather inspectors report their findings about strengths and areas for improvement and outline these in a published letter.
5. If inspectors find serious weaknesses, they will identify areas for priority action. An area for priority action is either:
 - An area of serious weakness that is placing children at risk of inadequate protection and significant harm
 - An unnecessary delay in identifying permanent solutions for children in care that results in their welfare not being not being safeguarded and promoted.

Inspectors did not identify any priority areas in this Focused Visit.

6. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have a severe impact in Leeds and all aspects of children's services have, and continue to be, greatly affected. It has presented many challenges across the workforce and in the very diverse, densely populated parts of the City that include a high number of low-income and multi-generational households, pre-existing vulnerabilities have been exacerbated. The experience of grief and hardship caused by the pandemic has impacted greatly on local communities and the social care workforce, who have experienced stress, anxiety and loss. Despite this, Ofsted inspectors identified a number of strengths in Social Work practice and Early Help in the Front Door Focused Visit. Leeds remains the only core city in the country to have achieved a 'Good' and subsequent 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating for Children's Services.
7. The strengths identified by inspectors included: timely and proportionate identification of risk and decision-making; assessments that demonstrated a focus on the child with effective information gathering that analysed the child's needs, strengths and risks; plans that were focused, with clear actions and timescales to measure the child's progress and all social workers receiving regular supervision and feeling well supported by managers and, despite an increase in demand over the last 12 months, no corresponding increase in average caseloads.
8. Inspectors noted that Staff are proud to work for Leeds, that there is a stable workforce, with good retention rates, that teams are well established, meaning that many children have a consistent social worker, which supports good relationships. They also identified

positive opportunities for career progression, with many staff choosing to remain in Leeds throughout their social work careers.

9. Inspectors highlighted the continued investment in early help services and the way that these services have adapted to meet changing and emerging demands during the pandemic, providing a timely and effective response and continuing to successfully divert children away from formal and more costly statutory interventions.
10. Inspectors found no areas of serious weakness but highlighted three areas for improved practice:
 - The quality and consistency of assessments to ensure that key information and family history is gathered and analysed to inform decision-making, and the quality of children's plans.
 - The quality and impact of management oversight and supervision to ensure that decisions are timely and well recorded.
 - The quality and independence of audits to ensure that they provide learning to support improvement in social work practice and provide senior managers with an understanding of the quality of that practice.
11. The Children and Families directorate fully accept the three recommendations set out by Ofsted; acutely aware that these are areas that require a relentless focus to achieve consistent high-quality practice given the size and scale of Leeds and in the context of the particular challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
12. Inspectors noted that where a child may be at risk of significant harm strategy meetings are taking place but that less than half of all strategy meetings are attended by the three key safeguarding partners (Leeds City Council, the NHS and West Yorkshire Police).
13. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on all agencies seeking to support Children and Families in Leeds. The three key statutory partners have acknowledged the associated organisational and whole system pressures and have taken immediate action to address any barriers to full attendance at strategy discussions. Statutory partners acknowledge that although information is provided to support decision making, ensuring that essential information from agencies is available to inform decision making and planning, the lack of attendance at meetings limits the contribution and involvement of agencies.
14. The Children and Families directorate have taken immediate steps to develop and implement a Focused Visit Improvement Action Plan to reflect and prioritise the recommendations from Ofsted.
15. The action plan includes a daily strategy discussion escalation process to ensure that any individual challenges are highlighted and addressed as a matter of urgency to enable attendance by all the three key partners. Additional resource has been identified to support full attendance by all three partners and multi-agency process mapping will take place during September to enable the strategic partnership to fully understand any ongoing barriers and to address these as a matter of priority.
16. The multi-agency weekly referral review meeting is monitoring the attendance and quality of strategy discussions and has noted improvements since the Focused Visit. Single agency and multi-agency performance management and quality assurance activity has been enhanced to provide additional scrutiny and progress and an action plan is in place

for the front door that includes a focus on timeliness and ensuring that all conversations are comprehensively recorded.

17. Learning for team managers is being updated around assessments, plans, recording of supervision, decision making and audit quality. Further comprehensive workforce development activity is also planned ensuring that social workers and managers are engaged in quality conversations about practice and how to reflect these in children's records.
18. Social work teams are now paired to establish cross team auditing with a clearer framework of moderation in place.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

19. The Children and Families directorate undertakes regular day to day consultation and more formal focussed consultation and engagement activity with a range of children, young people and families.
20. The directorate has an active Voice and Influence team who facilitate and enable the voice of children and families to shape and influence service delivery and development.
21. The directorate has developed a 'Let's Talk' programme that has enabled families with lived experience of the directorate and its services to shape and influence services in the here and now and in planning for the future.

What are the resource implications?

22. There are no resource implications, the Children and Families directorate will implement the Focused Visit Improvement Action Plan with its existing resource.

What are the legal implications?

