



Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION
SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

DATE: TUESDAY, 14 APRIL 2026

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles
Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Committee

Councillor Batool (Chair)

Councillor Bonham (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Barnes, Cole, Gregg, Dr Moore, Singh Sangha and Westley

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Ed Brown (Governance Services) Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk and Julie Bryant (Governance Services) Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk or E-mail: Governance@leicester.gov.uk Address: Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: Ed Brown or Julie Bryant, Governance Services on Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk or Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk. Alternatively, email governance@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

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1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

[Appendix A](#)

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People, and Education Scrutiny Commission held on Tuesday 3rd March have been circulated, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures will be reported.

6. PETITIONS

Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

7. OFSTED INSPECTION - VERBAL UPDATE

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help will give a brief update on Ofsted Inspection of Children's Homes, including inspection frequency, what is included and current gradings.

8. MULTI AGENCY CHILD PROTECTION TEAM - [Appendix B](#)
PROGRESS UPDATE

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education and the Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help submit a report on the development of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs).

9. SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER [Appendix C](#)

The Director of SEND and Education submits a report summarising the implications of the Government's Schools White Paper 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' for Leicester City.

10. WORK PROGRAMME [Appendix D](#)

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Batool – Chair
Councillor Bonham – Vice Chair

Councillor Gregg

Councillor Dr Moore

Also present:

Joycelin Eze-Okubuiro – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
Nic Plumtree – National Education Union
Sylvia M'cneill – National Education Union
Ezra Mbogo – Vice Chair Young People's Council Representative
Daniella Olugbenga - Young People's Council Representative
Adele Toussaint Saul - Young People's Council Representative
Aaliya Bhayani Young People's Council Representative
Councillor Pantling – Assistant City Mayor for Education

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202. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Singh Sangha.

203. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

204. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that when referring to SEND policies it was worded that they were to remain embedded, it should have read that they were to be consolidated.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 20 January 2026 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the above correction.

205. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair suggested that reports be taken as read where possible.

The Chair noted that there would be a short break so that those observing Ramadan could break fast.

206. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

207. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

208. FAMILIES FIRST PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help submitted a report to update on the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme and the pilot launched in South Leicester.

Cllr Pantling introduced the item noting that a good start had been made. The Head of Service for Family Help and the Disabled Children's Service highlighted points from the presentation attached to the agenda. Key points to note were as follows:

- The Family Help programme was a move to merge the teams within the service area. The consolidation was planned to be in place by June 2026.
- The Family Help pilot was based in the South Cluster of the city. Feedback had included the need for a key focus on internal relationship building, and the importance of training and development.
- There had been a significant increase in referrals since the pilot commenced and more joint visits had taken place.
- A smoother pathway had been developed where prevention work was required.
- Consultancy support had helped to strengthen the focus on partnership engagement.
- Regarding next steps, the pilot would continue and it was hoped that the remaining clusters would be rolled out by spring 2026. Co-production

included the Shadow Boards and the Practitioner's Forum.

- The Multi-agency Child Protection team was due to be rolled out by March 2027, an LLR model would be developed. A strong foundation was already in place.
- There was an established network of meetings for the Family Group Decision Making programme and expansion into other areas of work would ensue, with a focus on embedding Cyber Safety.

In response to member and Young People's Council (YPC) member questions and discussions, the following was noted:

- The Family Hubs offered support via an open-door approach and also signposted to relevant organisations. The hubs were generally well known to the communities and were advertised on the website.
- The branding was evolving and would consist of two clear offers for families:
 - Best Start For Life – early years activity.
 - Family Health – wider social work and family support
- A new website was in development, buildings could be multi-use and would have clear signage, further consideration would be given as part of the re-branding.
- Consent forms were in place and a one assessment, one plan strategy was being formulated.
- Mapping work for all of the clusters was still work in progress and was hoped to be rolled out by early summer.
- Partnership work with schools and youth provision would be strengthened as a key link for young people to access services. A report on the results of the Young People's Survey could come back to scrutiny.
- The teams merger would support the Schools White Paper 2026, with consideration given to how schools relate to the centres.
- There was a concerted move away from bureaucracy lead work with a focus on direct work with families.
- Processes and workflow for case triaging would be considered as part of the pilot.
- It was mandatory for multi-agency child protection teams to consist of a mix of professionals, with child protection cases allocated to qualified Social Workers, while looked-after children were managed separately.
- There was a strong emphasis on recruiting Social Workers, Central Government had awarded an uplift for this purpose.
- Key learning from the pilot included the need to strengthen relationships within the teams and gain insights into joint allocation processes.
- Buildings such as Halford House would remain in use for other children's services.
- Family group conferencing was reinstated and strengthened under the Family Group Decision Making model, with mandatory participation and allocated resources. Police, health, and education partners were required by government mandate to be involved, with existing resources reconfigured to ensure the model became fully operational by 2027.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.
- 3) For the results of the Young People's survey to come back to Scrutiny.

209. SCE PRIORITIES AND PERFORMANCE REPORTS 2026/27

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education gave a presentation on the fourteen agreed priorities for the Social Care and Education department for the 2026/27 financial year alongside performance ambitions which will be reported on periodically to track progress.

The presentation slides are attached to the agenda, additional points raised were as follows:

- Regarding children's residential provision, Holly House had been opened in the previous year, and Hillview Home was due to open. There was also approval for the funding for two further homes, jointly funded with the DFE.
- For each of the priorities and performance ambitions there would be a quarterly report, a draft report would be based on quarter four of 25-26.

