



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

scrutiny



Children and Families

Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?

Draft Inquiry Report



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Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – That future annual Youth Voice Summit events are utilised effectively to facilitate engagement opportunities between children and young people and the Council's Scrutiny function.

Recommendation 1 – That the Director of Children and Families leads on working collaboratively with the Head of Democratic Services to explore how future annual Youth Voice Summit events could be utilised to facilitate engagement opportunities between children and young people and the Council's Scrutiny function.

Desired Outcome – That there is greater awareness amongst young people of engagement opportunities, activities and available online resources.

Recommendation 2 – That the Director of Children and Families explores opportunities for strengthening and developing communication links with young people in order to generate greater awareness of engagement opportunities, activities and available online resources.

Desired Outcome – That the existing equality impact assessment process is being applied consistency across the Council in terms of providing a clear demonstration of how Council decisions impact on children and young people.

Recommendation 3 – That the Chief Executive leads on reinforcing the expectation that, as part of the Council's decision making process, there is a clear demonstration of the impacts on children and young people as part of the existing equality impact assessment process.

Desired Outcome – That the voice of children and young people is strengthened linked to the Council's formation and examination/inspection of local strategy planning documents

Recommendation 4 – That the Director of City Development and Director of Children and Families build upon existing cross-directorate working arrangements to explore how the voice of young people can be strengthened in terms of the future formation and examination/inspection of local strategy planning documents.

Desired Outcome – That there is more targeted engagement opportunities for local youth groups and schools to share their views on major planning proposals within their areas.

Recommendation 5 – That the Director of City Development and Director of Children and Families explore opportunities for more targeted engagement with youth groups and schools linked to major planning proposals within their specific areas.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – That broader measures of success and performance indicators linked to *all* children feeling safe from harm are developed and incorporated into future performance reports.

Recommendation 6 – That the Director of Children and Families works with the Director of Communities and Environment to explore appropriate success measures and performance indicators to be incorporated into future performance reports linked to the CYPP outcome around *all* children and young people feeling safe from harm.

Desired Outcome – That existing processes are being maximised in terms of sharing key information to parents about existing parental advice and support.

Recommendation 7 – That the Director of Children and Families explores opportunities to maximise the use of existing processes, such as the admissions process, as a way of disseminating key information to parents about existing parental advice and support services.

Desired Outcome – That there is a clear understanding of the Leeds offer in terms of parental engagement within schools and broader parental skills provision.

Recommendation 8 – That the Director of Children and Families:

- a) seeks to gather information surrounding the parental engagement work undertaken by schools across the city;
- b) undertakes a mapping exercise of existing Parenting Skills provision across the city;
- c) utilises local intelligence and research to inform the development of a parental engagement strategy for the city.

Desired Outcome – That the Council is actively encouraging and promoting good practice in relation to the role and function of school councils across the city.

Recommendation 9 – That the Director of Children and Families disseminates advice and good practice across all local schools in relation to the role and function of school councils.

Desired Outcome – That Scrutiny is informed of the findings arising from the evaluation of the MindMate Champion programme and MindMate lessons.

Recommendation 10 – That the Director of Children and Families ensures that the outcome of the evaluation of the MindMate Champion programme and MindMate Lessons by Healthwatch and MindMate Ambassadors is brought to Scrutiny for consideration.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – That Scrutiny is being actively informed and engaged in ongoing work linked to improving public transport for young people.

Recommendation 11 – That the Director of Children and Families ensures that a detailed update on the work undertaken by the directorate, in conjunction with other key partners, in relation to improving public transport for young people is brought to the relevant Scrutiny Board on an annual basis.

Desired Outcome – That the membership and action plan of the Play Partnership is shared with Scrutiny linked to the delivery of the Leeds Commitment to Children's Play.

Recommendation 12 – That the Director of Children and Families reports back to Scrutiny with membership details of the new Play Partnership as well as details of the Partnership's action plan to deliver the Leeds Commitment to Children's Play.



Introduction and Scope

Introduction.

1. The Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme was launched worldwide by UNICEF back in 1996 and is now active in 24 countries. The programme aims to create neighbourhoods, communities and cities where children and young people are treated with dignity, have a say in decisions that affect them, experience services that are built with and for them, know what services are available and feel safe and prioritised.
2. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹ is the basis of all of UNICEF's work. It is the most complete statement of children's rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history.
3. Since 2012, Leeds has had a vision to be a child friendly city in line with the principles of the rights of the child set out by UNICEF. In undertaking this journey there has been a relentless focus on one simple, but central, question: 'what is it like to be a child growing up in Leeds and how do we make it better?'
4. When Leeds first set out its vision, the Council listened to the ideas of thousands of young people of all different ages in terms of what would make Leeds a better city for them to play, live and grow up in. From this consultation, the '12 Wishes' were formed, which underpin the entire Child Friendly Leeds approach. These are set out in Appendix 1.
5. Led and supported by the Children and Families Trust Board², the city's child

¹ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

² Established in April 2010, the Children and Families Trust Board brings together senior representatives from key partner organisations across the city that have a leading role and

friendly vision continues to be articulated through the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). In terms of monitoring progress, formal reporting against the performance measures set out within the CYPP is undertaken every six months to the Children and Families Trust Board and also to the relevant Scrutiny Board.

6. However, this year we decided to take stock of the overall progress made since the launch of the Child Friendly Leeds initiative and ask the question 'Is Leeds a child friendly city?'

Scope of the inquiry.

7. Since it was first established, the Children and Young People's Plan has had three iterations: 2011-2015, 2015-2019 and now the latest version covering the period 2018-2023 (see Appendix 2). Although there have been various changes made to the performance measures set out within the Plan over the last seven years, the five stated outcomes have always remained the same and are set out below.

That all children and young people:

- Are safe from harm
- Do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life
- Enjoy healthy lifestyles
- Have fun growing up
- Are active citizens who have a voice and influence

8. We therefore decided to theme our inquiry around these five outcomes, with particular consideration given to how much the Council and partners have

responsibilities in improving the lives of Leeds children and young people.



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progressed over the last seven years towards delivering each outcome in relation to the following cohorts:

- All children
- Vulnerable Children
- Looked After Children

Best Council Plan.

9. As well as being defined as one of the 'Best City' priorities, the child-friendly city aspiration remains visible throughout our Best Council Plan³ in recognition of the fact that realising this aspiration will require progress across all the Best Council Plan priorities, with renewed action to integrate policy initiatives. In particular, we recognise that alongside the Children and Young People's Plan, the city's Inclusive Growth and Health and Wellbeing Strategies are also key drivers for improving outcomes for children and young people.

Desired Outcomes, Added Value and Anticipated Service Impact.

10. The aim of our inquiry was not to drill down into any particular service areas, but to gain a broad understanding of the strategic milestones that have been reached over the last seven years in terms of delivering the five outcomes within the Children and Young People's Plan.
11. We therefore heard from senior officers and Elected Members with responsibility for driving forward the Child Friendly

³ [Best Council Plan 2019/20 - 2020/21](#)

Leeds initiative and received reports that gave an overview of progress and relevant plans and initiatives in place, or in development, with regard to each outcome. We also considered existing pressures and barriers linked to the city's ongoing improvement journey.

12. However, in terms of asking the question 'Is Leeds a child friendly city?' it was essential that we heard directly from young people in the city about how *they* feel they are being supported to achieve in each of the five outcome areas.
13. We therefore welcomed the opportunity to work closely with the Children and Families Directorate in arranging a series of fact-finding visits to youth groups around the city and to hold a central event where young people could come together to give their views to the Scrutiny Board. This was the Youth Voice Summit for local youth and community groups which took place on 13th March 2019 and was themed 'Let's Talk about Leeds' so that the views of young people could be gathered to inform our inquiry. Invites were sent to 47 local youth and community groups and the event was attended by 134 children and young people aged 8 to 25 from 17 different youth and community groups.
14. In gathering such a diverse range of views, there were differing opinions around whether Leeds has indeed achieved its vision of becoming a child friendly city based on personal experiences and interpretations of what 'child friendly' really means. Despite this, our inquiry has helped us to identify common themes, key recommendations and potential areas for more detailed scrutiny work moving forward.



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15. The ongoing passion and commitment in making Leeds a city that children and young people can be proud to grow up in has been clearly demonstrated throughout our inquiry and we are extremely thankful to everyone who contributed. In particular, we would like to acknowledge all the young people who gave their time to meet with members of the Scrutiny Board in order to inform the findings of our inquiry.

Equality and Diversity.

16. The Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 to 2020 have been developed to ensure that the Council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to identify work and activities that help to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity to achieve its ambition to be the best city in the UK.
17. Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this scrutiny inquiry and the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery of the recommendations arising from this inquiry should also give due regard to equality and diversity and where appropriate, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.



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Acknowledging the city's improvement journey.

18. As we assess the level of progress made since the launch of the Child Friendly Leeds initiative, we need to consider the wider context for children's services in the city and the country as a whole. The National Audit Office had reported last year that grants from central government to councils have been reduced by 49.1 per cent in real terms over the period 2010-11 to 2017-18⁴. At the same time, the Children's Society⁵ reports that four million children (almost a third of children in the UK) are living in poverty, with the total number estimated to rise to five million by 2021. A child is said to be living in poverty when they are living in a family with an income below 60% of the UK's average after adjusting for family size.
19. In asking the question 'Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?' we will invariably get different opinions, particularly from young people who will base their answer on their own personal experiences and interpretations of what 'child friendly' really means. Interestingly we did also find that many of the young people who were below the age of 18 years were struggling to associate themselves as being a child, despite being legally classified as one. At the other end of the age spectrum, we also had young people explaining how the transition into

⁴ National Audit Office. 'Financial Sustainability of Local Authorities 2018. (March 2018).