23. The Children and Families Social Work Service has a range of statutory functions, the Improvement Action Plan will ensure that legal duties and responsibilities are fulfilled through the delivery of consistent high-quality child and family led practice and services.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

24. The key risk is inconsistency in practice and service delivery that may result in poorer outcomes for children and families. The directorate has developed an Improvement Action Plan to include the recommendations made by Ofsted in the Focussed Visit. Progress against the Improvement Action Plan will be closely monitored by the Children and Families Senior Leadership Team through its performance management and quality assurance framework and newly established Covid-19 Recovery Board.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

25. This report and its proposals support the ambitions and priorities for the Children and Families Directorate, the Council and the city as a whole as set out in the Best Council Plan, the Children and Young People's Plan, Inclusive Growth Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Climate Emergency and 'Thrive' Poverty Strategy.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

26. The Children and Families Directorate have developed and implemented a Focused Visit Improvement Action Plan, this was felt to be the best option to address the recommendations from Ofsted, the plan will be monitored through directorate's existing performance management and quality assurance framework and newly established Recovery Board.

b) How will success be measured?

27. As above, progress against the Children and Families Focused Visit Action Plan will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team through the directorate's existing performance management and quality assurance framework and the newly established Recovery Board.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

28. The directorate has taken immediate steps to action the recommendations from Ofsted.

Appendices

29. Appendix 1. Leeds Front Door Focused Visit Letter August 2021.

Background papers

30. None.

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Dear Sal

Focused visit to Leeds children's services

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

This letter summarises the findings of a focused visit to Leeds children's services on 20 and 21 July 2021. Her Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Victoria Horsefield and Matt Reed. Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for the front door, including decision-making for contacts and referrals, child protection enquiries, the decision to step down or step up from early help, and child in need assessments.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. However, the delivery model was adapted to reflect the COVID-19 context. The lead inspector and the director of children's services agreed arrangements to deliver this visit effectively while working within national and local guidelines for responding to COVID-19. Both inspectors were on site and held face-to-face discussions with some local authority staff. However, inspectors also used video calls for discussions with local authority staff, managers and leaders.

Headline findings

Leeds has experienced high rates of COVID 19 which has, and continues to have, an impact on all aspects of children's services. During the pandemic, senior leaders have continued to provide a wide range of early help services that have adapted well to meet the demands. Workers, despite the impact of COVID-19, report feeling well supported and proud to work for Leeds. However, the response to some children in need of help and protection is not as consistently strong as it was at the last inspection. When there is a clear identification of risk, children receive a timely and appropriate response. When a child's circumstances are more complex, and more information needs to be gathered to understand what is happening within a family, some children experience delay in their needs being identified and responded to.

When there are concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm, less than half of the strategy discussions involve key partner agencies.

What needs to improve in this area of social work practice

- The quality and consistency of assessments to ensure that key information and family history is gathered and analysed to inform decision-making, and the quality of children's plans.
- The quality and impact of management oversight and supervision to ensure that decisions are timely and well recorded.
- The quality and independence of audits to ensure that they provide learning to support improvement in social work practice and provide senior managers with an understanding of the quality of that practice.

Main findings

Leeds has experienced high rates of COVID-19 with some areas of the city significantly exceeding national averages. Lockdown restrictions have been in place throughout the pandemic. Senior leaders understand very well the significant impact of COVID-19 for children and families, staff and communities and have a good understanding of the demographics of the areas most affected by the pandemic. The local authority and its partners responded quickly to identify those most affected and are working effectively together to deliver support. Statutory services have been maintained throughout and children have continued to be seen where it is safe to do so. Staff have felt well supported during the pandemic and have received practical and emotional support from senior leaders and managers.

The continued investment in early help services means that there are a wide range of effective early help services available to children and families. For some children, the early help service has successfully diverted them away from formal statutory interventions. Managers in early help have effective oversight and clearly record decisions when children's cases need to be stepped up or when interventions end.

Social work practice and management oversight at the front door is not as consistently strong as it was at the last inspection. A recent external peer review of the front door commissioned by the local authority identified areas of good practice, but also identified similar areas for development found in this focused visit. Senior leaders acknowledged these findings and are working to address shortfalls in practice quality and the timeliness of decision-making.

The front door experienced an increase in contacts during the pandemic, with many of these related to domestic abuse and parental conflict. The front door is well resourced with an experienced and stable workforce who report positively about the 'Leeds way of working'. For most children, timely and proportionate decision-making

leads to them receiving the right service when needed. Where there is a clear identification of risk, children's cases are transferred to the locality teams without delay. Parental consent is well understood and considered and, where necessary, dispensed with to allow further checks to be made. However, where an immediate child protection risk is not clear, decision-making is not always timely. For some children, there is a delay in them receiving the right level of intervention at the earliest opportunity.

Managers at the front door are not demonstrating that they have sufficient oversight of the progress and timeliness of children's cases. Managers do not consistently provide a recorded rationale where timescales for the progression of contacts and referrals are not met. In some instances, this is appropriate and allows further work to be undertaken. However, for some children, this leads to a delay in the analysis of risk and identification of the required intervention.

