



CABINET – 9 FEBRUARY 2024

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2024 -
2026**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Children and Family Services Departmental Plan for 2024 to 2026 which is appended to this report.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2024 to 2026 be approved.

Reason for Recommendation

3. The Plan has been developed to fulfil statutory duties and provide a basis for the Children and Family Services' vision, planning, commissioning and delivery of services until 2026. The Plan and associated actions provide a vehicle for the Children and Family Services to work together on shared priorities, maximise resources and expertise and avoid duplication.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Plan on 23 January 2024 and its comments are set out at paragraph 13 of this report below.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. The Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2024-2026 is aligned to the County Council's Strategic Plan for 2022-2026.
6. It also aligns to Leicestershire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Children and Families Partnership Plan and Food Plan and partner plans including Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Infant Feeding and Infant Mortality Strategies.

Resource Implications

7. There are no resources implications arising from the recommendation in this report. The Plan will provide the context within which Children and Family Services budgets are produced and will continue to ensure that the County Council makes best possible use of its resources.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

8. None.

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PART B

Background

9. The Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2024 to 2026 is for all the children and young people living in Leicestershire and their families and sets out high-level priorities for the County Council's Children and Family Services Department for the next three years. The Plan builds on the work undertaken under the previous Departmental Plan covering 2020 to 2023 and has been informed by feedback from children, young people and families on their needs and experiences. It is intended to launch the Plan in April 2024.
10. Progress against the Plan will be monitored closely by the Children and Family Services departmental management team and a formal review will be undertaken annually and reported to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that the Plan remains relevant, dynamic, and aligned with local and national priorities.

The Plan

11. The Department has identified three ambitions and ten associated priorities to contribute towards improving outcomes for the children, young people and families of Leicestershire:
 - A. Support children and young people to Build Strong Foundations:
 - Support parents and babies, before and after birth, to create the conditions where stress is reduced, positive bonds and attachments can be formed, and language and communications skills can be developed.
 - Work in partnership to identify those children who would benefit from support and provide co-ordinated services at the earliest opportunity.
 - Support children and families to build strength, resilience, confidence and the skills to find their own solutions wherever possible.
 - B. Support children and young people to Be Safe and Belong:
 - Work in partnership to ensure risk is understood and reduced and targeted support is provided at the right time, in the right place and by the right service.
 - Ensure children in care and care leavers feel they have a stable, safe, loving home where they belong.
 - Ensure children and young people who are most vulnerable are protected, are safe from harm and supported.

C. Support children and young people to Enjoy and Achieve:

- Ensure every child has access within their community to good quality, inclusive education that enables them to achieve their full potential.
- Focus on learning and readiness for learning as a driver of wellbeing for all children and young people.
- Ensure that children who have additional needs and vulnerabilities are supported in the right place, at the right time in order to narrow the gap.
- Work with schools and educational settings to ensure there is a clear understanding of the impact of poverty and trauma to ensure that children are not disadvantaged from accessing education.

Consultation

12. It was not deemed necessary to undertake formal consultation specifically on the draft Departmental Plan as the Children and Family Services actively and continually seeks feedback from children, young people and families across Leicestershire as part of any direct work and group work undertaken with children and families, through specific engagement activity, through transformation activity and through forums including the Children's Youth Council for Leicestershire (CYCLe), Children in Care Council and the SEND Parent Carer Forum. The Plan has been informed by this feedback from children, young people and families on their needs and experiences.

Comments of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report and the draft Plan at its meeting on 23 January 2024. It was agreed that the draft Leicestershire Children and Family Services' Departmental Plan 2024 – 26 be supported and presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 9 February 2024.

Equality Implications

14. Children and Family Services has an interest in ensuring services provided meet the identified needs of local people. An Equality Impact screening assessment has been completed. This concluded that the Plan would have a positive impact overall and would not have an adverse effect on any section of the community. A full Equality Impact Assessment was not therefore required to be carried out.

Human Rights Implications

15. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Partnership Working

16. Delivery of the Plan will require the Department to maintain and develop effective working relationships with a range of partners including but not limited to colleagues across all other County Council departments, district councils, Health, Police, Leicester City and Rutland Councils and the voluntary and community sector.

Appendix

Draft Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2024 to 2026

Background Papers

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 23 January 2024 “Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2024-26” and minutes of that meeting

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MId=7477>

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