In response to member and YPC member questions and discussions, the following was noted:

- Work was underway for a code of ethics relating to AI. Other local authorities were seeing successful outcomes in use of AI which had performed well in line with Ofsted. There were good resources available for AI, with some funding from government reforms being used for support.
- The number of EHCP applications had reduced, which helped improve the availability of resources for developing initial plans. Reviews required joint working across partners, and processes were under review due to a significantly higher-than-average number of cases requiring amendments.
- A revised dashboard would provide clear figures for the commission to view.
- Senior Managers would commence scenario planning for Local Government Reorganisation.
- Regarding the Social Care Academy, the Head of the academy had been recruited, a Social Care practice week was planned for November in preparation for the launch.
- Savings targets had been delivered and services reconfigured, resulting in an underspend. This, alongside uplifts from central government, created a positive position for reinvestment. However, there was a need to avoid uncontrolled growth, particularly in high-cost provision, and to

prioritise investment in frontline services as part of the wider strategy.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.
- 3) For members to be invited to Social Care Academy Launch.

210. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submitted a report setting out the Social Care and Education Department's improvement ambitions with regards to equality and diversity over the 2026-27 year.

Key points to note were as follows:

- There had not been a formal approach for a number of years and it was now felt that something more concrete was needed.
- Many Global Majority staff had now been on leadership training.
- An initial action plan had been produced with an inclusive decision-making forum.
- Work had been done with outside agencies.
- A maturity matrix had been produced on where it was aimed to go on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) as a department.
- The question had been put to staff over what would need to change or the department to be the best version of itself. This would be mapped against the maturity matrix and a plan to deliver would be produced.
- It was aimed to be a good, inclusive place to work, where people felt they could succeed.
- Progress could be reported on quarterly.

In response to member and YPC member discussion, the following was noted:

- It was noted that there was a need to be upfront about doing things differently and there was a need to ask what needed to change. There was a need for cultural change, and only through committing to change and seeing it through would the change be seen.
- Lots of work had been done around the YPC around psychological safety and how people could share views. The Inclusive Decision-Making forum fell to all staff in the department, this helped open things up in a similar way to how it was done in the YPC.
- In response to points raised about unconscious bias, it was stressed that there needed to be awareness to the fact that racism existed and that people could test themselves and that conversations could be had on biases. There was a need for people to reflect and change. If these issues were not talked about, people would be left with prejudices.
- In response to points made on inclusive decision making, it was

explained that it was about getting more eyes onto issues and co-producing decisions, opening them up to checks and balances. This was a cultural change over time and there was a need to give opportunities for more people to be involved.

- In terms of communication and language, there was an open dialogue about how people felt and perceived things, and if there wasn't an open conversation, things did not move forwards. It was necessary to open the option of change which needed open dialogue, and it was necessary for people to feel safe and have conversations to feel included.
- With regard to a query about how the Council's approach compared to those of other Councils, it was noted that whilst some Councils were taking different approaches, the Council wanted to take an EDI approach. Work was being undertaken with external organisations, and the Organisation Diverse by Design had helped provide tools for dialogue.
- In terms of tangible indicators might be that the expected outcomes have been achieved, this could be shown in workforce progression and representation, particularly at senior levels where it was aimed to be more representative. Additionally, there was a need to be more aware of things that seemed like they were disproportionate to the local population in the community.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.
- 3) That quarterly updates be provided.

211. HNB REPORT

The Chair referred to the High Needs Block (HNB) report, outlining the amendments made in response to the January Scrutiny meeting. The report was taken as read.

In discussion with members, it was noted that:

- The Council could be in a better position on the HNB due to government funding.
- The Longest and Average Wait times for Special School Placements would be ascertained.
- Ofsted had picked up on the Council Special School sufficiency planning and recognised that all possible was being done.
- The Designate Specialist Provisions (DSP) programme had created 300 extra places.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.

2) That the report be presented to the Executive and the response from the Executive be brought back to the Commission.

212. WORK PROGRAMME

A report on outcomes concerning adventure playgrounds could come to the Commission.

The work programme was noted.

213. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, the There being no further business, the meeting ended at 19:51

Multi Agency Child Protection Team – Progress update

CYPE Scrutiny

Decision to be taken by:

Date of meeting: 14th April 2026

Lead director/officer: Damian Elcock/Laurence Mackie-
Jones

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Damian Elcock
- Author contact details: damian.elcock@Leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.0

1. Summary

The development of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) is an essential part of the Families First Partnership reforms. Implementation is expected by end of March 2026.

The teams will pull together safeguarding professionals from across 4 agencies, Social Care, Police, Health and Education, to develop a centre of excellence that will drive safeguarding practice and ensure that there is more effective multi-agency collaboration. The team will have direct input into all strategy discussions, section 47 enquiries and child protection conferences.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 Note the report and current position

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 There has been extensive stakeholder engagement through our Practitioner Forum, Shadow Children and Young People's Board, and Oversight group with members from Health, Police, Education. There have also been engagement events attended by schools, community and voluntary sector groups etc

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

4.1 In April 2025 the Department for Education published guidance on the most significant reforms in children's social care for three decades, under the banner of Families First Partnerships.

4.2 The reforms cover a range of practice areas, the two most significant outline the merging of two current separate areas of work, Early Help and Child in Need support into community based Family Helps teams; and the creation of MACPTs.

4.3 Work on the implementation of Family Help teams has been underway since May 2025 and the model has been piloted in one of the six existing Early Help clusters, and plans are in place for wider roll out of these teams into the remaining 5 clusters over the next 3 months.

4.4 Regional discussions with key stakeholders across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) started in January 2026 to develop a shared plan for implementing MACPTs recognising both the existing footprint of health and police organisations and the potential future impact of Local Government Reform.

4.5 Three potential delivery models covering the whole of LLR have been developed, and these have been subject to SWOT analysis by each partner. A follow up meeting to review

the collated analysis will take place on Wednesday 1st April 2026 with the aim of reaching a consensus on a preferred model.