Many referrals and repeat referrals are due to domestic abuse. In some children's cases, there is not a robust understanding or analysis of the previous history and incidents. For some children, this means that the cumulative impact of domestic abuse is not being considered in the assessment of risk and decision-making. The local authority has recently introduced a daily multi-agency meeting to strengthen their response to domestic abuse. As this is a recent development, it was too soon to identify the impact of these arrangements.

Where there is a clear identification of risk, child protection enquiries are undertaken, and children are seen promptly. In these children's cases, managers consistently record decisions and provide a clear rationale for the next actions to take, including the decision to proceed or not to a child protection conference.

Strategy meetings are taking place. However, less than half of all strategy meetings are attended by the three key safeguarding partners. The lack of attendance, participation and contribution by the two other safeguarding partners, in addition to the attendance by the local authority, means that, for some children, the fullest information about their family circumstances is not being shared to understand risk and inform joint decision-making.

Children are being seen on their own by their social worker on a regular basis. This has continued throughout the pandemic, but there is variability in the quality of assessments being undertaken. Stronger assessments demonstrate a focus on the child with effective information gathering that analyses the child's needs, the strengths and the risks. Where practice is weaker, the assessment is overly descriptive, and the analysis does not clearly focus on the impact of the identified risks on the child.

The quality of children's plans reflects the variability seen in the assessments. The better plans are focused, with clear actions and timescales that measure the child's progress. The weaker plans are too generic and lack focus on the specific needs of

the child and their family. The plans lack clear timescales, making it difficult to monitor progress and assess whether the child's needs will be met by the planned interventions within a timescale that is right for them.

Children's case records evidence regular supervision and social workers reported feeling well supported by their managers. However, in some cases, supervision records were not reflective and were not assisting the worker to analyse their findings or provide an opportunity for learning.

Senior leaders have access to a range of performance data, and audit activity takes place. However, it was not clear to inspectors how this was providing leaders with sufficient understanding and oversight of the quality of practice and management oversight. Team managers audit their own team's work. The audits are not moderated and do not provide independent scrutiny of practice. Although the audit process includes consultation with children and families, this is not embedded in practice and had not taken place in any of the audits reviewed during the visit.

Audits do not routinely identify areas for development and do not provide sufficient evidence to inform workforce development and drive forward practice. While performance data is available and is enabling managers at all levels to have oversight of performance at a service, team and individual level, this management information is incomplete. It does not include all the performance information that managers need to understand the quality of practice and whether practice meets statutory requirements.

Despite an increase in demand over the last 12 months, there has not been a corresponding increase in average caseloads. However, there is variability, with some social workers holding higher than average caseloads. Social workers reported these to be manageable.

Staff are proud to work for Leeds and enthusiastic about the Leeds practice model. There is a stable workforce, with good retention rates. Teams are well established, meaning that many children have a consistent social worker, which supports good relationships. Staff reported positive opportunities for career progression, with many choosing to remain in Leeds throughout their social work careers.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning your next inspection or visit.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Horsefield
Her Majesty's Inspector

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Work Schedule

Date: 15th September 2021

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year. In doing so, the work schedule should not be considered a fixed and rigid schedule, it should be recognised as a document that can be adapted and changed to reflect any new and emerging issues throughout the year; and also reflect any timetable issues that might occur from time to time.
- The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules also state that, where appropriate, all terms of reference for work undertaken by Scrutiny Boards will include 'to review how and to what effect consideration has been given to the impact of a service or policy on all equality areas, as set out in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme'.
- The latest iteration of the Board's work schedule is attached to this report for the Board's consideration.

Recommendations

Members are requested to consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year and therefore the latest iteration of the Board's work schedule for the remainder of the municipal year is attached as Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.
2. During the Board's consultative meeting on 9th June 2021, Members discussed possible areas of work for the Board to undertake this year, as set out within the note of that meeting. The latest iteration of the Board's work schedule is therefore reflective of the Board's discussion held on 9th June 2021.
3. The latest Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 21st July 2021 are also attached as Appendix 2. The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider and note the Executive Board minutes, insofar as they relate to the remit of the Scrutiny Board; and consider any matter where specific scrutiny activity may also be warranted.