⁵ <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/ending-child-poverty/what-is-child-poverty>

adulthood was placing greater expectations on them to be more independent and use their own initiative.

20. Despite such a complex and challenging landscape, Leeds has been on a remarkable improvement journey since the launch of the Child Friendly Leeds initiative in 2012. With over 850 ambassadors over 100 businesses having joined the campaign to make Leeds a child friendly city, there continues to be a growing momentum year on year. Since 2014, the Child Friendly Leeds Awards have also been held in the city, developed and delivered by young people recognising people, organisations and places in Leeds that are contributing to making Leeds the best city for children and young people.
21. Throughout our inquiry it has been evident that by working restoratively with children and young people wherever possible - i.e. working *with* them instead of doing things to them or for them – this helps to produce better outcomes and build confidence and resilience.
22. In relation to the five identified outcomes set out within the Children and Young People's Plan, our report continues to reflect our findings linked to the delivery of each of these outcomes.

CYPP Outcome: To be active citizens who have a voice and influence.

23. Article 12 of the UN convention on the rights of the child states that 'every child and young person has the right to express their views freely – about



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- everything that affects them' and we feel just as strongly about children, young people and their parents and/or carers having a right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives.
24. One of the original '12 Wishes' expressed by local young people also refers to a child friendly Leeds being a place where *'children and young people express their views, feel heard and are actively involved in decisions that affect their lives'*. The Children and Young People's Plan therefore continues to place great importance around ensuring that young people's voices are being heard and that they are at the heart of decisions that affect them.
25. Linked to this, we particularly acknowledge the valuable role and contribution that is made by the Council's Voice, Influence and Change (VIC) team. This central team was established in 2012 to provide a co-ordinating function championing and enabling children and young people and their families to have a voice and influence over services and policies and to shape priorities, provide training for staff, and run citywide youth voice programmes. Before this, participation work was contracted to the West Yorkshire Youth Association.
26. Whilst we considered the progress made generally against this particular outcome, we also recognised that the voice and influence of young people is fundamental to the successful delivery of all five outcomes. As such, this remained a constant thread throughout our inquiry.
27. In terms of measuring the voice and influence of young people, we do acknowledge the difficulty of this. Volume statistics (voting numbers, attendance at activities, survey completion) are therefore generally the easiest way to collect information and to also illustrate participation trends. Linked to this, we did note and welcome increasing trends in young people participating in key activities that enable them to have a voice, with some of the key highlights reported below.
- 'Make Your Mark' is the biggest ballot of the views and priorities of young people aged 11-18 years in the UK. It is organised by the British Youth Council and UK Youth Parliament. In 2011, around 500 Leeds young people voted in the UK Youth Parliament Make Your Mark Ballot. However, in 2018, more than 26,000 Leeds young people had voted.
 - Leeds Children's Mayor - The successful candidate is supported to achieve their manifesto aims and 51 schools entered last year, with more than 6,000 votes being cast.
 - The Leeds Youth Council now has 470 'virtual' members, with 40 on a working group that is consulted on major citywide priorities.
 - Pupils completing the My Health My School (MHMS) survey has continued to increase: 5,843 (2013/14), 10,914 (2016/17), 17,176 (2017/18).
28. We particularly welcome the significant increase in participation of the My Health My School survey. This is a pupil perception survey that is carried out every year by the Health and Wellbeing Service. It asks children and young people in years 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 & 11, (as well as separate surveys for Post 16 and SEND provisions) a number of questions



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in order to generate vital information on the health and wellbeing of these individuals. The survey contains around 100 questions asking children and young people about all aspects of their life, school and experience of growing up in Leeds and covers the following six themes:

- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity and Sport
- PE in School
- Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- My School/College

29. The latest MHMS survey had generated 17,176 responses from 170 out of 266 schools (40% of all eligible pupils). This is a great achievement, but we also welcome the continuing efforts to encourage all schools to engage in the survey as such data provides a wealth of information surrounding the welfare and needs of young people that can be used to inform service delivery. A summary of the key findings from the latest MHMS survey is presented in Appendix 3 and, where appropriate, we have continued to reference particular findings from this key source of evidence within our report. Further details surrounding the survey, including how to take part, can be accessed via the MHMS dedicated website⁶.

30. Although volume statistics are an extremely helpful source of intelligence, they do not necessarily help to show impact or change. We noted that much of the 'impact' activity is captured through regular voice and influence 'report cards' which form part of the

formal performance monitoring approach. Various examples of youth activities facilitated by the Voice, Influence and Change Team, with details of associated service impacts, were therefore shared during our inquiry.

31. As well as being able to reflect the views of young people through case study evidence and survey data, we were also very keen to hear directly from young people in the city about how *they* feel they are being supported to achieve in each of the five outcome areas.

32. In Leeds we are proud to have a Youth Voice Model that encapsulates the connectively of a wide range of youth groups/forums across the city (see Appendix 4). Linked to this, we very much welcomed the opportunity to work closely with the Children and Families Directorate in using their annual Youth Voice Summit event for youth and community groups as a platform to directly engage with the young people attending. This event was themed 'Let's Talk about Leeds' and was held in Leeds Civic Hall on Wednesday 13th March 2019.

33. This event was attended by 134 children and young people aged 8 to 25 from 17 different youth and community groups and all of their views and ideas were captured in a report⁷ by the Voice, Influence and Change Team and used as part of our evidence base.

34. In addition to this central event, local youth groups were also given the opportunity to express an interest in accommodating a visit from Scrutiny Board Members. In response, visits

⁶ www.myhealthmyschoolsurvey.org.uk

⁷ [VIC Youth Summit Event report 2019](#)



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were undertaken with the following youth groups:

- Dance Action Zone Leeds (DAZL)
- Youth Matters Group, Swarcliffe
- The Market Place
- Leeds Community Youth Ambassadors
- Student Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Leeds Youth Council

35. The contribution of the children and young people at the Summit event and during our fact-finding youth group visits has been extremely valuable. Their feedback was also very positive in terms of having an opportunity to meet and share their views and ideas with Scrutiny Board Members. We therefore fully support such collaborative working between the Scrutiny function and the Children and Families Directorate in the future so that young people do feel empowered to help shape and inform the work of Scrutiny as a key part of the Council's democratic process. In particular, we recognise the value of exploring how future annual Youth Voice Summit events could be utilised to facilitate such engagement opportunities.

Recommendation 1
That the Director of Children and Families leads on working collaboratively with the Head of Democratic Services to explore how future annual Youth Voice Summit events could be utilised to facilitate engagement opportunities between children and young people and the Council's Scrutiny function.

36. More generally, we did find that the young people's experiences of engaging with local Councillors was mixed and that many would welcome even greater engagement opportunities allowing them to share their views and ideas with their local Councillors.
37. Linked to this, we acknowledge the role of Community Committees. These provide a forum for local people to have their say on issues that matter to them and in recognition of the fact that young people are a growing part of our population and represent our city's future, all Community Committees have an ongoing commitment to engage and involve children and young people in decisions within their communities. In particular, we acknowledge that young people have been paramount in choosing which activities should be supported by the Community Committees' Youth Activity Fund.
38. Each year a report is published to summarise the work of all Community Committees and this includes a particular section around the engagement of young people. The Community Committees Annual Report for 2017-18⁸ summarises events and opportunities organised across the city for young people to meet their local Councillors, have their say and choose what activities they would like. As each community is different these events are adapted to engage with a wide range of young people, as well as being inspirational and fun. Overall, we note that there were 714 children and young people participating across Community Youth Summits and engagement sessions in 2017 to 2018, with their views and opinions then being

⁸ [Leeds Community Committees Annual Report 2017-18](#)



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shared with local Councillors to help influence local decisions.

39. However, a common theme throughout our inquiry related to young people not always knowing what engagement opportunities are available, as well as details of relevant activities and online resources. Linked to this, the Voice, Influence and Change Team also acknowledged the need to explore more innovative engagement and communication approaches linked to social media advertising and voting technologies. This is very much linked to another one of the '12 Wishes' which refers to a child friendly Leeds being a place where *'children and young people can easily find out what they want to know, when they want it and how they want it'*. As such, we also support the need to explore further opportunities for strengthening and developing communication links with young people across the city.

Recommendation 2
That the Director of Children and Families explores opportunities for strengthening and developing communication links with young people in order to generate greater awareness of engagement opportunities, activities and available online resources.

40. During our inquiry we found that whilst many young people welcomed opportunities to share their views and ideas, they were not always receiving feedback on how their contribution had made an impact.

41. As part of our inquiry, we questioned the extent to which young people are having a voice and influence across all Council services as we strongly believe that the Council needs to be able to demonstrate more clearly how its decisions have been informed by, and will have an impact on, local young people.
42. Linked to this, we are mindful that a recommendation was made by the Children and Families Scrutiny Board back in 2012 which had stemmed from its review of the Young Carers Service. The Board had recommended that the Chief Executive introduces an assessment process where the impact of decision making on children is a consideration in all formal decision making processes.
43. In response to this, an alternative suggestion was made in terms of strengthening the Council's existing Equality Impact Assessment process rather than introduce a separate process as this already aims to ensure that any detrimental and negative impacts on different groups, including young people, be identified and appropriate action considered to address them in the decision making process. A review of the Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration guidance, assessment and screening documents was therefore undertaken in order to ensure that the requirement to consider impact on children and young people is apparent and unambiguous.
44. Such guidance and documents are still in use today as part of the Council's decision making framework. As such, all reports which inform the Council's decision making process are required to indicate that due regard to equality and



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diversity has been given. This requirement is also prompted as part of the corporate reporting template. However, despite this, there is still a lack of detail being provided within reports around equality and diversity in terms of clearly demonstrating any associated impacts on children and young people. Moving forward, we would therefore like to see such expectations being reinforced.

