

AGENDA

Health & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Friday 16 November 2012**

Time: **10.00 am**

Place: **Council Chamber - Brockington**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call David Penrose, Governance Services on 01432 383690 or e-mail dpenrose@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the Meeting of the Health & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairman **Councillor JW Millar**
Vice-Chairman **Councillor SJ Robertson**

Councillor PA Andrews
Councillor PL Bettington
Councillor WLS Bowen
Councillor MJK Cooper
Councillor KS Guthrie
Councillor JLV Kenyon
Councillor JG Lester
Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes
Councillor GA Powell
Councillor J Stone
Councillor PJ Watts

AGENDA

		Pages
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence.</p>	
2.	<p>NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)</p> <p>To receive details of any Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.</p>	
3.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.</p>	
4.	<p>SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY</p> <p>To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.</p> <p><i>(There will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Consideration will be given to whether it should form part of the Committee’s work programme when compared with other competing priorities.)</i></p>	
5.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To note questions received from the public and the items to which they relate.</p> <p><i>(Questions are welcomed for consideration at a Scrutiny Committee meeting so long as the question is directly related to an item listed on the agenda. If you have a question you would like to ask then please submit it no later than two working days before the meeting to the Committee Officer. This will help to ensure that an answer can be provided at the meeting).</i></p>	
6.	<p>OFSTED SAFEGUARDING REPORT</p> <p>To enable the Committee to understand arrangements being made to address the findings of the recent OFSTED inspection of early help and child protection services in Herefordshire and to determine the action the Committee needs to take to assure the strength of the improvements being made.</p>	5 - 24
7.	<p>QUARTERLY REPORT OUTLINING SAVINGS THAT ARE BEING ACHIEVED THROUGH THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DELIVERING ADULT SERVICES (TO FOLLOW)</p> <p>To note the progress being made and risks associated with achieving the savings targets established for adult services for 2012/13.</p>	
8.	<p>TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT - SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN</p> <p>To consider the findings arising from the Task & Finish Group – ‘Safeguarding Arrangements for Children’ and to recommend the report to the Executive for consideration.</p>	25 - 46
9.	<p>HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>To consider the Committee’s work programme.</p>	47 - 50

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Public Involvement at Scrutiny Committee Meetings

You can contact Councillors and Officers at any time about Scrutiny Committee matters and issues which you would like the Scrutiny Committee to investigate.

There are also two other ways in which you can directly contribute at Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committee meetings.

1. Identifying Areas for Scrutiny

At the meeting the Chairman will ask the members of the public present if they have any issues which they would like the Scrutiny Committee to investigate, however, there will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Councillors will research the issue and consider whether it should form part of the Committee's work programme when compared with other competing priorities.

2. Questions from Members of the Public for Consideration at Scrutiny Committee Meetings and Participation at Meetings

You can submit a question for consideration at a Scrutiny Committee meeting so long as the question you are asking is directly related to an item listed on the agenda. If you have a question you would like to ask then please submit it **no later than two working days before the meeting** to the Committee Officer. This will help to ensure that an answer can be provided at the meeting. Contact details for the Committee Officer can be found on the front page of this agenda.

Generally, members of the public will also be able to contribute to the discussion at the meeting. This will be at the Chairman's discretion.

(Please note that the Scrutiny Committee is not able to discuss questions relating to personal or confidential issues.)

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YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO: -

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public Register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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MEETING	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	16 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	OFSTED INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN – IMPROVEMENT PLANNING
REPORT BY:	DIRECTOR FOR PEOPLE’S SERVICES

Classification: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To enable the Committee to understand arrangements being made to address the findings of the recent OFSTED inspection of early help and child protection services in Herefordshire and to determine the action the Committee needs to take to assure the strength of the improvements being made.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The Committee determine whether to establish a task and finish group to monitor the effectiveness of the Improvement Board arrangements and to strengthen the governance and oversight provided by Members for early help and child protection arrangements, including advising on the training for all Members.**
- b) **The Committee Consider the grade criteria at Appendix 2 and consider how a complementary work programme could assure over future months that the Council and its partners are on the right trajectory to significantly improve outcomes and experiences of children and families and to secure a ‘good’ rating.**

Key Points Summary

- In September 2012, OFSTED conducted an unannounced inspection of Herefordshire’s arrangements to protect children.
- The outcome of the inspection was that Herefordshire’s arrangements to protect children

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Jo Davidson,
Director for People’s Services on Tel: (01432) 260039

are deemed to be inadequate.