Developing the work schedule

4. When considering any developments and/or modifications to the work schedule, effort should be undertaken to:
 - Avoid unnecessary duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue.
 - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.
 - Avoid pure "information items" except where that information is being received as part of a policy/scrutiny review.
 - Seek advice about available resources and relevant timings, taking into consideration the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and the type of Scrutiny taking place.
 - Build in sufficient flexibility to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year.
5. In addition, in order to deliver the work schedule, the Board may need to take a flexible approach and undertake activities outside the formal schedule of meetings – such as working groups and site visits, where necessary and appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

Developments since the previous Scrutiny Board meeting

Additional meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 8th September 2021

6. In accordance with the agreed approach linked to the school organisation proposals and objections procedure, the Chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board was advised of formal objections received in relation to the proposal to expand St Edward's Catholic Primary School to permanently increase the number of places offered at the school in Reception from 20 to 30 places from September 2022.
7. After consulting the views of other Board Members, it was agreed that the Children and Families Scrutiny Board would hold an additional meeting on 8th September 2021 to consider the proposal, including the formal objections, in more detail.
8. In addition, the Board also agreed to utilise this formal public meeting to approve the appointment of non-voting co-opted members onto the Scrutiny Board and also consider and approve the Board's inquiry report on tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families.

Consideration of the findings from a recent Ofsted focused visit to Leeds Children's Services

9. Following the publication of a letter from Ofsted (dated 31st August 2021) to the Director of Children and Families summarising the findings of a focused visit to Leeds children's services on 20 and 21 July 2021, the Chair requested to utilise the Scrutiny Board's meeting on 15th September 2021 to discuss the reported findings with the Director of Children and Families and the Executive Board Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships, as well as considering what next steps the Scrutiny Board may wish to take. This matter is therefore being considered as part of the agenda for today's meeting.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

10. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

11. The Vision for Scrutiny also states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources prior to agreeing items of work.

What are the resource implications?

12. Experience has shown that the Scrutiny process is more effective and adds greater value if the Board seeks to minimise the number of substantial inquiries running at one time and focus its resources on one key issue at a time.
13. The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council also recognises that like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function are under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met.
14. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:
- Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
 - Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
 - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.

What are the legal implications?

15. This report has no specific legal implications.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

16. There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

17. The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the best council objectives.

Appendices

18. Appendix 1 – Draft work schedule of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board for the 2021/22 municipal year.
19. Appendix 2 – Draft minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 21st July 2021.

Background papers

20. None.



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2021/2022 Municipal Year

June	July	August
Meeting Agenda for 9th June 2021	Meeting Agenda for 7th July 2021	No Scrutiny Board meeting
<p style="text-align: center;">** Consultative Meeting**</p> <p>Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference and Sources of Work (DB)</p> <p>Performance Update (PM)</p> <p>Looked After Children and the EU Settlement Scheme – update position in Leeds (PSR)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">** Consultative Meeting**</p> <p>Scrutiny Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling – current position and determining next steps (PSR)</p> <p>Youth Work Review and Future Vision (PSR)</p>	
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2021/2022 Municipal Year

September	October	November
Meeting Agenda for 8th September 2021	Meeting Agenda for 13th October 2021	Meeting Agenda for 3rd November 2021
Co-opted Members (DB) Proposal to permanently increase learning places at St Edward's Catholic Primary School from September 2022 (PDS) Tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families – Formal ratification of final inquiry report (PSR) Meeting Agenda for 15th September 2021 ** Consultative Meeting** Leeds Child Poverty Strategy – Update (PSR) Covid-19 update with a focus on learning (PSR) Ofsted findings following a focused visit to Leeds Children's Services in July 2021 (PSR)	Education Health and Care Plans – quality assurance, engagement and reviewing processes (PSR) SEND and Inclusion Strategy for Leeds (PSR) Covid-19 recovery update with a focus on early years and social care (PSR) Scrutiny Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling - finalising terms of reference (PSR)	Future in Mind Strategy – Update (PSR) Scrutiny Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling – evidence session (tbc) 2022/23 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS)
Working Group Meetings		
	2022/23 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS) – <i>date tbc</i>	
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2021/2022 Municipal Year

December	January	February
No Scrutiny Board meeting.	Meeting Agenda for 26th January 2022	Meeting Agenda for 16th February 2022
	Performance report (PM) Financial Health Monitoring (PSR) 2022/23 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS)	Covid-19 recovery update relating to those service areas that fall within the remit of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board (PSR) Scrutiny Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling – evidence session (tbc)
Working Group Meetings		
Scrutiny Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling – evidence session (tbc) - 1/12/21 @ 10 am		
Site Visits		

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Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2021/2022 Municipal Year

March	April	May
Meeting Agenda for 30th March 2022	No Scrutiny Board meeting	No Scrutiny Board meeting.
New Youth Work Model – update (PSR)		
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

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Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response

EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 21ST JULY, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor J Lewis in the Chair

Councillors S Arif, D Coupar, M Harland,
H Hayden, J Pryor, M Rafique and
F Venner

APOLOGIES: Councillors A Carter and S Golton

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS: Councillors B Anderson and J Bentley

27 **Substitute Member**

Under the provisions of Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 3.2.6, Councillors B Anderson and J Bentley were invited to attend the meeting on behalf of Councillors A Carter and S Golton respectively, who had both submitted their apologies for absence from the meeting.