Recommendation 3
That the Chief Executive leads on reinforcing the expectation that, as part of the Council's decision making process, there is a clear demonstration of the impacts on children and young people as part of the existing equality impact assessment process.

45. We are particularly mindful that the environment children live in is key to their health and wellbeing and so we specifically explored how the voice of young people is being captured as part of the Council's planning and city development processes in terms of developing child friendly spaces and communities.
46. In doing so, we were pleased to note that there is now a more collaborative approach, particularly through the Planning and Design for Health and Wellbeing Group, in terms of bringing public health, planning and highways together as part of planning and design processes, with agreed key principles aimed at prioritising active neighbourhoods, better air quality and green space (see Appendix 5).
47. Linked to this approach, we learned that the Leeds Youth Ambassadors (children age 8-17 years from across the city) had worked with the Council's planning department, public health and also developers to ascertain the needs of children and young people when developers are in the design stages of a housing development and beyond. The young people looked at their communities and the positives and negatives about where they live. This was then followed by what improvements would make the community child friendly. The ambassadors then voted for 5 representatives to deliver a presentation to developers presenting their needs for a child friendly community. This was really well received and the young people then joined the developers and planners to discuss child friendly communities.
48. In November 2018, the Council also launched a public consultation on its first ever draft strategy detailing the ambitions for public realm – Leeds Our Spaces Strategy. This draft strategy focuses on the city centre identifying a number of key projects such as City Square and The Headrow and outlining the big changes and also challenges that the city faces over the next eight to ten years in regards to public realm.
49. The City Development directorate had worked in collaboration with the Children and Families Directorate through its Voice, Influence and Change Team to find effective ways of actively engaging young people in the public consultation. Linked to this, a special Playful Anywhere consultation was undertaken which involved facilitated 'Playdome' chats at four locations across Leeds – Kirkgate Market, St Johns Centre, Park



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- Square, The Tetley. This attracted approximately 200 respondents.
50. Such engagement work also included a facilitated discussion between representatives from the City Development directorate and members of the Leeds Youth Council at its meeting on Saturday 9th March 2019. A bespoke questionnaire was also developed for young people surrounding public realm spaces, which was sent out to all members of the Leeds Youth Council in early February.
51. In relation to the Youth Voice Summit Event in March 2019, we were particularly pleased to find that representatives from City Development had also taken the opportunity to attend this event to engage with a large and diverse range of young people. This attracted approximately 120 respondents.
52. At the time of our inquiry, work was still ongoing in terms of analysing both the quantitative and qualitative responses arising from the consultation. However, we did receive an overview of the Youth Council questionnaire responses and also a summary of the 5 most popular 'asks' that were made by the young people at the Youth Summit, which were as follows:
- Less traffic
 - Accessible for all
 - Outdoor play spaces
 - Better transport links
 - More green spaces
53. Moving forward, we recognise that such cross directorate working will greatly aid children and young people's opinions
- being incorporated into the city centre vision going forward.
54. As part of our inquiry we also considered the extent to which young people are engaged in the formation and examination of broader strategy planning documents, such as the Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan for Leeds. In relation to the Core Strategy in particular, we found that the Leeds Youth Council had only been consulted during the initial development stages of the Strategy, which dates back to 2006.
55. Although there are clear legislative and external considerations linked to the way in which formal public planning hearings are undertaken, we feel that more needs to be done to enable young people's voices to be heard. This could be facilitated by holding meetings at more convenient times and also with use of video links where appropriate. Whilst we acknowledge this being a national issue warranting direct action by the Planning Inspectorate, we also recognise the scope of opportunity to bring in and strengthen the voice of young people as part of our own processes surrounding the formation and examination/inspection of strategy planning documents, with the forthcoming review of the Core Strategy, including a refresh the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, presenting a key opportunity to do so.
56. Moving forward, we would like to see further work undertaken in terms of building upon the positive cross-directorate working arrangements that are now in place in order to explore how the voice of young people can also be strengthened in terms of the future formation and examination/inspection of local strategy planning documents.



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Recommendation 4

That the Director of City Development and Director of Children and Families build upon existing cross-directorate working arrangements to explore how the voice of young people can be strengthened in terms of the future formation and examination/inspection of local strategy planning documents.

57. In relation to significant planning and development decisions that are more localised, we noted that young people forums, such as the Youth Council, are not recognised as statutory consultees for planning applications. As such, the decision to carry out specific consultations with children and young people remains at the discretion of individual planning officers. Whilst we acknowledge that children and young people are able to submit their views in the same way as any other member of the public, we believe that local youth groups and schools would be particularly receptive to more targeted engagement opportunities with them linked to major planning proposals in their area. Building on the positive cross directorate working already in place, we would like to see such engagement opportunities being explored further.

Recommendation 5

That the Director of City Development and Director of Children and Families explore opportunities for more targeted engagement with youth groups and schools linked to major planning proposals within their specific areas.

CYPP Outcome: To be safe from harm.

58. Safely and appropriately reducing the number of children looked after is one of the 'Three Obsessions' set out within the Children and Young People's Plan. This is in recognition of the need for outcomes to improve faster for our most vulnerable children and young people who are deemed to be at a higher risk of significant harm.
59. In 2009, Ofsted conducted a full inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's services in Leeds and deemed them to be 'inadequate' after identifying serious concerns about the safety of children in Leeds. In responding to this, a continued focus on improvement and ambition for children and families in Leeds ensured that by the time Leeds Children's Services were inspected again in January 2015, the Authority was judged to be 'good' overall, with 'outstanding' leadership, management and governance.
60. During the course of our inquiry, a more recent inspection of children's social care services was undertaken by Ofsted in October/November 2018. This had a closer focus and a stronger emphasis on the quality of social work practice and outcomes for children. As a result, Ofsted had judged the Authority to be 'Outstanding'⁹ overall, making Leeds the first major city to achieve this standard. This very much reflects the Authority's remarkable improvement journey since 2009.

⁹ [Ofsted Leeds Inspection Report Oct-Nov 2018](#)



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61. In terms of safeguarding our most vulnerable children and young people, we accept that there continues to be much focus around two particular performance indicators and measures of success. These refer to the number of children who need to be looked after and the number of children and young people subject to a child protection plan.
62. However, in terms of *all* children and young people being safe from harm, we were keen to explore what young people's views and priorities were in this regard and found that a top priority was around tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, with many wanting more CCTV and an increased police presence within their communities and also in their school environments.
63. Whilst there were mixed responses surrounding perceived risks and fear of crime within local communities, there was an overwhelming consensus that more could be done to make the city centre feel more safe for young people to visit. Linked to this, we note that one of the original '12 Wishes' expressed by local young people also refers to a child friendly Leeds being a place where *'children and young people find the city centre welcoming and safe, with friendly places to go, have fun and play'*.
64. We noted that many of their perceived risks of crime were linked to behaviours associated with alcohol and drug issues and so we have addressed these within a separate section of our report that refers to the 'healthy lifestyles' outcome. However, another perceived risk was associated with violent crime and particularly knife crime.
65. Knife crime can have devastating consequences - not only for wider communities - but also those individuals directly caught up in it including families of people injured or killed through knife crime or sent to prison because of it. In view of the prevalence of knife crime both nationally and locally, this has become a more high profile issue, particularly surrounding the numbers of perpetrators and victims who are young people.
66. We were therefore not surprised to learn that in 2018, over 1.1 Million young people participated in the UK Youth Parliament's 'Make Your Mark' ballot and the issue which came out top was 'Put an end to knife crime'. Members of the UK Youth Parliament then took a vote in the House of Commons on what they would choose as campaign priorities for 2019 and tackling knife crime came out on top.
67. As part of our inquiry, we considered the specific role and work undertaken by the Leeds Youth Offending Service (YOS) over the last seven years as the strategic aims of this service is focused on preventing offending and reducing re-offending by young people. Linked to this, the Child Friendly Leeds initiative provides a permanent reminder that we are dealing with children and young people and as such, the YOS has operated on a 'child first, offender second' basis and has developed individualised plans and arrangements with key partners to support the needs of the young people and their families.
68. Many of the young people the YOS works with have experienced one or more traumatic experiences, such as



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bereavement, witnessing domestic violence, experiencing abuse or neglect. Over the last few years, there has therefore been increasing awareness of the need to develop the service as a trauma informed organisation in terms of taking into account young people's traumatic experiences and their impact on development in designing effective interventions to reduce re-offending and harm to others. Linked to this, the service recently undertook a review of its values and principles and consequently agreed to remove the label 'offender' and change the name of the service to the Leeds Youth Justice Service¹⁰.

69. Unfortunately the service has experienced a significant reduction in both staffing and budget between 2010/11 and 2018/19. The current budget, of £4.4 million, is 42 per cent lower than the 2010/11 budget of £7.7 million. Staffing has been similarly affected, with 88 full time equivalent (FTE) posts in YOS in 2018/19, compared to 153 FTE posts in 2010/11. Yet despite this, the numbers of young people within the youth justice system has reduced considerably since 2011 as a result of changes in practice and the targeting of preventative provision within the service. In particular, the service has been very successful in reducing first-time entrants to the criminal justice system; introducing with West Yorkshire Police a revised out-of-court disposal framework, the 'Youth Panel', to support joint decision making between the service and the Police to promote positive outcomes.

70. Whilst welcoming such progress, we are mindful that young people's perceptions

¹⁰ [Leeds Youth Justice Service Values](#)

and risks associated with crime and community safety matters will extend beyond the responsibilities of the Council's Children and Families Directorate and Leeds Youth Justice Service and therefore we believe that this particular matter warrants a more detailed look into how other relevant directorates and partners, with a particular focus on community safety, can work together in addressing such risks and fears so that we are delivering on the CYPP outcome in terms of *all* young people feeling safe from harm.