4.6 Appendix 1 outlines the 3 potential models. Currently we are proposing that Model 1a would best meet the needs of Leicester City Children’s Services and the families we support, as it is more firmly rooted in one of the key principles of the Families First Reform, that support services are founded on relational practice, both between professionals and between professionals and families. Having named workers for each Local Authority MACPT is essential to that principle. We do not believe that the other models deliver this.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The proposed option will however lead to more effective collaboration with partners to manage demand for children’s social care which may lead to reduced costs in future.

Signed: Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance

Dated: 30 March 2026

5.2 Legal implications

The proposed Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams build on existing statutory safeguarding duties rather than introducing new legal powers. The arrangements are consistent with the Children Act 1989 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, particularly in relation to multi-agency involvement in section 47 enquiries and child protection processes.

Overall, there are no direct legal implications arising from the report from a social care and safeguarding perspective.

Signed: Sonali Unka – Principal Solicitor

Dated: 31.03.26

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The report provides an update on the progress of implementing Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland and presents three potential models for these teams. The proposals are intended to strengthen safeguarding arrangements and improve outcomes for children and families across Leicester through

closer partnership working between Social Care, Health, Police and Education. This integrated approach aims to ensure consistent, timely and equitable support for all children, regardless of background or protected characteristic.

In order to demonstrate that the consideration of equalities impacts is taken into account, as an integral part of the process of reviewing or amending existing services, it is recommended that an Equality Impact Assessment be undertaken on the agreed option.

Improving coordination across agencies and promoting consistent responses for children who may be more vulnerable to harm or disadvantage, including those with disabilities, from minority ethnic communities, or living in deprived circumstances should lead to positive impacts.

Equality considerations should continue to be monitored through implementation, workforce development, and regular review to ensure that inclusive and equitable practice remains embedded across all partner agencies.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 31 March 2026

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

As service delivery by the council and partners generally contributes to the council's carbon footprint, any impacts could be considered by the organisations involved in this collaboration, such as encouraging the use of sustainable travel options, using buildings and materials efficiently and following the council's sustainable procurement guidance, as appropriate and relevant.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 30th March 2026

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

[Families first partnership programme guide: delivery expectations for statutory safeguarding partners year 2 \(2026 to 2027\)](#)

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – outline of the three proposed models for MACPT delivery across key partners.



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8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