- An Improvement Board has been set up by the Director for People's Services in consultation with the lead member immediately in order to address the issues raised, in line with best practice.
- The progress of the Improvement Plan will be monitored through an Improvement Notice, by the Department for Education and by the Minister, Edward Timpson M.P.
- It is anticipated that it will take approximately 18 months to demonstrate sufficient progress and the sustainability of that progress to be released from this Improvement Notice.
- It may be appropriate for the Committee to provide local scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Board on behalf of the people of Herefordshire. This would augment the monitoring that will be in place through the improvement notice.

Alternative Options

7.1 There are no alternative options to this process which has a statutory basis to it.

Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee will wish to consider how best to become involved in the contribution to and monitoring of progress associated with the Improvement Plan.

Introduction and Background

The OFSTED inspection

- 9.1 OFSTED carried out a two week unannounced inspection of the early help and child protection services in Herefordshire between 10-19 September 2012. This was carried out under a new framework which is being used for all council areas currently graded as adequate or inadequate. These arrangements will be replaced in 2013 by a new unannounced multi-agency, multi-inspectorate inspection framework of early help and child protection arrangements which will inspect all agencies at the same time.
- 9.2 This inspection relates to the local authority arrangements for the protection of children, including the effectiveness of the practice of other agencies involved in safeguarding children. Herefordshire was the fourth area to be inspected in the country, through a process which, rightly, raises the bar on practice and impact.
- 9.3 The inspection report can be accessed from this link, <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/herefordshire>. The report identified a number of strengths in the early help arrangements, which have been lead by the Council and overseen by the local Safeguarding Board; it also identified some improvements since the last full inspection in 2010 and the unannounced inspection of the duty referral and assessment arrangements, in 2011.
- 9.4 However, as has already been announced, the inspectors identified a number of significant weaknesses in the quality and effectiveness of child protection practice, the effectiveness of leadership and governance in child protection and therefore the impact of the child protection services on outcomes and experiences for children and their families. As a result of these weaknesses, OFSTED judged arrangements in Herefordshire to be inadequate for all elements.

Key Considerations

Improvement planning

National arrangements

- 10.1 Under the national arrangements, all councils graded inadequate (currently in the region of 23 for early help and child protection and a further 17 for adoption and/or fostering services) are considered to require the oversight of the Department for Education (DfE), to ensure the improvements made are as rapid as possible, and are likely to continue to improve. It is likely that Herefordshire will require an Improvement Notice from the Minister which will be developed with the Council. This will set out the specific improvements to be made and the timescales for doing this. National evidence shows that most authorities improve to an 'adequate' rating within 18 months to 2 years from the original inspection. A verbal update will be given to the Scrutiny Committee about the Improvement Notice, following a meeting with the DfE officials on 23rd October 2012.

Improvement Board

- 10.2 The Council and its partners have taken advice from the national Children's Improvement Board and from other Safeguarding Boards and Councils on the actions which have most impact on improving arrangements rapidly. An Improvement Board has been established comprising Chief Officers of all relevant organisations, or their most senior nominees; the Lead Member for the Council; external advice from the DfE and the Children's Improvement Board and an experienced Independent Chair, Paul Curran. The Terms of Reference of the Board are attached at Appendix 1.
- 10.3 The Board is determined that improvements are seen as the responsibility of all agencies and organisations, and not just as a Council issue to resolve. It has set the goal of achieving a 'good' OFSTED grading in the future; the current grade criteria for this are attached at Appendix 2. Scrutiny may wish to reflect on these criteria and consider the role it could play in assuring, over time, that the necessary changes are having the impact they need to.

Improvement Plan

- 10.4 In common with other Authorities, the Council and its partners has created a draft improvement plan. The plan identifies the improvements necessary in:
- The outcomes for children, young people and their families
 - The quality of practice
 - The effectiveness of the help and protection provided
 - Leadership and Governance
 - The arrangements for and the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements
- 10.5 The plan tackles the greatest areas of risk first and lays the foundations for more effective practice. One of the current weaknesses in child protection arrangements is the understanding of the experience and views and opinions of the children and young people we are protecting. The Improvement Board has, therefore, established outcome measures which keep firmly in the minds of staff, managers, members and non-executive directors, the central importance of these experiences and views:
- I know who to talk to and I am listened to
 - I feel I am getting the help I need