28 **Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED – That, in accordance with Regulation 4 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt from publication on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follows:-

(A) That appendix 3 to the report entitled, 'British Library at Temple Works', referred to in Minute No. 33 be designated as being exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 10.4(3) of Schedule 12A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 and considered in private on the grounds that the appendix contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). As such, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of the appendix as exempt from publication outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information;

(B) That appendix 1 to the report entitled, 'Leeds Pipes District Heating Network: Status Update and Securing Future Growth', referred to in Minute No. 34 be designated as being exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 10.4(3) of Schedule 12A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 and considered in private on the grounds that the appendix contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). Specifically, the appendix contains detailed pricing information underpinning the Council's heat sales which, if disclosed

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 22nd September, 2021

could damage its commercial interests. Disclosure of this information would seriously harm the Council's negotiating position when discussing heat sales with potential customers. Therefore, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of Appendix 1 as being exempt from publication outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

29 Late Items

Agenda Item 10 - Update on Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic – Response and Recovery Plan

With the agreement of the Chair, a late item of business was admitted to the agenda entitled, 'Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic – Response and Recovery Plan'.

Given the scale and significance of this issue, it was deemed appropriate that a further update report be submitted to this remote meeting of the Board. However, due to the fast paced nature of developments on this issue, and in order to ensure that Board Members received the most up to date information as possible, the report was not included within the agenda as originally published on the 13th July 2021. (Minute No. 36 refers).

30 Declaration of Interests

In relation to Agenda Item 9, 'Leeds Air Quality Strategy 2021 - 2030', Councillor Arif declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item, due to the fact that she was a Director of EV Master, a company involved in electric vehicle charging points. As such, Councillor Arif left the meeting room for the duration of that item, and hence did not participate or vote upon it. (Minute No. 35 refers).

Also in relation to Agenda Item 9, 'Leeds Air Quality Strategy 2021 - 2030', Councillor Hayden declared an 'other' interest in that item due to the fact she was a Council appointed representative on the Outside Body 'Environmental Protection UK'. Councillor Hayden remained in the room for the consideration of this item, participated and voted upon it. (Minute No. 35 refers).

31 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd June 2021 be approved as a correct record.

ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING

32 To consider the future of the maisonette block on the Highways housing site in the Killingbeck area of East Leeds and receive an update on progress with the redevelopment proposals for the site

Further to Minute No. 41, 24 July 2019, the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report detailing proposals to include the maisonette block of 12 homes at 122-133 Highways, York Road, Leeds LS14 in a wider redevelopment of the Highways tower block site, which had been previously agreed by Executive Board. The report also sought approval to

suspend new lettings to the maisonettes and start re-housing existing residents with a view to achieving vacant possession as soon as possible. Additionally, the report provided a further update on the overall progress made in respect of the Highways site.

In considering the matter, Members welcomed the scheme. Responding to a specific enquiry, it was noted that currently there were 132 homes on the site and that the scheme would see this replaced with an estimated 230 – 250 new build units. Regarding a question about whether there were any known abnormalities or risks associated with the site, it was noted that although there was no current indication of such issues, appropriate onsite surveys and assessment would be undertaken as part of the due process. Also, responding to an enquiry the Board noted that it was anticipated that rent levels for the properties would be consistent with social rent levels for new build Council homes.

In considering the current timeframes for the scheme, the Board received further details on the progress being made to re-house existing tenants as efficiently as possible.

Also, it was noted that the commitment made for tenants of the Highways tower blocks and maisonettes who wished to return to the new build programme when completed, would be honoured, subject to the size of the new properties being able to appropriately accommodate each family's needs.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That the properties of 122-133 Highways, York Road, LS14 6AR be declared as surplus to requirements;
- (c) That agreement be given to take out of charge the properties of 122-133 Highways, York Road, LS14 6AR;
- (d) That agreement be given for the buildings on the site of 122-133 Highways, York Road, LS14 6AR to be safely demolished, creating a clear site for future use;
- (e) That the serving of an initial demolition notice, in line with Housing Act processes, in respect of tenants wishing to exercise their Right to Buy, be approved;
- (f) That agreement be given for the site to be developed as part of the Housing Growth programme, enabling new Council housing to be built on that site in the future;
- (g) That it be noted that separate reports will follow which will deal with the demolition proposals for existing homes and for any proposals for replacement housing under the Council Housing growth programme;

- (h) That it be noted that the officers responsible for the submitted report and the implementation of such matters are the Head of Housing Management (Communities Housing & Environment) and the Head of Council Housing Growth (City Development).

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE

33 British Library at Temple Works

The Director of City Development submitted a report setting out proposals for how the Council could help to facilitate a British Library location to be brought forward at the Grade I listed, and at risk, Temple Works.