71. Moving forward, we would also like to see additional appropriate success measures and performance indicators being developed and incorporated into future performance reports linked to this CYPP outcome.

Recommendation 6
That the Director of Children and Families works with the Director of Communities and Environment to explore appropriate success measures and performance indicators to be incorporated into future performance reports linked to the CYPP outcome around *all* children and young people feeling safe from harm.

CYPP Outcome: To do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life.

72. Leeds City Council has a statutory duty to ensure the provision of good quality learning places and to secure an



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- appropriate balance locally between education supply, demand, and choice. It is the role of the council to plan, organise and commission learning places in Leeds in a way that raises educational standards, manages fluctuations in pupil numbers and creates a diverse community of good or better schools.
73. Again, as we reflect on the '12 Wishes' expressed by local young people, there is a specific one which refers to a child friendly Leeds being a place where *'all our learning places identify and address the barriers that prevent children and young people from engaging in and enjoying learning'*.
74. As a Scrutiny Board, we have historically tracked progress in this area through the formal six monthly performance monitoring approach and also through the consideration of the Council's Annual Standards Report. This provides a snapshot of performance across a range of measures and we considered the latest Annual Standards Report at our meeting in April 2019.
75. Linked to the above, we are also aware of a developing 3As (Attendance, Achievement and Attainment) Strategy for the city, which aims to ensure that all children, including those affected by child poverty and disadvantages, have the opportunity to reach their potential. Whilst this Strategy was not complete at the time of undertaking our inquiry, it will be brought to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board for consideration once available.
76. Whilst it is difficult to establish a causal link between the impact of child poverty on life quality indicators, research shows that experiencing poverty in childhood is a statistically significant factor for substantially lower outcomes in education, employment, wellbeing and physical and mental health.
77. Yorkshire and Humber is regarded as one of the regions with the greatest challenge. This is particularly reflected in the Leeds data. Leeds gaps are larger than national, with the gap between children who are on free school meals and not on free school meals widening throughout their education journey.
78. As a Scrutiny Board, we therefore undertook an in-depth inquiry to consider the impact of child poverty on achievement, attainment and attendance. Our inquiry had a significant focus on the legislative framework and the duties on local authorities around child poverty, the prevalence of child poverty in Leeds, and the initiatives in Leeds to support partners and schools in mitigating the impact of child poverty. The findings and recommendations arising from this Scrutiny inquiry were reported in May 2018¹¹ and we continue to track progress against the implementation of these recommendations.
79. As well as factors associated with child poverty, we were particularly interested to note that parental educational achievement also has strong links to the education outcomes of children and young people. We therefore explored this in more detail during our inquiry.
80. Although there is a lack of evidence nationally surrounding the long term impact of parental engagement on
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- ¹¹ [Scrutiny Inquiry report on the impact of child poverty on the 3As - May 2018](#)



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educational outcomes, we welcome that the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)¹² is now undertaking research around the potential long term benefits.

81. We very much believe that positive relationships between schools and parents can only enrich a child's experience of school and therefore should be actively encouraged. Linked to this, we received details of two nationally available online resource toolkits associated with parental engagement and schools. The first related to Parentkind¹³ which is designed to help teachers, school staff, governors and others engage and involve parents successfully. The second related to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)¹⁴. Whilst acknowledging that the Council no longer has a dedicated team tasked with disseminating such guidance amongst schools, we felt that other existing communication channels and forums could effectively be used to achieve this outcome. We also recognised the potential benefits of maximising existing processes that involve contacting all parents directly, such as the admissions process, as a way of disseminating key information surrounding parental advice and support services.

¹² The EEF is an independent charity aimed at supporting teachers and senior leaders by providing evidence-based resources designed to improve practice and boost learning.

¹³ <https://www.parentkind.org.uk/for-schools/Resources>

¹⁴ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/working-with-parents-to-support-childrens-learning/>

Recommendation 7
That the Director of Children and Families explores opportunities to maximise the use of existing processes, such as the admissions process, as a way of disseminating key information to parents about existing parental advice and support services.

82. We recognise that all schools need to be considering a variety of ways to communicate with parents and to particularly embrace modern methods communication, such as SMS notifications; online portals and social media channels.
83. However, we do also acknowledge that some parents may still find it difficult to engage in a school environment, especially if their own experiences of school was not positive. To help address this, we recognise the potential benefits of schools having parent forum volunteers and exploring ways in which they could assist in building a positive relationship between the school and the wider parent community. The parental engagement work undertaken by Shakespeare Primary School in relation to its Parent Voice Group was cited as a particular example of good practice.
84. As schools across the city are likely to adopt various approaches, we recognise the benefits of trying to capture this in some way, as well as mapping existing Parenting Skills provision across the city. In collating such information, we believe that the city would benefit from having a dedicated parental engagement strategy too.



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Recommendation 8 That the Director of Children and Families:

- a) seeks to gather information surrounding the parental engagement work undertaken by schools across the city;**
- b) undertakes a mapping exercise of existing Parenting Skills provision across the city;**
- c) utilises local intelligence and research to inform the development of a parental engagement strategy for the city.**

practices so that we can aim to achieve consistent good practice across all school councils in the city so that pupils do feel they have a voice and influence within their school environment.

Recommendation 9 That the Director of Children and Families disseminates advice and good practice across all local schools in relation to the role and function of school councils.

85. As we reflect on the views expressed by young people during our inquiry, a particular issue raised related to the function of school councils where children are elected to formally represent their peers in school affairs and make a positive contribution to the life of the school.
86. We recognise that a school council can provide a meaningful way in which pupils can voice their opinions and have their views taken into account in decisions which impact upon them. It is also an important and useful way for schools to provide leadership and development opportunities for their pupils. We were therefore disappointed to find that some of the young people had felt disengaged with their school council or unable to voice their opinions on issues that matter to them.
87. Although the role and function of a school council remains the responsibility of individual schools, we recognise the key role of the Council in helping to disseminate advice and share good

88. We also noted that many young people had found the transition from primary school to secondary school and then beyond secondary school a daunting experience.
89. Linked to this, we understand that the forming of one 0-19 team has been fundamental to securing more effective transitions, and enables cross-phase discussions and prioritisations. Families of schools' meetings also provide opportunities for transition discussions and planning for pupil transfer. However, it is acknowledged that the diverse education landscape still presents significant challenges in establishing both common agreed transfer information and transition arrangements for pupils moving to secondary.
90. To help make such transitions smoother for young people, we noted that a key recommendation set out within the 2016/17 Annual Standards Report was to develop a city-wide strategy around transition as a learning continuum as part of planned focused work with local Teaching School Alliances, the local universities, the Leeds Learning Partnership and other school partners.



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91. Whilst we understand that work has now begun to develop this strategy, it is clear that there is still more to do to ensure an embedded learning continuum and therefore we will continue to monitor progress surrounding this particular area of work.
92. In terms of transitions beyond secondary school, we noted that many young people reflected on the provision of careers advice and work experience opportunities provided to them. Good quality careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) can raise the aspirations of young people. It can increase motivation by linking activities in school with preparation for life post 16 and post 18 by helping them to focus on their longer term career ambitions and make informed choices about academic and technical qualifications and pathways.
93. One of the original '12 wishes' also refers to a child friendly Leeds being a place where *'there are a greater number of better quality jobs, work experience opportunities and good quality careers advice for all'*. However, the quality of careers advice has frequently been criticised and recent governments have made several reforms, including the establishment of the National Careers Service and the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), aimed at improving the quality and range of careers advice on offer.
94. Whilst the recent publication of the National Careers Strategy and changes in the statutory duties may encourage learning institutions to do better and do more in terms of IAG provision, it is felt that more can be done to empower young people to inform them about their rights to receive impartial, good quality IAG.
95. This was therefore the subject of a Scrutiny Inquiry last year¹⁵ which explored the merits of establishing a Young Person's IAG Charter for Leeds. As well considering the principles of such a Charter, the inquiry also sought to ensure that it connects directly with young people and their parents/carers. Following this inquiry, the decision to establish a Young Person's IAG Charter was formally endorsed and work is continuing, including feedback from young people, to put in place a marketing and communication campaign to promote the charter. This will then be followed by implementation and monitoring of the charter, which also forms part of the tracking process linked to the scrutiny recommendations.
96. In relation to this particular outcome, we recognised that there are a wide range of determinants associated with having a 'healthy lifestyle'. As such, we decided to focus on issues that have remained a key public health priority for the city, which include:
- *Sexual health/teenage pregnancy*
 - *Oral health*
 - *Maintaining a healthy weight*
 - *Physical activity*
 - *Alcohol and drugs*
 - *Social, emotional and mental health*

CYPP Outcome: To enjoy healthy lifestyles.