- I am protected from harm
- I am helped by people who know what they are doing
- My family are getting the help they need

10.6 The improvement work has been broken down into 7 areas of work:

- Front line practice
- The development of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board
- Developing the workforce, including recruitment and retention
- Multi-agency safeguarding hub
- Commissioning and contracting improvements, including addressing gaps in services
- Looked after children services (this is not a requirement of the Inspection as these services were not subject to inspection. However it is prudent to ensure that the service improvements are as far reaching as possible whilst not losing focus)
- Quality assurance and performance management arrangements

10.7 The plan is very much a work in progress, but is available for Members who wish to look at it.

10.8 A work area under development is leadership and governance arrangements of the council and its partners, including strengthening and improving the role of Members and senior officers. Scrutiny will particularly wish to consider two aspects of this:

- What is Scrutiny's own assessment of its effectiveness and what help would it wish to access to improve?
- How will Scrutiny play an effective assurance role over the next 18 months, which complements the role of bodies such as the Safeguarding Board and the Improvement Board?
- Scrutiny might wish to consider establishing a task and finish group to develop expertise and understanding in this area to advise and inform the rest of the committee.

10.9 The Improvement Plan is currently with managers and teams for discussion and development, to ensure that everyone understands what we are aiming for; everyone can play their part in fulfilling their own individual responsibilities effectively and each individual person is clear what their own improvements need to be.

Monitoring the effectiveness and impact of the Plan

10.10 The plan will be closely project managed and workstream leads will be expected to report on the progress of

- Actions and timescales
- Whether all staff are now operating within new models of working/policies/procedures/expectations
- The impact this is having on children, young people and their families

10.11 Early progress reports will focus on whether the actions necessary have taken place when people said they would; over time this will then move to monitoring compliance and then finally impact. The Improvement Board will be checking from a number of qualitative and quantitative angles whether the necessary changes to culture, activity and impact have taken place through:

- Stakeholder and Service User consultations
- Audits, surveys and practice observations
- Child Protection and Looked after Data – benchmarked and looking at trends over time
- Workforce data, supervision records, career professional development data and quality assurance
- Commissioning data

10.12 At specific points during the improvements, the new Healthwatch organisation will also be involved in collecting user experience data; the Council will also be commissioning a peer challenge and a peer review to provide external validation and learning. The Independent Chair of the Improvement Board is likely to be required to make three monthly progress reports to the DfE. The next inspection of these services is likely to be in 18 months to 2 years.

10.13 Scrutiny will wish to consider the assurance role it too will play and the frequency of reporting it would wish to have. The purpose of the Improvement Plan is to secure rapid and long lasting improvements which enable the usual mechanisms to operate effectively without the need for additional improvement activity.

Update on the immediate actions

10.14 The Committee will be aware that there were four immediate actions required of the Council and its partners. At this stage, the expectation is that process actions will have been put into place, with the impact of these reported at a later date. In brief, the actions taken so far are:

Arrangements for the audit of all cases closed within the last three months and for all current cases to be risk assessed, have been made, through the commissioning of an organisation to carry out this work on the Council's behalf. This extensive piece of work to audit over 1600 cases, is scheduled to take place from 12th November until 15th December, 2012.

10.15 A programme of workshops have commenced to reinforce compliance with statutory guidance on strategy discussion and child protection enquiries. This work is further reinforced by an intensive team management coaching and mentoring support programme which is also underway and due for completion in December, 2012.

10.16 Performance information related to social workers visiting children in need and those in need of protection is being both scrutinized and further developed to ensure that children are visited regularly. These practices are also being reinforced by the programmes referred to above.

10.17 Scrutiny of legal planning meetings over the last six months has identified that there is no evidence of any other delays in legal planning meetings other than those cases identified by the inspectors.

Staffing issues

10.18 The child protection system has staff and front-line managers from a range of different professions and organisations. Each organisation has to ensure it has enough qualified, experienced and skilled staff and managers.

10.19 The findings of the report have been accepted and work is in place to ensure we have a full understanding of strengths and weaknesses, to make some fundamental changes. Staff at the front line continue to focus their efforts on meeting the needs of the children and families on their caseloads. Staff and managers are being provided with help, support and coaching, alongside analysis of skills and capability. In an already vulnerable situation, the position of

the front line management in four teams has become more vulnerable, with some staff leaving, or expressing a wish to change role. The level of management vacancies and staff absence in the child protection and children with disabilities team is of concern. Short and long term solutions are being explored. Meanwhile senior managers are prioritising time with the front line teams to offer support, reassurance and leadership during this unsettled period. .