No

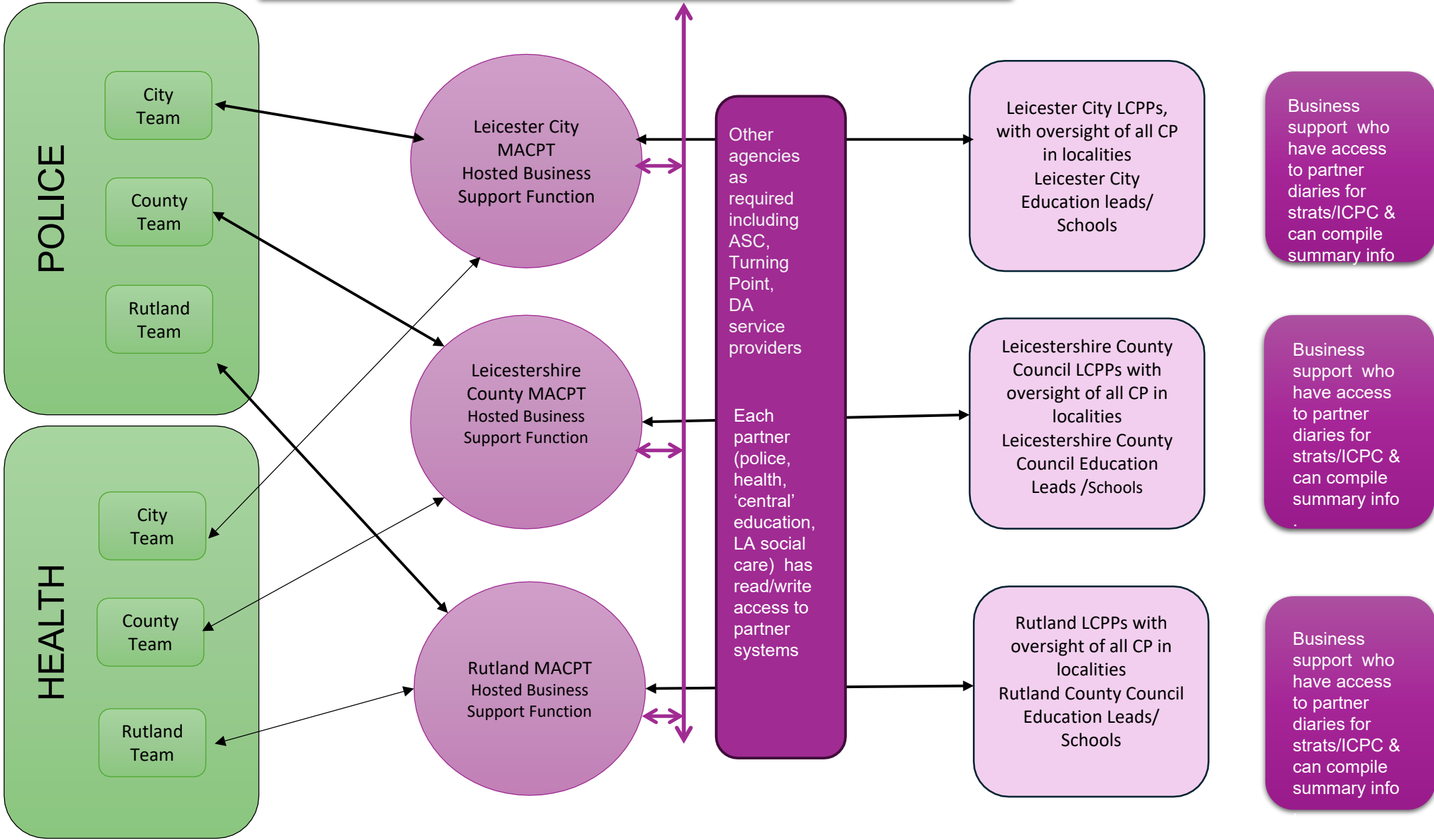
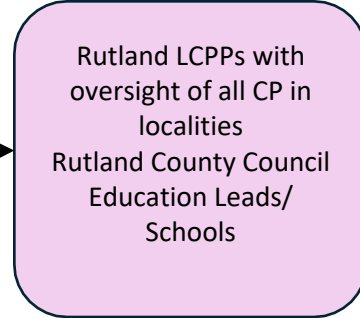
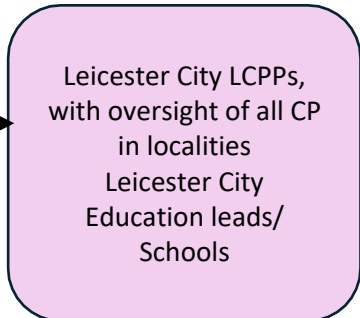
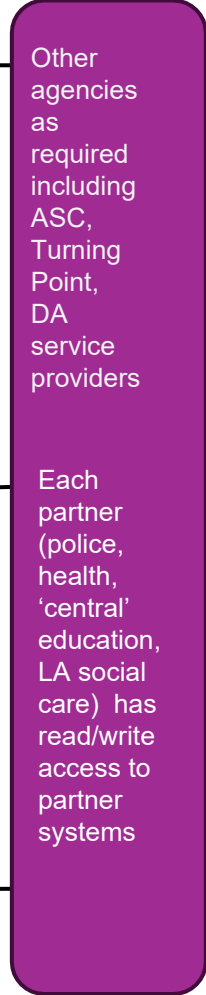
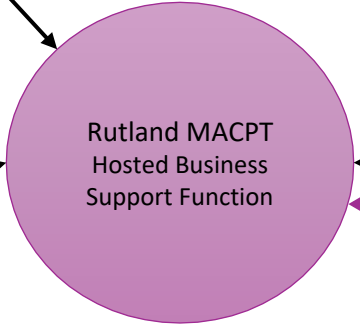
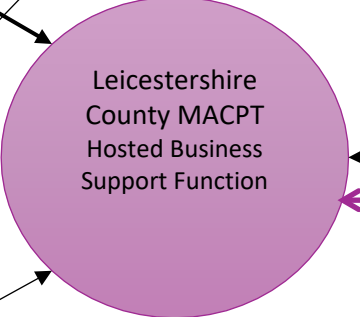
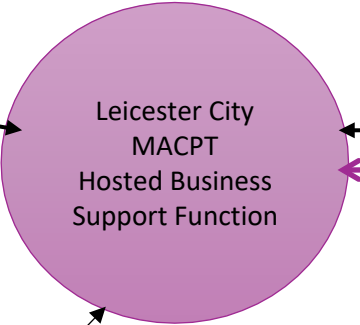
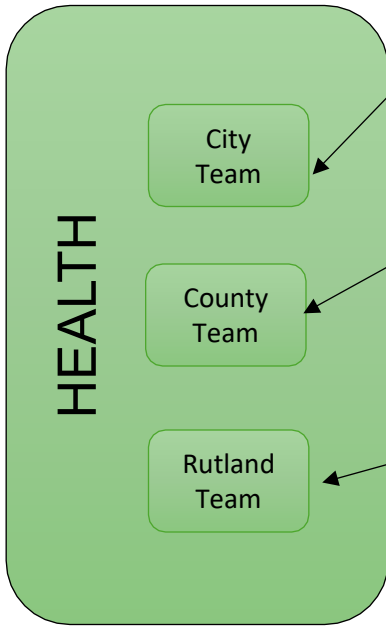
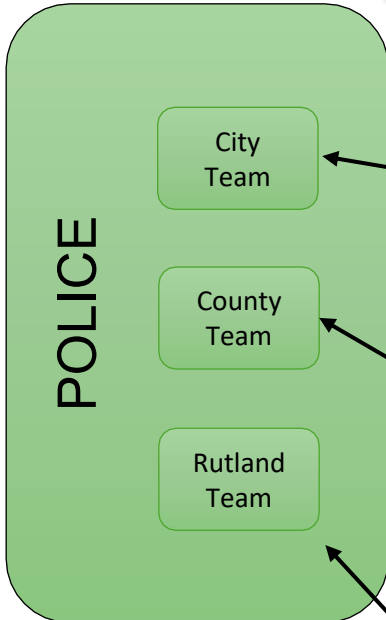
Models for MACPT – core assumptions

1. Effective MACPTs are underpinned by effective agency screening (local authorities and police)
2. Hybrid Teams – virtual for day-to-day operations with purposeful face-to-face sessions to support relationship building at regular, agreed intervals
3. Clear arrangements for Out of Hours
4. Health, Police, Social Care, Adult Social Care, and Education – shared access to CMSs (ambition)
5. Clear process for MACPT to offer consultation – ‘centre for excellence’
6. Need to follow/meet all statutory requirements

Model 1a. Three Local MACPTs with aligned police and health teams

Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership – QA, SCRs, audit, Multi agency training, etc