¹⁵ [Scrutiny Inquiry Report on Information, Advice and Guidance Provision. March 2018](#)



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97. A common theme throughout our inquiry related to young people wanting to know where they can access further information and advice in relation to such health matters and that there needed to be more consistency in terms of what information and advice is provided by schools.
98. Linked to this, we acknowledge the role of Leeds Healthy Schools, which is part of the Health & Wellbeing Service within the Children's Services directorate.
99. This service focusses on supporting schools to raise attainment and achievement by improving the health and wellbeing of pupils. They aim to achieve this through working together with schools, and our partners, to offer an effective, evidence-based online School Health Check tool available to schools and school settings which is accessible through their dedicated website www.healthyschools.org.uk.
100. Its sister site, School Wellbeing (www.schoolwellbeing.co.uk) also provides additional wellbeing support and resources, many of which are free to download, as well as offering a subscription service for unlimited access.
101. In addition to this online toolkit, help is also offered through one to one meetings, whole school staff or cluster meetings, training courses, workshops and networking. There are also resources and training to support both teaching and evaluation processes. Other details surrounding current events and developments can also be accessed via their twitter account (@healthyschools_)
102. At the time of our inquiry, we were pleased to note that 214 schools (78%) across Leeds are engaged in the Healthy Schools programme, with efforts continuing to engage all schools across the city.
103. Reflecting on the views expressed by young people during our inquiry, we found that many references were made to tackling alcohol and drug issues and social, emotional and mental health issues in relation to both the healthy lifestyles and the safe from harm outcomes. Whilst we have therefore paid particular attention to these as part of this section of our report, we have also summarised below some key information shared during our inquiry in relation to the other health factors.
 - *Sexual health/teenage pregnancy*
104. Although the Leeds under 18 conception rate is still higher than the national and regional averages, we are pleased that the rate has continued to be a downward trend since before 2011. Young people are able to use the universal Leeds Sexual Health clinics as well as under 18s only, youth work-staffed clinic times. The www.leedssexualhealth.com website was also refreshed to include information and signposting to all sexual health services available and educational content on relevant topics. Users can book appointments online, live chat with a health advisor and order STI screening kits. Work will also continue to support schools with sexual health aspects of Sex and Relationship Education, in the development of the new statutory curriculum.



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➤ Smoking

105. In relation to the My Health, My School survey results, overall numbers of pupils reporting they have 'never smoked, have tried or used to smoke' has consistently increased over the last 11 years, stabilising at 98% since 2015/16. Moving forward, the Leeds Tobacco Action Plan (2019-2024) will be focusing on supporting smokers who wish to stop, prevent the uptake of smoking amongst young people and normalising smoke free living.

➤ Oral health

106. Dental decay is an important aspect of a child's overall health status as it leads to pain, distress, sleepless nights, time off school and also affects school readiness.
107. Latest figures (2017) show that in Leeds, 31.1% of children examined had experience of decay, compared with 15.9% in York and 39.8% in Bradford (lowest and highest in region). Whilst oral health is improving in Leeds, there are still inequalities with the most vulnerable and socially excluded being disproportionately affected. To help address this, we are pleased to note that resources to promote oral health, including the Leeds Smiles website (www.leedssmiles.co.uk), have been developed.

➤ Physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight

108. Physical activity is not only essential to maintaining a healthy weight but also to the wider mental and physical health of children and young people. It can also improve educational attainment and increase self-esteem and confidence in

children. We noted that the recent 2018 Sport England Active Lives Children's survey data shows that nationally only 17.5% of children and young people (1.2m) are meeting the current Chief Medical Officer guidelines of taking part in sport and physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day. 32.9% (2.3m) do less than an average of 30 minutes a day.

109. Linked to this, Childhood obesity remains a top public health priority in England. The national strategy *Childhood Obesity: a plan for action (2018)* sets out the ambition to half the rate of child obesity by 2030 and narrow the inequalities gap. However, we are very pleased that the 5 year aggregate data for Leeds shows that we are bucking the trend as Leeds childhood obesity rates among Reception aged children have reduced and principally among children living in the more disadvantaged areas.
110. One of the primary factors linked to this success relates to the HENRY (Health, Exercise and Nutrition for the Really Young) programme which has been delivered city wide at scale and over time. Delivered from Children's Centres, HENRY is available as a group and 1 to 1 programme for families with children under 5. Over 1000 staff, mainly from Early Start Teams, have participated in HENRY training and are now more confident and skilled in working with families on the sensitive issue of weight and healthy lifestyles using a collaborative approach.

Alcohol and drugs

111. It recognised that alcohol consumption by under 18's is a national and local problem and one that affects the health



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of young people while also causing issues for wider society. Alcohol contributes to 5% of young people's deaths and the UK has the highest rates of teenage alcohol related injuries in Europe.

112. In relation to drug use, Class A drug use such as heroin, crack cocaine etc. has declined in young people over the last few decades and is minimal. However, the most commonly used illegal drug nationally and in Leeds is cannabis, with Leeds having higher than average number of young people in treatment for cannabis use.
113. Drug and alcohol services for the city were recommissioned in July 2015 from Forward Leeds which takes an all-age approach and creates a more joined up service than previously. 211 young people accessed Forward Leeds Young People's Drug and Alcohol Treatment service in 2017/18. However, the number of young people in specialist substance misuse services has shown a slight downward trend since 2013 which is in line with national trends. Forward Leeds data shows the most common reasons for young people entering treatment in Leeds and nationally are alcohol and cannabis misuse, with more young men entering treatment than young women.
114. The Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust now adopts an Under 16's A&E Pathway, screening all young people attending A&E for alcohol or drug related injury/illness and automatically referring them to Forward Leeds and this has significantly increased referrals from A&E. As with national trends there has been a decrease in rates of under 18s

alcohol specific hospital admissions since 2011.

115. Interestingly the My Health My School Survey shows that a growing number of school age young people in Leeds are choosing not to drink alcohol in line with national trends. 30% of secondary school age young people reported that they have never had an alcoholic drink in 2011/12 and this has increased steadily to 50.9% in 2017/18. Of Year 11s who drink, the proportion who report drinking 2/3 times per week has declined from 8% (2011/12) to 3.2% (2017/18). However, the proportion who report drinking to get drunk has increased slightly from 13.3% (2011/12) to 15.7% (2017/18) indicating that some young people are still at risk of alcohol related harm. The proportion of Year 11's who report ever having taken illegal drugs fluctuates yearly around 20% and shows no clear pattern.
116. In terms of tackling this issue, we do acknowledge the difficulties of gathering reliable data on young people's drug and alcohol use, as well as the increased strength of cannabis and normalisation of cannabis use in society and increased access to drugs by young people on the web.
117. However, particular reference was made to the young people and families cannabis awareness training that has been successfully developed in 2018 and is being rolled out due to high demand from the children's workforce. The "Highs of Leeds" young people's cannabis awareness campaign will also be rolled out further in 2019/20.
118. Moving forward, as Health Education is planned to be mandatory in schools from September 2020, this will also present an



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excellent opportunity to improve the quality of the provision and impact of drug and alcohol education in schools.

Social, emotional and mental health

119. We acknowledge that the emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.
120. Information gathered through the My Health My School (MHMS) survey data show that between 2011/12 and 2017/18 the number of primary school aged children reporting feeling happy every day or most days remained fairly steady at around 83%. However, all secondary school young people reporting feeling happy every day or most days has steadily declined over the same period but the biggest reduction in feeling happy can be seen in the Year 11 pupils, which has fallen from almost 80% to 65%.
121. It is also concerning that the MHMS survey data is showing an overall increase in the number of children and young people reporting *feeling 'stressed or anxious every day or most days'*. Primary pupils have reported increases for 5 consecutive years from 13% to 18%, and secondary pupils saw the biggest increase between 2013/14 and 2017/18 from 23% to 31%.
122. The Future in Mind Programme Board was developed in 2015 to oversee the city's approach to improving children and young people's social, emotional, mental health (SEMH) in Leeds. Young people co-produced the Future in Mind Strategy, following a Clinical Commissioning

Group (CCG) consultation that had young people's social, emotional, and mental health concerns as the top issue.

123. The MindMate website, commissioned by Leeds CCG, was also created and shaped by young people to provide accessible up to date information about self-help and how to access services. Whilst we note that many schools now have MindMate lessons and champions, there were mixed responses from the young people in terms of its awareness and use. In acknowledging plans to undertake an evaluation of the MindMate Champion programme and MindMate Lessons by Healthwatch and MindMate Ambassadors, we would like to see the outcome of this evaluation brought to Scrutiny for consideration.

Recommendation 10
That the Director of Children and Families ensures that the outcome of the evaluation of the MindMate Champion programme and MindMate Lessons by Healthwatch and MindMate Ambassadors is brought to Scrutiny for consideration.

124. Reflecting on the many views expressed by young people in relation to SEMH issues, we particularly acknowledge the need to generate greater awareness amongst young people of available advice and support services as well as having a better understanding of the relevant referral pathways that will enable them to access these discretely and with confidence. In particular, many young people expressed the need to be able to access discrete advice and support within the school environment to avoid any potential ridicule.



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125. Linked to this, we learned that a school/college resilience programme for young people aged 11-18 commenced in October 2018. This programme is delivered by the Health & Wellbeing Service and aimed at supporting young people vulnerable to or experiencing emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties. The programme enables young people to access tools to improve emotional resilience and manage challenging situations.
126. In view of the importance of this matter, we acknowledge that the Leeds Youth Council is already leading a campaign around SEMH and is working with Mindmate around mental health in schools. However, moving forward we believe that this area of work also warrants a more detailed piece of scrutiny work.
- CYPP Outcome: To have fun growing up.**
127. Whilst acknowledging this as a key outcome, we note that the Children and Young People's Plan does not contain a 'fun' performance measure as 'having fun' is difficult to measure. Whilst volume statistics can show participation, they do not capture an individual's enjoyment or 'benefit' from the event.
128. Linked to this outcome, we recognise that play is a biological, psychological and social necessity that is fundamental to the healthy growth, development and well-being of children and young people. All children therefore have the right to play, as enshrined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
129. There are over 250 public play areas in Leeds including playgrounds, ballparks, skateboard parks and teen zone. There are 63 community parks and seven city parks, plus many other areas of public recreation grounds, woodlands and nature areas (including seven local nature reserves).
130. However, the My Health My School survey data for 2017/18, which measured how many hours a week children play out, shows only 29.8% of primary school and 25.72% of secondary age children playing out more than 4 hours a week and 75.61% primary and 66.38% secondary age children visited a park or play area in the past 4 weeks.
131. In terms of promoting activities, the Breeze Leeds delivers local playful events across the city and has a dedicated website which provides an online library of 'what's on'. Linked to this, the BreezeCard take-up has also continued to increase: 14,718 (2015) 17,947 (October 2017 to March 2018).
132. We also learned that over 8,000 young people accessed youth work sessions in 2017/18. Youth work resource is targeted at the most vulnerable young people and is allocated citywide, with 40 per cent based on the 11-17 population and 60 per cent based on deprivation. However, there has been an increase in the number of children and young people living in poverty in Leeds and research has highlighted that child poverty has a significant impact on the health and well-being of children and young people and their ability to access and participate in activities.