- 10.20 Staff are very prepared and eager to address the findings. We have many excellent staff working in an extremely complex and sensitive area of business. The improvement plan and associated monitoring and holding to account needs to ensure that those staff are able to flourish in an environment of appropriate support and challenge with barriers to effective working removed as rapidly as they can be.

Community Impact

- 11.1 The improvements planned will lead to a positive impact on the most vulnerable children and families in Herefordshire.

Equality and Human Rights

- 12.1 By the nature of its work Children's early help and child protection services, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to -
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

Financial Implications

- 13.1 Members have protected and enhanced the child protection budgets over the past 3 years. Over the past two years the budgets for children's safeguarding has increased by 14.8% against an overall council budget reduction of 9%.
- 13.2 The current resource plan for the Improvement Plan is costing in the region of £364 in the current financial year and £630k projected for 2013/14,, of which £75-100k can be funded from a national improvement grant.
- 13.3 In common with other local authority areas, there is already an increase in activity in the child protection teams, with the number of Child Protection Plans increased from 169 (September 2012) to 193 (November 2012). This increase in activity is expected to extend to an increase in the number of children in care and children in the early help system, at the same time that the government is reducing the size of the early intervention grant in Herefordshire.
- 13.4 By the end of December around 1600 children's cases will have been re-examined and it is anticipated that more work will flow from this, alongside the day to day work of new children coming to the attention of services. These challenges are being built into the budget planning for 2013 and beyond.

Legal Implications

- 14.1 This report does not raise any legal issues and arises from a mandatory statutory process

Risk Management

- 15.1 A risk register has been developed. The most significant risks are:
- 15.2 The recommendations of the plan include the requirement to audit all open cases (1100) and closed cases over the previous 3 months (500). This audit work is likely to identify the need to reopen a considerable amount of cases and to escalate a considerable amount of cases to Child Protection concerns. Should this risk materialise, additional staff will be required at significant cost. Therefore the resource register has identified the potential costs, but a resource to support these costs has yet to be identified. Recruitment to new and vacant roles however remains a challenge.
- 15.3 Additionally, the numbers of looked after children may increase which could affect placement costs. Currently there are mitigating plans in place, including some savings made this year through successful savings strategies.
- 15.4 Staff concern resulting from a critical inspection may also affect decision making and sound judgements, therefore creating a risk that children may not be appropriately safeguarded. A range of training and staffing support measures are currently being planned and put into place to mitigate against this risk.
- 15.5 Additionally raised awareness resulting from the publication and dissemination of this report may result in additional concerns being identified in children from other agencies, at an earlier point. Whilst this is positive for families, the risk is the additional demand which is difficult for agencies to meet.

Consultees

- 16.1 The Improvement Plan covers activity by the Council, the police, the Probation Service, Wye Valley NHS Trust, 2gether Mental Health Foundation Trust; the Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Herefordshire, the voluntary sector, schools and early years sector.

Appendices

- 17.1 Appendix 1: Herefordshire Children's Improvement Board – Terms of Reference
Appendix 2: Ofsted current grading criteria

Background Papers

- 18.1 OFSTED Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children – Herefordshire
- 18.2 Herefordshire Supporting and Protecting Children - Draft Improvement Plan

Herefordshire Supporting and Protecting Children Improvement Board

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Overall purpose of the Board

The Board is responsible for ensuring improvements in the arrangements for the protection of children in Herefordshire by enhancing:

- The quality of practice
- The effectiveness of help and protection provided to children, young people, families and carers
- Leadership and governance
- Multi agency working and integration
- Good Outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that local safeguarding systems, policies and procedures, staff, structures and processes deliver sustainable improvements in all aspects of safeguarding in the county.

Overall Objectives

The Herefordshire Supporting and Protecting Children Improvement Board will drive and oversee progress through monitoring, challenging and supporting the actions within the Improvement Plan, tackling the areas of greatest risk first and laying the foundations for more effective practice. This will include monitoring targets set out in the plan and checking that improvements are embedded through quality assurance and scrutiny.

The Board will have an unwavering focus on securing the necessary rapid improvements needed to safeguarding services for children and young people.

How will the Board know that differences have been made and are sustainable?