Following consideration of Appendix 3 to the submitted report designated as being exempt from publication under the provisions of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3), which was considered in private at the conclusion of the public part of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the status of proposals for a British Library at Temple Works and the funding strategy, as set out in exempt appendix 3 to the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That approval be given to inject £5.0m into Capital Scheme Number 33490/000/000, funded from the £5m of devolution deal monies, in order to fund a grant for temporary stabilisation and more detailed design and surveys; and that the necessary authority be delegated to the Director of City Development and the Chief Officer, Financial Services in order to enable the Director and Chief Officer to provide ‘authority to spend’, subject to subsidy control compliance and entering into the legal agreements, as set out in exempt appendix 3 to the submitted report;
- (c) That the principles of the longer term tripartite legal agreement with the British Library and CEG, be endorsed, should British Library’s commitment to Temple Works become unconditional, as set out in exempt appendix 3 to the submitted report;
- (d) That the principles of the Council entering into legal agreements with CEG for: a) the disposal of LCC land surrounding Temple Works; b) grant agreement(s); and c) CPO Indemnity Agreement, as set out in exempt appendix 3 to the submitted report, be endorsed;
- (e) That a further report on Temple Works and the British Library with recommendations on the final detailed heads of terms for the legal agreements, as set out in exempt appendix 3 to the submitted report, be presented to the Board following further financial and legal due diligence.

34 **Leeds PIPES District Heating Network: Status Update and Securing Future Growth**

Further to Minute No. 24, 20 July 2020, the Director of Resources submitted a report providing an update on the progress that has been made on the development of the Leeds Pipes District Heating Network, and which sought the Board's consideration of the recommendations in the report regarding the next steps to be taken in relation to the Phase 3E extension of the network to the Southbank area of the city.

Responding to a Member's enquiry on the options available regarding the use of the profit beginning to be generated by the scheme, it was noted that such circumstances would enable the faster repayment of capital, however, other options would be considered, as appropriate, having first met any related obligations.

Also, with regard to the management of any risks associated with the scheme, it was noted that a risk register had been established specifically for this project, with it being noted that a measured approach was being taken towards the scheme as a whole, in order to mitigate risk.

Members also discussed the positive role being played by the Council through this scheme in terms of its contribution towards addressing the Climate Emergency, the development of associated infrastructure and the financial benefits in terms of providing lower cost heating and reducing fuel poverty.

Responding to a specific enquiry regarding the regulatory and competition aspects of the scheme, it was noted that guidance on such matters had been sought at the outset of the project, however, it was undertaken that further detail on this would be provided to the Member in question.

Following consideration of Appendix 1 to the submitted report designated as being exempt from publication under the provisions of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3), which was considered in private at the conclusion of the public part of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, including the detail set out within exempt Appendix 1, be noted;
- (b) That the recommendation within the submitted report to no longer proceed with the extension to the Tetley Brewery site and to hand back £2.438m grant to Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP), be approved;
- (c) That the 'authority to spend' for the construction of works on the Citu site at Low Fold to a value of £450k, which will ensure the opportunity to supply heat into the South Bank in future remains possible, be approved;

- (d) That the authority to submit a funding application to the Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) for a potential phase 3W extension to the Wellington Street area of the city, be approved, with further details being brought to a future Executive Board meeting to seek authority to sign a grant agreement and to provide the funding required from the Council to the District Heating PipeCo. in the form of a loan in order to satisfy funders' requirements;
- (e) That in line with existing delegations, it be noted that any strategic investment opportunities up to an individual scheme value of £500k will be authorised by the Director of Resources, where a viable business case exists;
- (f) That approval be given to the principle of providing capital free connection agreements to customers if there is a viable business case.

35 Leeds Air Quality Strategy 2021 - 2030

Further to Minute No. 66, 21 October 2020, the Director of Resources submitted a report presenting for the Board's consideration the Leeds Air Quality Strategy Action Plan 2021 – 2030, which provided a framework for the continued compliance and improvement of the city's air quality.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board received an update on the current position and the actions being taken to improve air quality levels in the area of Main Street, Pool in Wharfedale. It was undertaken that the Member in question would be provided with further information on this matter, including the latest data on air quality.

Members discussed the specific impact of domestic wood burners on air quality and with regard to the effect upon people's health, highlighting that increased awareness of such matters was needed. In response, regarding the circulation of further communications and information on how air quality in Leeds could be further improved, and also on mitigating the impact of specific issues, such as domestic wood burners, it was noted that the aim was to compile such information over the course of the next 3-4 months. It was also undertaken that any developments on the specific issue of wood burners at a national level would be provided to those Members in question, as appropriate.

The Board also received further information on the actions being taken to improve the infrastructure across Leeds for electric vehicle charging.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the 2021-2030 Air Quality Strategy Action Plan, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved;
- (b) That agreement be given to the submission of an annual progress report which confirms projects delivered and refreshes the air quality targets accordingly;

- (c) That the extension of the Electric Vehicle trials service from October 2021 to March 2022, be approved;
- (d) That the development of a business case to bring electric vehicles on to the refuse fleet as part of the standard fleet replacement programme with the aim of bringing the first electric Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) onto fleet in 2022, be supported;
- (e) That a collaborative approach for action to address the direct impact of air pollution on health, be supported;
- (f) That it be noted that the Chief Officer, Sustainable Energy & Air Quality will be responsible for any actions arising and the subsequent implementation of such actions.