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133. Transport has been a particular issue raised during our inquiry in terms of being able to access facilities and events across the city. This was also raised as a key factor as part of the annual UK Youth Parliament “Make Your Mark” ballot in 2017 and so improved and more connected public transport for young people has since become a priority in the Leeds Children & Young People’s Plan. We therefore expressed an interest to learn more about how young people have been involved in identifying and addressing local transport needs.
134. We learned that the Council’s Voice, Influence and Change Team and the Yorkshire and Humber Youth Work Unit worked with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to invite the Bus18 Board to meet with youth representatives to discuss improving bus travel for young people in the region and in turn encouraging more young people to become regular bus users. This meeting took place on 16th August 2018.
135. During our inquiry, we noted that the Bus18 initiative is now evolving into the West Yorkshire Transport Alliance and that responsibility in the Children and Families Directorate for progressing this Transport priority has transferred from the Voice, Influence & Change Team to Children’s Transport. Moving forward, we noted that an agreement in principle was reached to support young people with a ‘mystery shopper’ type exercise to collate systematic feedback for operators in respect of progress following previous feedback that young people provided. As a Scrutiny Board we will therefore continue to track progress in relation to this work.

Recommendation 11
That the Director of Children and Families ensures that a detailed update on the work undertaken by the directorate, in conjunction with other key partners, in relation to improving public transport for young people is brought to the relevant Scrutiny Board on an annual basis.

136. At the time of our inquiry, we also acknowledged that a review of the Leeds Play Strategy had been undertaken, with the revised version including a Leeds commitment to children’s play, which aims to increase opportunity for children to play; create time and space to play; ensure the recognition and understanding of children’s play.
137. Linked to this, a citywide Play Partnership will support the development and delivery of the Leeds Commitment to Children’s Play and report directly to the Children and Families Trust Board. Members of this Play Partnership will include Leeds City Council service areas, Leeds Universities, third sector play organisations, parents and carers, Child Friendly Leeds Ambassadors and children from across the city working collaboratively.
138. The key function of the Play Partnership will be to bring partners and stakeholders together to design and implement an action plan that will ensure there is a diverse range of opportunities across the city for all children to engage in Play. We therefore recommend that further details of the Partnership’s membership



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and action plan is brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.

Recommendation 12
That the Director of Children and Families reports back to Scrutiny with membership details of the new Play Partnership as well as details of the Partnership's action plan to deliver the Leeds Commitment to Children's Play.

Potential areas for further Scrutiny work.

139. The findings of our inquiry has helped us to identify common themes and key recommendations, but has also highlighted potential areas for more detailed scrutiny work moving forward, particularly around addressing young people's perception and fear of crime and also around social, emotional and mental health issues.
140. Our Best Council Plan emphasises the need for enhancing the city now and for future generations and linked to this, the voice and influence of children in Leeds is critical to supporting change and making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in.



Appendix 1

The 12 wishes

In a child friendly Leeds...

1 Children and young people can make safe journeys and easily travel around the city:

- ☛ Affordable public transport and parking.
- ☛ More zebra crossings.
- ☛ Promote safe cycling paths and walking routes.

2 Children and young people find the city centre welcoming and safe, with friendly places to go, have fun and play:

- ☛ Good access to the city centre.
- ☛ Signposting to attractions.
- ☛ Playful areas for children of all ages and places where young people can hang out and have fun.
- ☛ Information about what is going on and when.
- ☛ Maps showing safer routes in the city centre.

3 There are places and spaces to play and things to do, in all areas and open to all:

- ☛ More staff in the places and spaces children and young people go.
- ☛ Things to do all year round, not just during holidays.
- ☛ Families and young people informed about what is going on across the city and how to get there, for example bus routes.

4 Children and young people can easily find out what they want to know, when they want it and how they want it:

- ☛ Use websites, social media, posters, letter, text, email and verbally.
- ☛ Information is up to date and relevant.
- ☛ Two way communication; opportunities to give feedback, suggest ideas and have discussions, for example online forums.

5 Children, young people and adults have a good understanding of children's rights, according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- ☛ Responsibility of all to respect each other's rights.
- ☛ Recognise young people who are active citizens, volunteer their time and help out in their local communities.
- ☛ Adults working with children and young people and families, need to explain how their work supports children's rights.
- ☛ Agree which child friendly version of UNCRC should be promoted across the city, for example through schools and different organisations.

6 Children and young people are treated fairly and feel respected:

- ☛ Tackle stereotyping of young people.
- ☛ More positive media coverage of young people.
- ☛ Adults are friendlier to children and young people.
- ☛ Better access and choice for disabled children and young people, for example leisure opportunities.

7 Children and young people have the support and information they need to make healthy lifestyle choices:

- ☛ Better information and support around: emotional health; building confidence; having positive friendships; eating healthily and being active; sex and relationships; drugs; smoking and alcohol.

8 All our learning places identify and address the barriers that prevent children and young people from engaging in and enjoying learning:

- ☛ Better approaches to tackling bullying and disruptive behaviour of pupils.
- ☛ Lessons are more interactive and fun.
- ☛ Linking lessons to life skills and future employment.

9 There are a greater number of better quality jobs, work experience opportunities and good quality careers advice for all:

- ☛ More support for young people not in education, employment and training.
- ☛ Increase work experience opportunities across the city and across professions.
- ☛ Young people know where to go to find out about job vacancies and apprenticeships, work experience opportunities and careers information, advice and guidance.

10 All children and young people have their basic rights met:

- ☛ All children and young people have a home and feel they have a reasonable standard of living.
- ☛ Protect all children and young people from harm.
- ☛ Support low income families.

11 Children and young people express their views, feel heard and are actively involved in decisions that affect their lives – this is what we mean by 'participation':

- ☛ Inform children and young people that it's their right to have a voice and be involved in decisions affecting their lives.
- ☛ Increase understanding of different ways children and young people can share their views, have their say and make a difference.
- ☛ More opportunities for all children and young people to get actively involved in decision making and influence change in the city centre and local communities.
- ☛ Tackle barriers preventing children and young people getting involved in participation activities.
- ☛ Organisations working with or for children and young people, should involve children and young people in deciding what they should do, how they should do it and how well they are doing it.

12 Places and spaces where children and young people spend time and play are free of litter and dog fouling:

- ☛ Clean streets.
- ☛ Clean parks.
- ☛ Encourage people to take responsibility for their actions.
- ☛ Children, young people and adults working together on community clean ups.

Appendix 2

The way we work

Making connections

Developing quality connections, conversations, and relationships with children, families, and professionals is how we work in Leeds



Valuing families

Children live in families
Families create communities
Communities create cities



Three mindsets

Always remember...
Do the simple things better
The child is the client
Safeguard and promote the welfare of children



Four behaviours

Listening to the voice of the child
Working restoratively: doing things with families instead of to them, for them or doing nothing
Using outcome based accountability to measure our progress and challenge whether anyone is better off
We support and prioritise children and young people to have fun growing up



And a relentless focus on the question...

What is it like to be a child or young person growing up in Leeds and how do we make it better?



Our city

About Leeds

Total population: **781,700**

Including **165,000** children and young people aged 0-19 (269,500 aged 0-25)

264 schools

195 different languages spoken in Leeds schools



Working together

The Child Friendly Leeds initiative's ambition is to make Leeds the best city in the UK for children and young people to grow up in. To help us make this happen we have a Children and Families Trust Board, and a Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership. They bring senior people together from the main organisations working with children and young people to make sure the work we do keeps children safe, and has a positive impact on improving outcomes.

We work with schools, governors, police, the youth service, the youth offending service, children's centres, housing services, third sector, health, and local councillors, amongst others, to help make a difference to the lives of children and young people who live in Leeds.



Find out more

Visit www.leeds.gov.uk/childfriendlyleeds for more information about our work

Follow us on Twitter: @Child_Leeds

For information about how we work together to keep children and young people safe, visit www.leedsiscp.org.uk

To see our one minute guides on all aspects of children's services, please visit www.leeds.gov.uk and search for one minute guides.

To help by being a Child Friendly Leeds supporter, ambassador or partner, email childfriendlyleeds@leeds.gov.uk



Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2023



The priorities that guide our work have been developed through consultation across the city, including the views of children and young people.



Making Leeds a child friendly city

Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2023

What we'll do

1

One vision

Our vision is for Leeds to be the best city in the UK and the best city for children and young people to grow up in. We want Leeds to be a child friendly city. Through our vision and ambitions we invest in children and young people to help build an increasingly prosperous and successful city. We aim to improve outcomes for all our children whilst recognising the need for outcomes to improve faster for children and young people from vulnerable and deprived backgrounds.