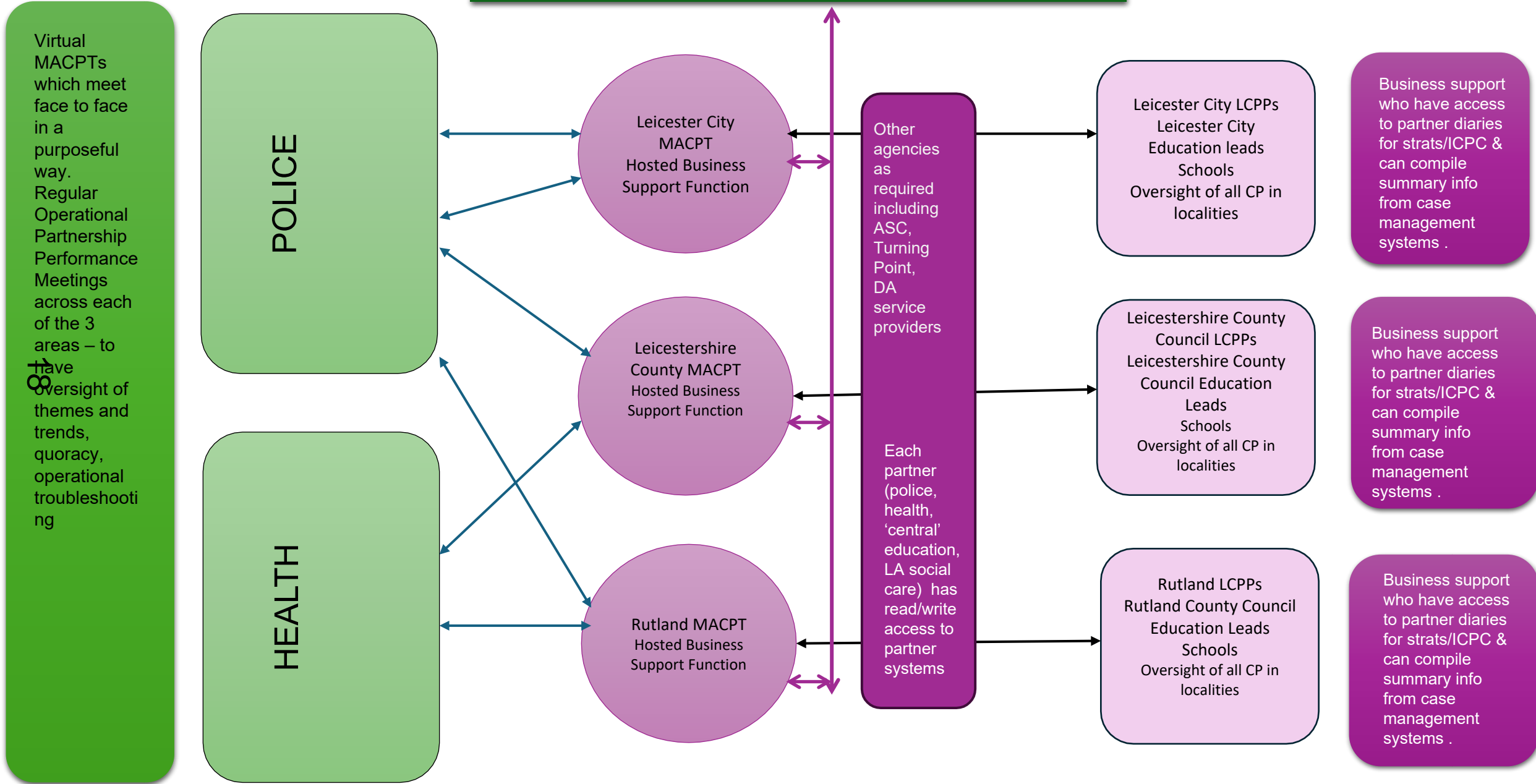
3 Virtual MACPTs which meet face to face in a purposeful way. Regular Operational Partnership Performance Meetings across each of the 3 areas – to have oversight of themes and trends, quoracy, operational troubleshooting. Report into LSCP. Operating requirements and performance measures to be agreed for LLR



Model 1a. Three local MACPTs with aligned police and health teams

- Each local authority team retains its screening function.
- Each referral requiring a Strategy Discussion goes to the MACP Team.
- Each local authority will host a coordinated, 'multi-agency' business support function. This will support coordination of diaries for strats and ensuring appropriate information sharing ahead of meetings. (Shared systems, direct access to case management systems OR direct access to named individuals, i.e. Care Navigator)
- Strategy Discussions Meetings are organised by Business Support in the MAPCT supporting timeliness and consistency. Same for ICPC and reviews.
- Centralised police and health teams have dedicated staff facing each local authority to help build effective relationships (with flexibility for cover arrangements and demand surge)
- Local Authority education staff will have some oversight where no education setting provision/no availability and will provide advice on systems, processes and best practice. They will attend team meetings.
- MACPT will all meet together on a regular basis in a purposeful way to support shared learning and building relationships. A level of face-to-face meeting will be agreed.
- Regular performance management meetings will take place, against some pre-agreed minimum quality and performance standards, which will be for the most part, the same across LLR.
- MACPT will work closely with LSCP. This will include shared learning, identification of themes, etc and overview of QA and audits, Multi-Agency Training needs identification and delivery – further work required to define
- Line management for all staff will remain with employing agency
- Local Authorities will explore and then determine operating hours for the MACPT will police and health colleagues.
- Each local authority will confirm arrangements for Out of Hours.