- Monitoring the progress of targets set out in the plan
- Assessing Improvements in performance data
- Evidencing improvement in quality of practice
- Evaluating the impact of improvements through engagement and feedback from children, young people and families
- The Board will also explore evaluation by a Higher Education institution

Approach to Improvement

The Board will ensure that individual agencies commit to and take action to improve practice and performance within their own organisations and will be holding the local Safeguarding Children Board to account for securing the necessary improvements in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Board will want to ensure that frontline staff, children and families are engaged in the improvement plan.

Governance Mechanisms

The Board will have an independent Chair.

The Chair will report to the Department for Education on progress with the improvement agenda. The Board's work will also be reported quarterly to the Council's Cabinet. Reports will also routinely be presented to the task group of the Health and Social Care scrutiny committee as well as to the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

The Board will additionally report regularly to the Boards of every partner agency, including, Wye Valley Trust, West Mercia Primary Care Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Group, 2gether, the West Mercia Probation Trust, the West Mercia Police Authority, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable.

This Board does not replace the work of other strategic Boards for example, the Community Safety Partnership, the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board, the Health and Well Being Board and the Children and Young People Partnership Forum; rather, it supports and holds those Boards to account for driving forward and galvanising rapid improvement in prioritised areas of work.

The Board will also ensure that staff and managers are aware of the overall governance, lines of accountability and specific roles of each in driving forward improvement.

Membership

Board members will have clearly defined roles and responsibilities clearly aligned to the objectives and approach of the Board.

Members will make every effort to attend all meetings. In the event of absence, members will send an appropriate deputy who is able to act on their behalf.

The members of the Herefordshire Supporting and Protecting Children Improvement Board will consist of the following:

Independent Chair

Paul Curran

Council

Councillor Patricia Morgan (PM), Cabinet Member for Health & Well Being
Dean Taylor (DT), Interim Chief Executive
Erica Hermon (EH), Corporate Statutory Services Manager

Health

Michelle Clarke (MC), Director of Nursing and Transformation - Wye Valley NHS Trust
Cathy Gritzner (KG), Chief Operating Officer - Clinical Commissioning Group
Trish Jay (TJ), Director of Quality and Performance – 2Gether
Helen Hipkiss (HH), Programme Consultant Children and Safeguarding – NHS West Midlands
Sue Doheny, Interim LAT Director of Nursing

Schools

Sian Bailey (SB), Blackmarston School
Oremi Evans (OE), Brookfield School
Claire McKeown (CM), Whitchurch Primary School
Denise Strutt (DS), Whitecross High School and Specialist Sports College

Early Years

Klaus Wedell (KW)

Third Sector

TBA

Safeguarding Board

Dave McCallum (DMc), Independent Chair – HSCB/HSAB

West Mercia Police

Superintendent Damian Barratt (DB)

West Mercia Probation

David Chantler (DC)

Department for Education

Angela Windle (AW)

Regional Children's Improvement Board

Claire Burgess (CBu)

External

TBA

Advisors

Jo Davidson (JD), Director - People's Services
Chris Baird (CB), Assistant Director - People's Services Commissioning
Kathy O'Mahony (KOM), Assistant Director - Children & Young People's Provider Services
Ruth Taylor (RT), Head of Finance – People's Services
Julie Rzezniczek (JRz), Interim Head of Improvement
Katie Simpson (KS), Project Manager
TJ Postles (TJP), Head of Workforce and Organisational Development

Occasional Advisors

Paul Meredith (PMe), Head of Safeguarding and Review (HC)
John Roughton (JR), Principal Social Worker and Head of Casework(HC)
Carla Preston (CP), Press and Publicity Officer (HPS)

Workstreams

Task Groups will be constituted to drive forward, as appropriate, the workstreams in the Improvement Plan. These groups will be focussed on taking stock of progress to date and on stepping up the pace of improvements.

The workstreams are as follows:

- Workforce
- Practice
- MASH
- Quality Assurance
- Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board
- Looked After Children
- Commissioning and Contracting

The scope of these workstreams will be agreed by the Board. Task group members will also have defined roles and responsibilities. Each group will be assigned a Chair who will be responsible for reporting progress to the Board.