5

Five outcomes

Conditions of well-being we want for all our children and young people

- All children and young people:
1. are safe from harm
 2. do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life
 3. enjoy healthy lifestyles
 4. have fun growing up
 5. are active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence

11

Eleven priorities

1. Help children and parents to live in safe, supportive and loving families
2. Ensure that the most vulnerable are protected
3. Support families to give children the best start in life
4. Increase the number of children and young people participating and engaging in learning
5. Improve achievement and attainment for all
6. Improve at a faster rate educational progress for children and young people
7. Improve social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing
8. Encourage physical activity and healthy eating
9. Support young people to make good choices and minimise risk-taking behaviours
10. Help young people into adulthood, to develop life skills, and be ready for work
11. Improve access to affordable, safe, and reliable connected transport for young people

3

Three obsessions

1. Safely and appropriately reduce the number of children who are looked after
2. Reduce the number of young people not in education, employment and training
3. Improve achievement, attainment and attendance at school

Helping deliver the Best Council Plan and our Best City ambition of a strong economy in a compassionate city

How we'll do it

we are
child friendly
Leeds

The best start in life for all children
Before and after birth, we will support parents and babies to create the conditions where stress is reduced, positive bonds and attachments can form, and language and communications skills develop.

Think Family Work Family
We will consider family relationships, the role of adult behaviour, and the wider context such as friends and the local community, and how these impact on outcomes for children and young people.

Attaining and Achieving
Learning underpins wellbeing; we will place a disproportionate focus on learning, and readiness for learning, so we narrow the gap, and enable all children and young people - particularly those vulnerable to poor outcomes.

Challenging Child Poverty
In acknowledging the scale and impact of poverty on families, we will work with communities and families to mitigate the impact of poverty on children's outcomes and support children's journeys into secure adulthood in a prosperous city.

Outstanding social work and support
Continuing our journey to outstanding following the 2016 Ofsted inspection, and our investment in social work, we will ensure consistent quality across all our work with vulnerable children and young people.

Early help - the right conversations in the right place at the right time
Building on what works well, and reorganising more of our services around the Restorative Early Start (RES) approach, we will focus help to where it is needed earlier.

A stronger offer to improve social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and well-being
We will redesign the whole system of SEMH and wellbeing support, and create simple pathways with clear points of entry to an integrated offer from education, health and social care services, which is personalised to individual needs.

Behaviours that underpin everything we do

Use Outcome Based Accountability, and ask the question: is anyone better off?

Use restorative practice to work and do with people, not for or to them

We listen and respond to the voice of the child

We support and prioritise children and young people to have fun growing up

How we'll know if we've made a difference

1. Number of children looked after
2. Number of children subject to a child protection plan
3. Number of parents who have had more than one child enter care at different times
4. Number of children in need
5. Pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (end of reception year)
6. Infant mortality rates
7. Newly created school places in good and outstanding schools
8. School attendance
9. Fixed-term exclusions from schools
10. Pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 2 (end of year six)
11. Progress 8 score for Leeds at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of year 11)
12. Destinations of young people with special educational needs and/or a disability when they leave school
13. Progress against measures in the Future in Mind dashboard
14. Children who are a healthy weight at age 11
15. Young offenders who re-offend
16. Under-18 conception rates
17. Under-18 alcohol-related hospital admissions
18. Students achieving a level 3 qualification at age 19
19. Young people who are not in employment, education, or training, or whose employment status is 'not known'
20. Transport for young people indicator to be developed after further discussions with young people

Key Findings 2017-18

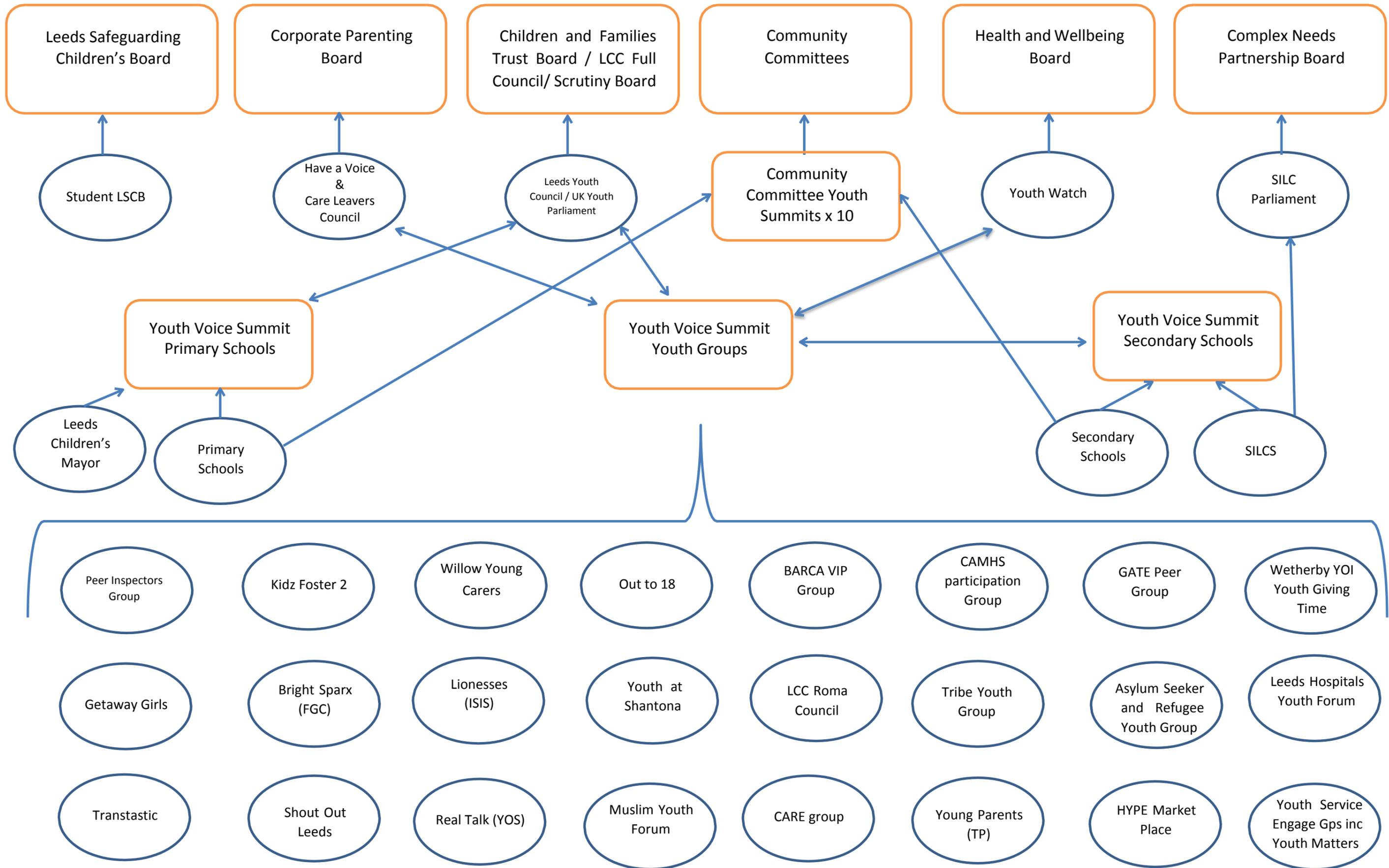
Primary & Secondary:

	Uptake of '5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables' remains consistent with the previous 10 years data with just over 1 in 5 pupils (22%) reporting this response on an average day.
 	Frequency of 'brushing teeth twice a day or more' has shown an upward trend since 2010/11 (69%). In 2017/18 results show a very slight overall decrease on the previous year, now at 77% from 78%. Year 11 data recorded a slight reduction to 81% (3% down on previous year).
	Physical activity of '7 or more times of 30 minutes or more' increased significantly in 2013/14 to 68% after remaining consistent at around 40% since 2009/10. After increasing to 70% last year (the highest physical activity levels recorded across the 11 years of the survey) this years' data decreased very slightly to 69%, with reductions across Primary, Secondary and year 11.
 	Overall numbers of pupils reporting they have 'never smoked, have tried or used to smoke' has consistently marginally increased over the last 11 years, stabilising at 98% since 2015/16. The best outcomes since the survey began were seen in 2017/18 for Year 11 at 88%. The rate of pupils 'smoking 10 or more cigarettes a day' has reduced significantly since 2007/8 from 3%, and has remained consistent over the last 5 years at 0.5%.
 	A sharp increase in 'abstinence from drinking alcohol' over the last 11 years from 40% in 2007/8 to 65% in 2017/18 is consistent with last years' data which has remained stable since 2015/16. Since 2007/8 year 11 results have increased from 7% to 25%. There was a decline in last years' data for both Secondary (down 1%) and year 11 pupils (down 3%) reporting that they have never had a drink of alcohol.
 	'More at risk alcohol consumption' has reduced from 4.4% overall in 2007/8 and continues to be consistent at around 1% overall since 2011/12. Primary pupil data has continued a downward improvement trend when considering 'drinking alcohol everyday' from 0.9% in 2007/8 to 0.1% in 2017/18. Secondary year groups saw a decrease in those reporting that they chose to 'drink to get drunk' from 13% to 5% in 2017/18, which is down 1% on 2016/17. Year 11 recorded a second consecutive yearly increase to 16% (4% rise).
 	Feeling happy 'everyday, most days' saw a slight decrease of 1% overall this year from last year, with this year recording the lowest rate since the question was introduced in 2009/10. Year 11 also saw the lowest rate at 66%, which reflects a steady decline from 82% in 2009/10. At primary level the figure has been consistent since 2009/10 at around 84%, with a 1% reduction from last year to 83%.
	Those reporting feeling 'stressed or anxious every day or most days' overall has increased from 19% in 2009/10, with a consistent increase for 5 years to 24% in 2017/18. Primary pupils have reported increases for 5 consecutive years from 15% to 18%, and secondary pupils saw the biggest increase over the last 4 years from 23% to 31%. More specifically, year 11 increased from 28%, in 2012/13, to 45% in 2017/18, reflecting a 4% increase on last year.
 	Overall bullying incidents have seen steady decreases since 2011, with 62% reporting 'not at all' to being bullied in the last 12 months in 2012/13, increasing to 70% in 2016/17. Year 11 reflected a 2% increase from 77% last year to 79% this year. 2017/18 data shows a 1% decrease for both primary and secondary as a whole.