(Further to the declaration of interest as detailed at Minute No. 30, Councillor Arif took no part in the consideration of this matter and left the meeting room for the duration of this item)

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

36 Update on Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic - Response & Recovery Plan

The Chief Executive submitted a report presenting details of the actions being taken as part of the multi-agency partnership approach since the last Executive Board meeting on 23rd June 2021. The report included the findings of a review of the city's multi-agency response to the pandemic, involving stakeholders from across the partnership. The report also provided the latest Response and Recovery Plan, which continued to be the main reporting tool for ongoing work across the seven themes, setting out the broad range of activities including: a summary plan for the rest of 2021, details of the vital partnership arrangements, and information on the continued proactive work to try and control the number of cases across the city and increase testing, tracing, isolating and crucially vaccination uptake.

In presenting the report, the Leader provided an update on how the Council was adapting services following progression to Step 4 of the Government's roadmap on 19th July, with the importance of a continued cautious approach being highlighted. In addition, the Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles provided an update on the progress being made in relation to vaccination rates across the city. A summary of the 'lessons learned' review which had been undertaken regarding the multi-agency approach towards responding to and recovering from the pandemic was also provided.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board received an update regarding the actions being taken and the processes which continued to be worked through as a result of progression to Step 4 of the Government's roadmap in areas such as the delivery of Council services, the public use of Council buildings and the operation and accessibility of Council committee meetings.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the findings and recommendations in the Learning Lessons Review, as set out in Annex A to the submitted report, be noted and agreed;
- (b) That the latest version of the Response and Recovery Plan as at Annex B, including the plan for the remainder of the year, and the updated Local Outbreak Management Plan at Annex C, be noted;
- (c) That the information within Annex D, the latest Covid-19 Dashboard, and Annex E, a summary of national developments since the last meeting of Executive Board, be noted.

37 Annual Corporate Performance Report 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report which reviewed the Council's performance during 2020/21 in delivering against the ambitions, outcomes and priorities, as set out within the Best Council Plan, including details of progress against Key Performance Indicators.

RESOLVED – That the Annual Performance Report for 2020/21, as appended to the submitted report, be received; and that the progress which has been made during 2020/21 in delivering the ambitions and priorities set out within the Best Council Plan, be noted.

38 Annual Corporate Risk Management Report

The Director of Resources submitted a report providing an update on the most significant risks currently on the Council's corporate risk register and which presented a summary of assurances describing the key controls in place to manage those risks and any further actions planned.

Responding to a specific enquiry, the Board received further detail regarding the prevalence of cyber-attacks upon the Council and the actions which continued to be taken to mitigate the risks that such attacks posed.

Again, responding to a specific request, officers undertook to contact Councillor A Carter in order to schedule briefings with him on the Council's risk management processes.

RESOLVED – That the Annual Corporate Risk Management report, as appended to the submitted report, be noted, together with the assurances provided on the most significant corporate risks, in line with the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy and the Board's overarching responsibility for their management.

39 Risk Management Policy and Strategy Update

The Director of Resources submitted a report that presented the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy, which had been reviewed and updated in order to reflect relevant changes in the sector together with the latest best practice and guidance.

In presenting the report, the Leader emphasised the importance of maximising Elected Member involvement and awareness in the Council's risk management policy and processes.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the updated Risk Management Policy and Strategy, as appended to the submitted report, be endorsed;
- b) That the offer of risk management training be noted, with it being acknowledged that the report author should be contacted if any such training was required.

RESOURCES

40 Financial Health Monitoring 2021/22 - Month 2

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report which presented an update on the financial health of the Authority in respect of both the General Fund revenue budget and also the Housing Revenue Account, as at month 2 of the current financial year. In addition, the report made a specific recommendation regarding the delivery of free school meals during the 2021 school summer holidays.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member for Resources specifically highlighted the in-year collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates which were lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Members considered the proposal within the report regarding a release from the COVID Reserve in order to support the delivery of free school meals during the 2021 school summer holidays, with specific discussion around the timing of the proposal and the Government's role in such matters. Responding to a Member's specific enquiry, officers undertook to provide the Member in question with further details on what the balance of the Covid Reserve would be following that release.

The Board discussed the potential release of funding from the Covid Reserve to help address one-off backlogs in some Council services which had built up as a result of the pandemic. In response to a Member's enquiry about Elected Member consultation on such matters, it was noted that the intention was for the Board to receive further reports regarding the utilisation of this fund.