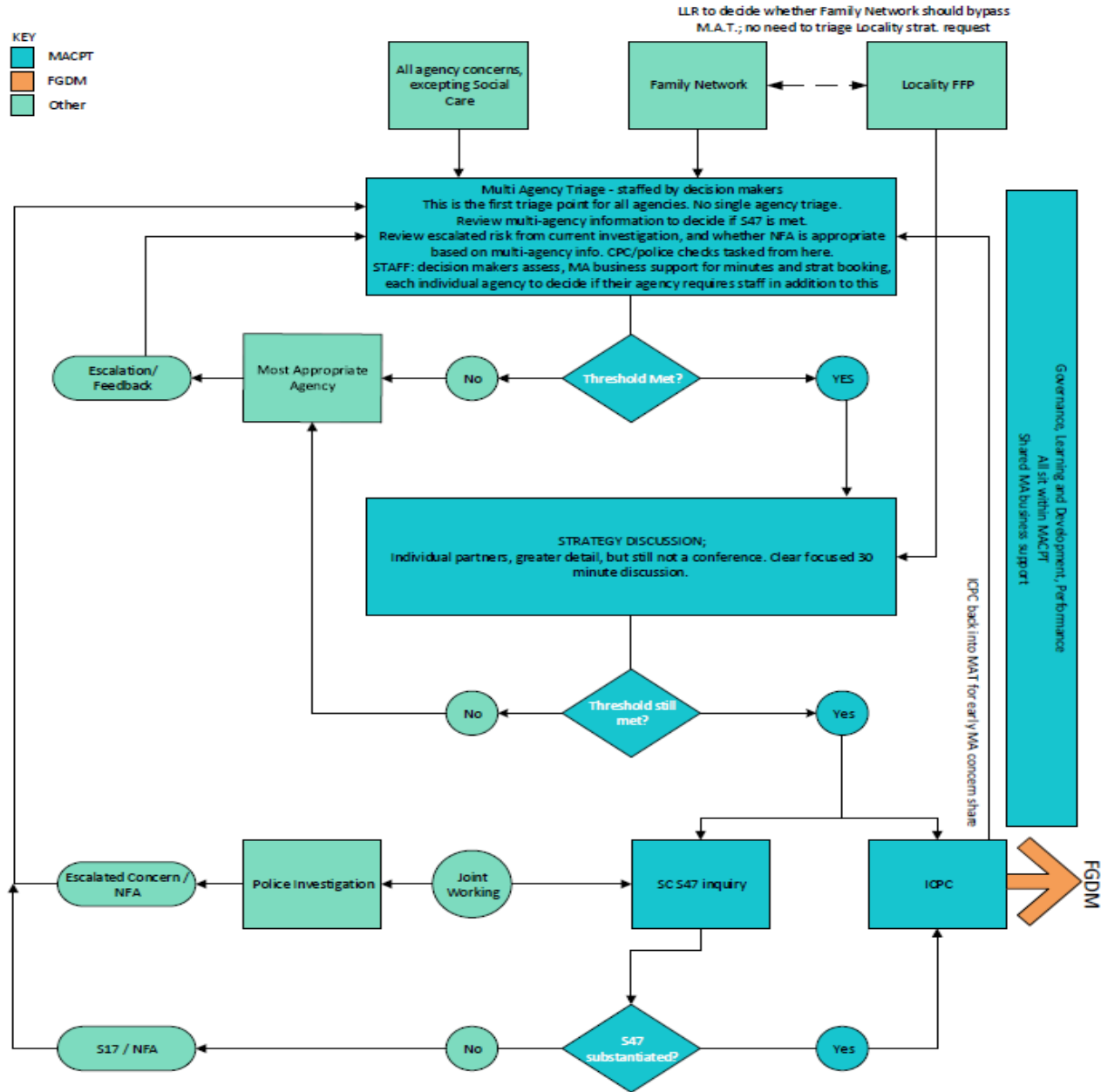
Model 1b. Three Local MACPTs with centralized police and health teams



Model 1b. Three Local MACPTs with centralised police and health teams.

- Each local authority team retains its screening function.
- Each referral requiring a Strategy Discussion goes to the MACP Team
- Each local authority will host a coordinated, 'multi-agency' business support function. This will support coordination of diaries for strats and ensuring appropriate information sharing ahead of meetings. (Shared systems, direct access to case management systems OR direct access to named individuals, i.e. Care Navigator)
- Strategy Discussions Meetings are organised by Business Support in the MAPCT supporting timeliness and consistency. Same for ICPC and reviews.
- Centralised police and health teams have dedicated staff who work across the three local authorities on a demand/needs basis
- Local Authority education staff will have some oversight where no education setting provision/no availability and will provide advice on systems, processes and best practice. They will attend team meetings.
- MACPT will all meet together on a regular basis in a purposeful way to support shared learning and building relationships. A level of face-to-face meeting will be agreed.
- Regular performance management meetings will take place, against some pre-agreed minimum quality and performance standards, which will be for the most part, the same across LLR.
- MACPT will work closely with LSOP. This will include shared learning, identification of themes, etc and overview of QA and audits, Multi-Agency Training needs identification and delivery – further work required to define
- Line management for all staff will remain with employing agency
- Local Authorities will explore and then determine operating hours for the MACPT will police and health colleagues.
- Each local authority will confirm arrangements for Out of Hours.

MODEL 2 One LLR MACPT



In essence, every new concern, escalation, and change will be shared with all partners, to review against their own information, and record. Police will share on all key points: arrest, charge, bail, released under investigation, court date, court orders, convictions, found NG. Police will also share new children, associations, change in support needs, etc.