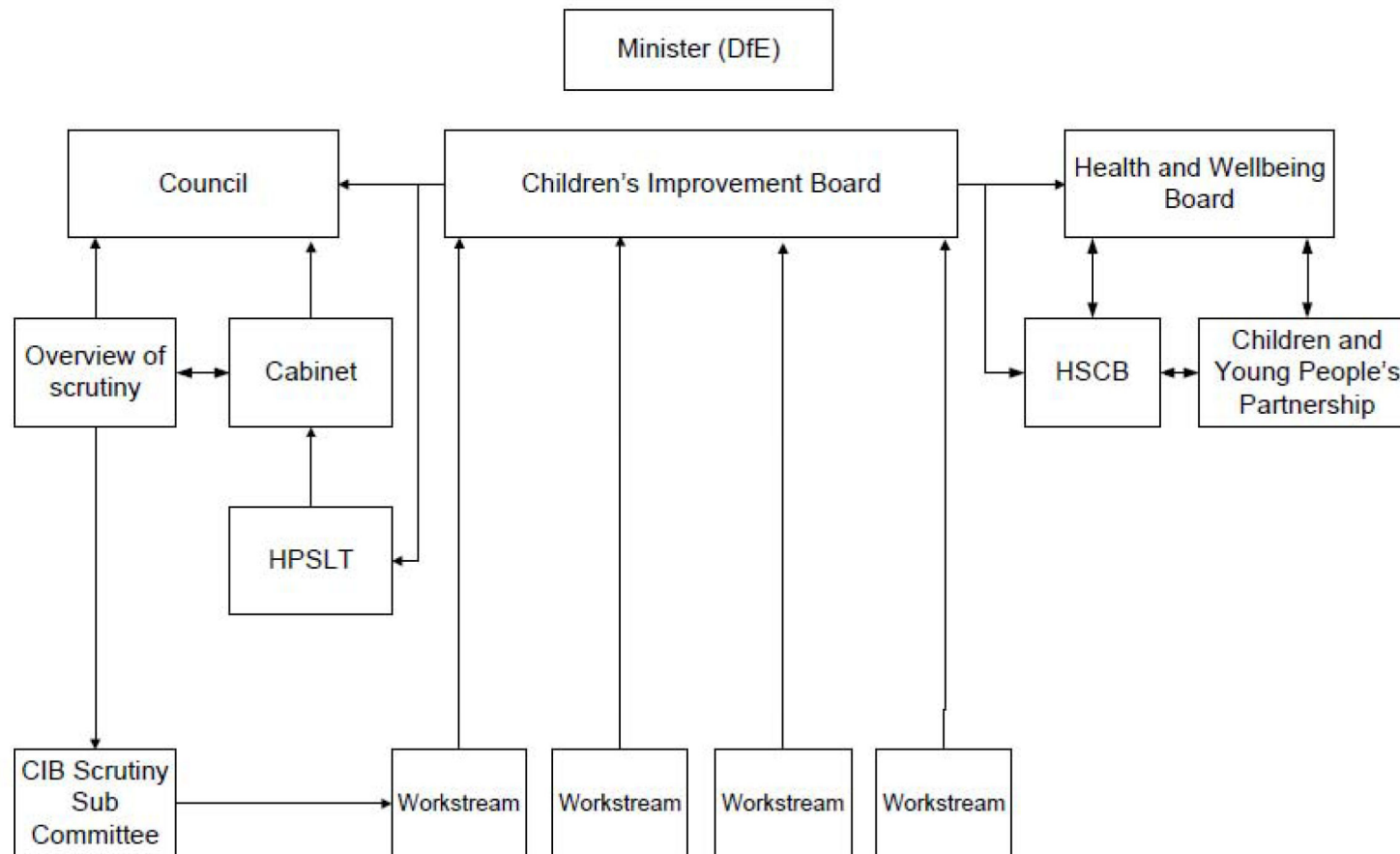
Stakeholders

Communication and consultation with Stakeholders will form a key aspect of the journey to improvement and the Board will agree and determine the scope of this work.

Frequency of Meetings

The Board will meet fortnightly initially and then monthly for the first 12 months. The frequency of meetings will be reviewed after one year.