Finally, a Member commented upon the current format of the financial dashboards, as appended to the submitted report, highlighting that they would welcome the inclusion of further detail as part of future editions.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the projected financial position of the Authority, as at Month 2 of the financial year, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted, together with the projected impact of COVID-19 on that position;

- (b) That it be noted, that for 2021/22 the Authority is forecasting an overspend of £0.2m;
- (c) That it be noted that the position detailed within the submitted report does not reflect the potential effects of any further local or national lockdown arrangements on these financial projections, or any potential additional costs arising from the current 2021/22 pay negotiations;
- (d) That the release of £0.52m from the COVID Reserve in order to support the delivery of free school meals during the 2021 school summer holidays, be agreed, and that it be noted that the officer responsible for the implementation of this resolution is the Chief Officer, Financial Services.

41 Capital Programme 2021/22 - 2025/26: Quarter 1 Update

The Chief Officer, Financial Services, submitted a report setting out the Council's updated Capital Programme for 2021-2026, split between the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, with a forecast of resources available over that period. The report also provided a specific update of the 2021/22 programme and which sought necessary approvals around proposed injections into the programme.

Responding to a Member's enquiry regarding the level of Government grant funding received in response to the pandemic, it was noted that the city region as a whole had received approximately £618m. However it was emphasised that whilst some of that money was to support Council services which had been adversely affected by the pandemic, with regard to much of the funding, the Council had solely played an intermediary role by passporting funding to help support individuals and businesses, as appropriate. In order to provide further clarity on the range of grant funding which made up that sum, it was undertaken that officers would provide Board Members with a break down following the meeting.

In conclusion, the Executive Member for Resources highlighted that whilst the grant funding from the Government was welcomed, she emphasised the importance for the Council to receive longer term funding provision, in order to provide the Authority with greater financial certainty.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the following injections into the Capital Programme, as detailed at Appendix A (iii) to the submitted report, be approved:
 - (i) £15,654.0k of Department for Transport Grant for Additional Delivery within the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme (LPTIP) / Connecting Leeds Programme;
 - (ii) £12,000.0k of WY+TF (West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund) Grant for the Regent Street Flyover scheme;
 - (iii) £20,635.8k of other announced grant allocations including realignment of future year's estimates. These include Pot Hole and Local Transport Plan Grants for Highways & Transportation; Basic Need, School Condition Allocation (SCA), Devolved Formula Capital

- (DFC) and High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) Grants for Schools; and Disabled Facilities Grant for Adaptations; and
- (iv) £2,861.0k of various external grants and a prudential borrowing injection.
- (b) That it be noted that the above resolutions to inject funding of £51,150.8k will be implemented by the Chief Officer Financial Services;
- (c) That the latest position on the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as at quarter 1 2021/22, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (d) That the additional Capital Receipts Incentive Scheme (CRIS) allocations to Wards and Community Committees for the period October 2020 to March 2021 of £513.9k, be noted.

ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

42 Annual Fostering Report

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report which presented an overview of the work undertaken by the Fostering Service during the period April 2020 to March 2021, as presented within the appended Annual Fostering Report. In addition, the report noted that the submission of an Annual Report was a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member for Adults and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships highlighted several key points which included an update on the number of children currently in foster care, the range of positive publicity that Leeds had received in relation to its foster care provision, the offer provided in Leeds for Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carer roles, the actions being taken to increase foster carers from the BAME community and the role of Elected Members in the promotion of foster caring in their Wards.

Also, Members received an update regarding the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children which Leeds had taken into care over the relevant period.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the 2020 – 2021 Annual Fostering Report, as appended to the submitted report, be adopted, together with the service priorities for the forthcoming year; with it being noted that the actions arising from this resolution will be implemented during 2021-22;
- (b) That the plan of the Fostering Service to continue to increase the range of carers and placements available, be noted and supported; with it also being noted that the actions arising from this resolution will be implemented during 2021-22;

- (c) That it be noted that the responsible officer for such matters is the Deputy Head of Service, Corporate Parenting.

COMMUNITIES

43 Equality Improvement Priorities Progress Report 2020 – 2021 and Equality Improvement Priorities 2021 - 2025

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report which presented for the purposes of approval the Equality Improvement Priorities Annual Report for 2020– 2021; the Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities for 2021 – 2025 and the refreshed Equality and Diversity Policy 2021.

In considering the submitted report, the work of the Members' Equality Group was highlighted and thanks was extended to those officers who had been involved in supporting that group. In addition, the Board highlighted how the collaborative approach which had been taken in relation to equality improvement had enabled this agenda to be progressed significantly across the Council.

Also, responding to a specific enquiry, the Board received details on the city wide, people based approach being taken to support those experiencing poverty and deprivation who were located within more affluent Wards.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Equality Improvement Priorities Annual Report 2020– 2021, as appended to the submitted report, be approved;
- (b) That the new Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities for 2021 – 2025, as appended to the submitted report, be approved;
- (c) That the refreshed Equality and Diversity Policy 2021, as appended to the submitted report, be approved;
- (d) That it be noted that the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment is responsible for the implementation of the resolutions made by Executive Board in respect of this report.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 23RD JULY 2021

LAST DATE FOR CALL IN OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS: 5.00 P.M., FRIDAY, 30TH JULY 2021