Model 2: One LLR MACPT

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- This is a virtual model
- Every referral is risk assessed as a multi agency response, so the whole picture is seen with every case with one exception
- LCPP will 'skip' the multi-agency triage and go straight to strat. Consideration for urgent requests to come through MAT
- MAT will need to be staffed by personnel capable of making a threshold decision
- LCPPs will be a virtual part of the MACPT alongside Police Staff, Health professionals and education leads.
- Clear feedback loops created so that all investigations come back to the MACPT for feedback, and evaluation over risk; i.e. if social care are NFA, does this now meet school threshold for action
- Minutes and decisions for all risk assessments; strategy discussions, CPC, are recorded by the multi agency business support team and uploaded directly onto individual case management systems.
- Organisation/bookings of Strategy Discussions, ICPCs, and RCPCs will sit with multi-agency business support.
- The MACPT will jointly agree policy and process and develop guidance and templates
- The MACPT will have a role in sharing the learning from serious case reviews, audits, inspections, etc. They will develop and deliver multi-agency training; multi-agency products for multi-agency delivery.
- The MACPT will employ data analysts and explore any emerging themes and issues and feed this back to MACPT governance who will instruct L&D
- The wider governance of child safeguarding will sit within the MACPT under the governance umbrella, and their meeting structure will be coordinated by the multi-agency business support. This will avoid duplication.
- Co-authored documents, for example the Threshold Document, will be a product of the MACPT



Schools White Paper

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny
Commission

Date of meeting: 14/04/2026

Lead director/officer: Sophie Maltby

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected:
- Report author: Sophie Maltby
- Author contact details:
- Report version number:

1. Summary

This report summarises the implications of the Government's Schools White Paper 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' for Leicester City, highlighting a shift towards more inclusive mainstream education for children and young people with SEND.

While the direction aligns with the Council's existing strategy, it requires accelerated delivery, strengthened practice in mainstream schools, and enhanced collaboration across services.

The local authority is also required to develop a Local SEND Reform Plan by June 2026 to set out how these changes will be implemented

● Recommendation(s) to scrutiny:

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission are invited to:

- Note the publication of the Schools White Paper and its strategic direction
- Consider the implications of the increased emphasis on inclusive mainstream education for Leicester City
- Note that the direction of travel aligns with the Council's existing SEND strategy
- Note the requirement for the local area to develop a Local SEND Reform Plan

2. Detailed report

This report provides an update on the Government's Schools White Paper 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' and its implications for Leicester City.

The White Paper sets out a significant shift in the national education system, with a clear expectation that more children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will have their needs met within inclusive mainstream schools. It emphasises that mainstream settings should be equipped to support a wider range of needs effectively, with high standards and inclusion seen as mutually reinforcing.

This represents a move away from a system that has increasingly relied on specialist provision, towards one where mainstream schools are supported, resourced and held accountable for delivering inclusive practice, with specialist provision focused on those with the most complex needs.

In Leicester City, the development of more inclusive mainstream provision has been a core priority. The broad policy direction of the White Paper therefore aligns well with the Council's existing strategy, providing national policy support and momentum for work already underway locally. However, the reforms will require a step change in the scale, consistency and pace of delivery, with increased expectations on all parts of the system.

The shift towards inclusive mainstream education will require continued strengthening of practice across schools, including greater consistency in what is ordinarily available, improved access to specialist advice, and more effective graduated responses to need. This will place increased emphasis on workforce development, leadership capacity and collaboration across schools and services.

The White Paper reinforces the role of the local authority as a system leader and convener, responsible for bringing together education, health and care partners to deliver integrated, place-based services. For Leicester City, this will require strengthened joint commissioning, effective sufficiency planning, and clear governance and accountability across the partnership. More broadly, the White Paper highlights the importance of early intervention, a broad and engaging curriculum, improved attendance and belonging, and stronger partnerships across education, health and care services. Schools are positioned as key community anchors, with services increasingly wrapped around them to support children and families.

Alongside the White Paper, the Government has published a SEND Reform consultation and requires all local areas to develop a Local SEND Reform Plan, setting out how the local system will align with national expectations.

National Timeline for Reform

The White Paper sets out a programme of reform to be delivered over the course of this Parliament and into the next decade, with early implementation beginning immediately. Key elements of SEND reform are expected to be introduced in phases, including initial system changes and investment from 2026–27, with further legislative changes and full implementation of new frameworks expected later in the programme.

Local areas are required to submit a Local SEND Reform Plan by June 2026, with Year 1 delivery commencing from 2026–27. This places an expectation on the local system to begin implementation at pace, while further national policy and legislative detail continues to be developed.

Delivery of these reforms will depend on workforce capacity across education, health and care, and the ability of the local system to implement change at pace while maintaining confidence among schools, families and partners

[Schools White Paper.pptx](#)

4.1 Financial Implications

The Government has announced that councils with a DSG deficit at the end of 2025/26 will be eligible to receive a High Needs Stability Grant in the following financial year subject to approval of a Local SEND Reform Plan. The cumulative deficit at the end of the current financial year is forecast to be £44.7m, therefore if our plan is approved we should receive a grant of £40.3m in 2026/27.

The Local SEND Reform Plan builds on the existing SEND Transformation Plan which aims to achieve change and reform aligned to the DfE Change Programme Partnership (CPP). Progress is being made to reduce the rate of increase in expenditure growth by lowering average unit cost per pupil and limiting reliance on independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS) which tend to be significantly higher cost.

Signed: Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance

Dated: 30 March 2026

4.2 Legal Implications

This report reflects a shift in national policy rather than introducing any new legal duties. The Council's responsibilities remain set out in existing legislation, in particular the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice.

The greater focus on inclusion within mainstream settings is in line with the current legal framework. However, as this is taken forward, the Council will need to ensure it continues to meet its duty to secure the provision set out in EHCPs, and that placements remain suitable to meet individual needs.

The requirement to produce a Local SEND Reform Plan by June 2026 does not create new legal obligations, but it should clearly set out how the Council will continue to meet its existing duties in practice.

Overall, there are no direct legal implications arising from the report from a social care and safeguarding perspective.

Signed: Sonali Unka – Principal Solicitor

Dated: 31.03.26

4.3 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The strategic direction set out in the Schools White Paper, and the Council's alignment with developing more inclusive mainstream provision, will directly impact individuals sharing the protected characteristics of Age (children and young people) and Disability (pupils with SEND). The overarching aim of the reforms is to advance equality of opportunity by ensuring that children and

young people with SEND have their needs met effectively within mainstream settings, promoting greater inclusion and parity of educational outcomes.