Governance of Improvement Board



Outcome measures based on ‘Good’ grade descriptors

Overall effectiveness (OE)

- 1.1 The views and experiences of children, young people and their families are at the centre of service development and strategic thinking
- 1.2 The views of children, young people and their families are listened to, analysed and used to inform practice
- 1.3 Children experience good quality of practice in most cases and adequate in nearly all
- 1.4 The quality of practice leads to improved outcomes for most children, including some hard to reach groups
- 1.5 Help and protection are delivered through a coordinated multi-agency response.
- 1.6 A well-coordinated multi-agency early help offer is available to meet the diverse needs of the local population
- 1.7 Leaders have a track record of understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their services, tackling the issues and delivering improvement
- 1.8 A well-embedded learning culture ensures that opportunities for learning and improvement at individual and strategic levels are taken

The effectiveness of the help and protection provided to children, young people and their families and carers (EHP)

- 2.1 Children and young people at risk of harm are identified and protected and, in the majority of cases, their needs are responded to in an effective and purposeful way
- 2.2 Children, young people and their families clearly understand the intentions of the help they receive
- 2.3 Risks are well assessed and well managed
- 2.4 There are no cases identified in which children are currently at risk of, or suffering, significant harm as a result of systemic deficits in practice or management
- 2.5 Most children, young people and their families feel that they have been effectively helped
- 2.6 There is a diverse and wide ranging early help offer that is accessible and reflects the needs of the population

- 2.7 Agencies work together effectively to provide help to children and young people in need of protection
- 2.8 Multi-agency services are effective in offering help and working together to protect children
- 2.9 Services are well-coordinated, proportionate, and are provided early in the emergence of a problem at any stage of their lives
- 2.10 The help and protection received is sensitive and responsive to ethnicity, culture, religion, language or disability
- 2.11 The help and protection given to children and young people is equally accessible and robust, irrespective of the ethnicity, culture, religion, language or disability of the child, young person and family
- 2.12 As a consequence of the help offered, circumstances have improved and, in some cases, the need for targeted services has reduced or been avoided
- 2.13 Early help enables children and young people to develop in line with their peers and to access similar life experiences, such as maintaining attendance at school
- 2.14 The help given is proportionate to risk; children and families are not subjected unnecessarily to formal child protection processes

The quality of practice (QP)

- 3.1 Children who are the subject of concern are consistently seen alone by a social worker
- 3.2 Practice is focused on the experiences of children and young people, and informed by their wishes and feelings
- 3.3 Work with children and families is explained to, and understood by, them in the majority of cases
- 3.4 Social workers develop effective and on-going relationships with children and young people as the medium for their work
- 3.5 Children, young people and their families are kept informed about all actions and decisions being taken
- 3.6 Social work staff receive regular and effective supervision that is focused on their work with children, young people and families
- 3.7 There is effective management oversight, monitoring, risk assessment and decision making in almost all work with children and families
- 3.8 Locally agreed thresholds for access to services for children in need of protection are understood across the agencies.
- 3.9 Thresholds are well embedded and are reviewed and updated regularly
- 3.10 Social work expertise and advice is available to other professionals to support them in determining whether a referral should be made to children's social care
- 3.11 Universal, preventative and non-social care refer children and young people to social care in a timely and effective manner

- 3.12 The management of, and response to, referrals concerning children and young people who live in households where at least one parent or carer misuses substances or suffers from mental ill health, or where there is domestic violence, is timely and facilitates early help and protection.
- 3.13 Section 47 enquiries are thorough and timely and always carried out by a qualified and suitably experienced social worker. Findings in relation to significant harm are clear.
- 3.14 In the majority of cases, assessments (including common assessments) are timely and result in a direct offer of help or appropriate protection where appropriate.
- 3.15 Assessment and planning addresses children's physical, social, emotional and/or educational needs, including supporting their attendance and progression at school and their capacity to learn.
- 3.16 Planning is outcome-focused and the progress and impact is measurable and reviewed.
- 3.17 Decision making is undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced social work staff and/or managers, as appropriate, and those decisions are recorded effectively.
- 3.18 The majority of case recording is coherent, timely, reflects the work undertaken, is clear about the reasons for decisions, including decisions not to take actions, and includes an up to date case chronology.
- 3.19 Information sharing between agencies and professionals is timely, specific, effective and, where necessary, is the subject of consent to that sharing by the family concerned.
- 3.20 In the majority of cases, multi-agency case conferences, strategy meetings and core groups are consistently attended by key participants and are effective forums for information sharing, planning, and informed and risk-based decision making.
- 3.21 Response to children and young people at immediate risk of harm is effective at all times, including out of normal office hours.
- 3.22 Almost all case recording is coherent, timely, reflects the work undertaken, is clear about the reasons for decisions, including decisions not to take actions, and includes an up to date case chronology.
- 3.23 Recording clearly demonstrates outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.24 Plans are dynamic and change in the light of emerging issues.
- 3.25 Most multi-agency case conferences, strategy meetings and core groups are consistently attended by key participants and are effective forums for information sharing, planning, and informed and risk-based decision making.
- 3.26 Children, young people and families have access to the services of an advocate where appropriate.