Secondary:

 	Illegal drug use has dropped dramatically since 2007/8 in secondary pupils overall, reducing consistently from a peak of 17% to a low of 5% in 2015/16. An increase in 2016/17 has remained consistent this year at 7%. Year 11 pupils' reporting 'ever using an illegal drug, glue, gas or solvent as a drug' , has been more erratic over the years, peaking at 28% in 2007/8 and a low of 5% in 2015/16, increasing to 21% this year (1% increase from last year).
 	Overall secondary pupils reporting 'ever having had sexual intercourse' saw its' lowest ever level this year at 13% after recording a significant decrease over time from 38% in 2007/8. Year 11 has seen a sharp decrease over time in those reporting 'ever having sexual intercourse' from 47% in 2007/8 to 26% last year. 2017/18 data reflects a slight 2% increase to 28%.
 	Of pupils reporting 'ever having had sexual intercourse' , all year groups recorded a fall, secondary (49%, - 8% down) and year 11 (49%, 3% down), in reporting 'either using a condom or a condom and another form of contraception' the last time they had sexual intercourse. This rate has seen a steady decrease since 2008/9 at 73% to 46% in 2015/16, and although it did increase last year to 57%, this year has seen another decrease of 8%. The number of pupils reporting 'never using any form of protection' the last time they had sexual intercourse reached its highest at 35% this year, after consistently seeing an increase since 2007/8 when the rate was 19%. Year 11 has also seen an increase in this response from 20% in 2007/8 to 31% last year.

Appendix 4



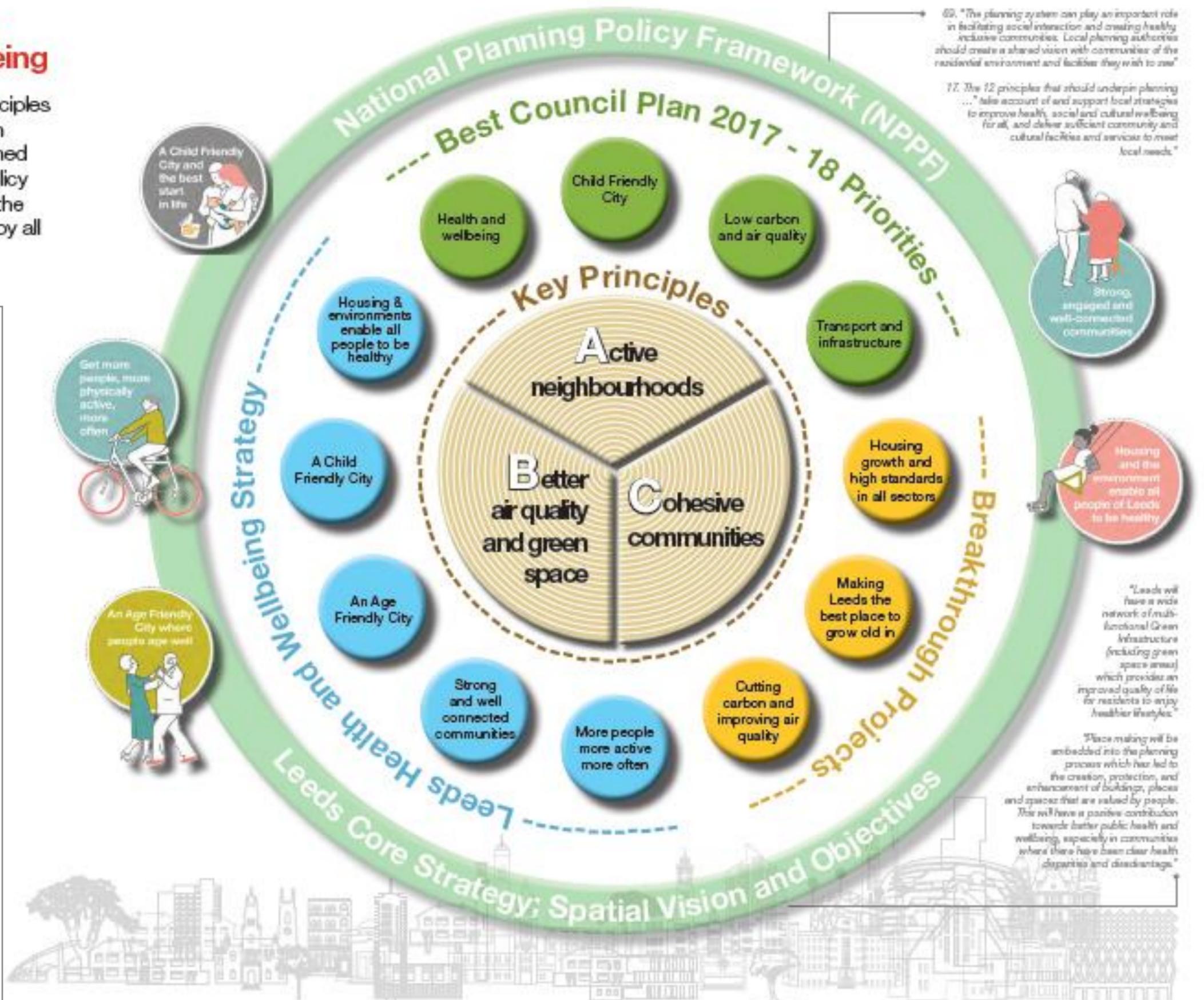
Appendix 5

Planning and Design for Health and Wellbeing

Leeds aims to establish key principles of planning and design for health and wellbeing that are underpinned in national and local planning policy and meet strategic priorities for the city, which can be signed up to by all partners.

Key Principles

- Active neighbourhoods** – promoting cycling and walking, reducing car usage and improving children’s opportunities for independent mobility.
The increasing volume and speed of traffic over the last few decades have been shown to impact negatively on healthy outdoor activity. Attractive, safe streets and networks lead to more children’s informal Wplay and active travel for all ages and abilities, and can add to the financial value of development.
- Better air quality and green space** – using green and blue infrastructure to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and promote mental wellbeing.
New development should provide and link to existing green and blue infrastructure wherever possible and should provide new natural features including green roofs, hedges, street trees and gardens. Environmental sustainability is integrally linked.
- Cohesive communities** – encouraging co-located services and high quality neighbourhood spaces to encourage social interaction and combat isolation.
A well-overlooked street or space that provides places for chance encounters or to sit and chat is more likely to lead to more neighbour friendships, helping those from different backgrounds get to know each other and feel safe. Facilities and workplaces should be easy to reach, and communities helped to play an active part in managing their area.





Evidence

Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

Session 1 – Scrutiny Board Meeting on 26th September 2018

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1089&MId=8400&Ver=4>

Report of the Director of Children and Families 'Scrutiny inquiry – Is Leeds a Child Friendly City? – Cover Report'.

Main CYPP Outcome Areas: That children and young people are active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence and have fun growing up.

Session 2 – Scrutiny Board Meeting on 24th October 2018

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1089&MId=8401&Ver=4>

Report of the Director of Children and Families 'Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?'

Main CYPP Outcome Area – That children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life.

Session 3 – Scrutiny Board Meeting on 6th March 2019

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1089&MId=8403&Ver=4>

Report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support 'Scrutiny Inquiry – Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?'

Main CYPP Outcome Areas: That children and young people are safe from harm and enjoy healthy lifestyles.

Session 4 – Scrutiny Board Meeting on 24th April 2019

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1089&MId=8546&Ver=4>

Report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support 'Scrutiny Inquiry – Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?'



Evidence

Dates of Scrutiny

Scrutiny Board Meeting (Session 1) – 26th September 2018
Scrutiny Board Meeting (Session 2) – 24th October 2018
Scrutiny Working Group (Parental engagement and education outcomes) – 4th March 2019
Scrutiny Board Meeting (Session 3) – 6th March 2019
Scrutiny Board Meeting (Session 4) – 24th April 2019

Youth Voice Summit Event – 13th March 2019

Youth Group Visits:

- Dance Action Zone Leeds (DAZL) – 21st February 2019
- The Market Place – 8th March 2019
- Leeds Youth Council – 9th March 2019
- Leeds Community Youth Ambassadors – 12th March 2019
- Student Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership – 25th March 2019
- Youth Matters Group, Swarcliffe – 10th April 2019

Witnesses Heard

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Steve Walker, Director of Children and Families
- Ian Cameron, Director of Public Health
- Sal Tariq, Deputy Director for Children and Families
- Phil Mellen, Deputy Director for Learning
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer, Partnerships and Health, Children and Families
- Chris Hudson, Performance Programme Manager, Children and Families
- Hannah Lamplugh, Voice, Influence and Change (VIC) Lead, Children and Families
- Richard Cracknell, Voice and Influence Coordinator
- Rebecca Gilmour, Deputy Service Manager, Leeds Youth Offending Service
- Vicki Marsden, Play Strategy Officer, Children and Families
- Anne Fell, Joint Interim Head of Learning Improvement
- Kim Porter, Joint Interim Head of Learning Improvement
- Janice Burberry, Head of Public Health, Children and Families
- Heather Thomson, Head of Public Health (Healthy lifestyles)
- Michelle Kane, Public Health Principal, Children and Families
- Saira Mumtaz-Jones, Health and Wellbeing Lead, Children and Families
- Kerry Swift, Health Improvement Specialist, Public Health
- Jane Walne, Head of Programmes and Projects, City Development
- Kathryn Holloway, Team Leader, City Development
- Jenny Fisher, Principal Officer, Planning and Sustainable Development, City Development

**Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)
Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?
July 2019
Report author: Angela Brogden**



www.scrutiny.unit@leeds.gov.uk