In order to demonstrate that the consideration of equalities impacts is taken into account as an integral part of the process of reviewing or amending existing services, an Equality Impact Assessment should be undertaken on the proposed Local SEND Reform Plan

Signed: : Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 31 March 2026

4.4 Climate Emergency Implications

There are no significant, direct climate emergency implications arising from this report.

Implications arising from strategic plans developed in response to the White Paper should be given consideration as and when the relevant reports are submitted for decision

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 30th March 2026

4.5 Other Implications

Signed:

Dated:

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

Schools White Paper – Key Direction

- Shift to inclusive mainstream as default
- More children with SEND supported in mainstream schools
- High standards and inclusion go together
- Schools as community anchors

What This Means Nationally

- Reduced reliance on specialist placements
- Stronger accountability for inclusive practice
- Earlier intervention and graduated support
- Integration across education, health and care

Leicester City Position

- Inclusive mainstream already core to local SEND strategy
- Strong alignment with national direction
- Step change needed in pace, scale and consistency
- Focus on workforce, sufficiency and system leadership

National Reform Timeline

- 2026: Local SEND Reform Plans submitted (June)
- 2026–27: Year 1 delivery begins (early implementation)
- 32 • 2027 onwards: Expansion of inclusive mainstream reforms
- Later phase: Legislative change and full system implementation
- Key message: Implementation of the reform will begin this year

White Paper Consultation

- National Consultation on proposed SEND reform
- Closing date 18th May
- Feedback informing the final reform approach
- LCC response to the consultation being developed

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**Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (CYPE)
Work Programme 2025 – 2026**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
18 June 2025	<p>Overview of CYPE</p> <p>Families First Programme</p> <p>Social Care and Education Performance Dashboard</p> <p>Children's Social Care, Early Help and Prevention Improvement Plan</p>	<p>That regular updates on the progress of the Family First Programme would come to the commission.</p> <p>The improvements be an agenda item at a future meeting.</p> <p>Quarterly updates be added to the work programme.</p>	
23 September 2025	<p>SEND Transport Update</p> <p>Children's Services Finances</p> <p>Edge of Care</p> <p>Youth Justice Plan</p>	<p>Members to be notified and details circulated once white papers are released.</p> <p>Update to come to the commission on the outstanding 200 children</p> <p>DSG/ high needs recovery programme added to the work programme.</p> <p>School planning added to the work programme</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
28 October 2025	<p>Verbal Ofsted update/ Children's Social Care, Early Help and Prevention Improvement Plan</p> <p>Children Seeking Safety</p> <p>Families First Programme</p> <p>Early years extended entitlement</p>	<p>To include impact monitoring on the Fostering Service microsite launched on the Council website which includes the fostering offer.</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>2 years offer take up</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
20 January 2026	<p>Budget</p> <p>Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report</p> <p>SEND Transport Update</p> <p>HNB Task Group Report</p> <p>Fostering Annual Report</p> <p>Performance Dashboard</p>	<p>Outcome specifics gathered on Travel Training, applications, appeals and outcomes.</p> <p>To include costs relating to Customer Relationship management tool, the Ofsted thematic report, information on family finding events and more detail on advertising techniques for recruitment.</p>	
3 March 2026	<p>Families First Programme</p> <p>Performance Dashboard</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Development</p> <p>HNB Report</p>	<p>To include an update on the pilot launched in South Leicester.</p> <p>With answers to questions raised.</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
14 April 2026	<p>Ofsted Inspection – Verbal Update</p> <p>Early Work - Multi Agency Child Protection Teams – Families First Programme</p> <p>White Paper Briefing</p>		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Corporate Parenting Annual Report	Moved from 14 April 2026	First meeting of new municipal year 2026/27
School age childcare	Moved from 14 April 2026	
Youth Services Survey	Requested at meeting on 3 March 2026	
YPC Survey Findings	To go to first meeting of 2026/27 municipal year.	
EDI Quarterly update	Quarterly report.	
Impact of Recruitment Work	Requested at OSC – to include caseloads for Social Workers.	
Early Years Extended Entitlement Update	To come early in the 2026/27 municipal year.	
Children from Abroad Seeking Safety	6-monthly report.	

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Youth Services - overview		
Academies – Performance Report		
Needs Assessment in Relation to Families in the City		
Children not in state-maintained schools e.g.: Academies, Independent, Faith schools		
Multi-Academy Trusts - Overview		
Update from local DfE Officer		
Fostering Annual Report	Fostering Service microsite launched	
Fostering Community Champions update	Deferred from 26 March 2024	
Corporate Parenting Update	Annual report.	
Fostering Service – Marketing Strategy		
SEN support and funding		
Pupil Place Planning (Primary and Secondary)		
Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report		
Children in Care Council/Care Leavers		
School Holiday Activity and Food Provision		
Education Govt reports e.g.: white paper / green paper		
Ofsted Inspection reports		
Children’s Social Care – Recruitment Issues		
Mental Health impacts on children	Likely to be examined jointly with other commissions	
Informal Scrutiny on DSG High Needs Block	To commence following the full report to the Commission.	

Leicester Children's Services – Self Evaluation		
Covid impact and response to early childhood development		
Families First Programme	To remain on work programme.	
Children's Social Care, Early Help and Prevention Improvement Plan		
SEND Transport	Update to come to the commission on the outstanding 200 children in January 2026.	
DSG/ high needs recovery programme		
School Planning		
Sufficiency in Mainstream and Special Schools	Add Homefield info (following Special meeting May) as an appendix with the report.	
Sufficiency for CLA and Care Leavers		
Early Years Extended Entitlement	A further update to come to the Commission April 2025	