Leadership and Governance (LG)

- 4.1 Leaders prioritise, identify and implement strategies in relation to the commissioning and provision of child protection services, including early help services, which are clear about priorities and identify what needs to be done to secure improvement.
- 4.2 The shared local strategy: is based on established local need; includes the provision of a range of services for early help; is appropriately resourced; and is focused on the effectiveness of help that is provided and the difference that it makes to children and young people's lives.
- 4.3 There are clear accountabilities and responsibilities between the LSCB, the Director of Children's Services, the Chief Executive and the Lead Member for Children's Services, to ensure that sufficient and focused attention is given to children and young people, who are suffering, or likely to suffer, harm from abuse and neglect.
- 4.4 The LSCB has been effective in improving the quality of child protection practice across the system, and all key partners are committed to its work.
- 4.5 The LSCB ensures that multi-agency training is available and effective in improving the protection of children and young people.
- 4.6 Performance management and evaluation is established within the local authority and in partner agencies, and leads to improvements in keeping children and young people safe from harm, and in outcomes.
- 4.7 There are effective mechanisms in place for feedback from children, young people, families and front line staff, both individually and collectively.
- 4.8 There is an adequate supply of suitably experienced and competent social work and other staff, and effective arrangements for their training and development.
- 4.9 The local authority and its partners have an accurate understanding of their effectiveness and their key strengths and areas for development.
- 4.10 Staff feel supported, challenged and motivated to improve.
- 4.11 The authority can demonstrate some learning from the range of sources available.
- 4.12 There is active and visible leadership and commitment from the Leader or Mayor of the Council, from the Chief Executive, and from the Lead Member for Children's Services.
- 4.13 Leadership, at all levels, is active and visible.
- 4.14 Senior managers personally scrutinise and audit practice on a regular basis.
- 4.15 The local authority and its partners have a consistent track record of sustained improvement and are able to sustain those improvements.
- 4.16 There is a robust and up to date joint strategic needs assessment, which informs effective strategic commissioning, both by the local authority and through joint commissioning.
- 4.17 The strategy includes a clearly articulated and deliverable early help offer.

- 4.18 The LSCB provides effective challenge to all partner agencies, which drives improvement.
- 4.19 Elected members champion the needs of children and young people and respond proactively and effectively to their needs.
- 4.20 The local authority can demonstrate that feedback from children, young people and families, and from staff, both individually and collectively, impacts appropriately on strategy, service development and design.
- 4.21 Effective workforce planning addresses staffing requirements to meet the needs of the local community and to reflect its diversity.
- 4.22 Resource deficits are understood and risk assessed and appropriate action is taken.
- 4.23 Leaders are effective in tackling weaknesses and overcoming barriers to improvement.
- 4.24 Management information is used effectively and the local authority is responsive to changes and challenges; this is demonstrated in the priorities set and the progress made.
- 4.25 There are systematic mechanisms in place to feedback, act on, and evaluate the impact of learning from all sources.
- 4.26 There is effective and continuous learning from feedback from children, young people, families and carers, and from practitioners, and a range of other sources, including complaints, serious case reviews and audits, peer review and challenge, inspection findings and research.
- 4.27 Knowledge, learning and development are well embedded and demonstrate that staff increase their skills to effectively help and protect children and young people.

MEETING:	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	16 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	TASK & FINISH GROUP REPORT – SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN HEREFORDSHIRE
REPORT BY:	Task & Finish Review Group

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the findings arising from the Task & Finish Group – ‘Safeguarding Arrangement for Children in Herefordshire’ and to recommend the report to the Executive for consideration.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **The Committee considers the report of the Task & Finish Group – Safeguarding Arrangement for Children in Herefordshire, in particular its recommendations, and determines whether it wishes to agree the findings for submission to the Executive;**
- (b) **Subject to the Review being approved, the Executive’s response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response;**

Key Points Summary

- A scrutiny Task & Finish Review has been undertaken into the Council’s Safeguarding Arrangement for Children.
- The findings and recommendations of the Review Group are contained in the attached report.

Alternative Options

- 1 The Committee can agree, not agree or can vary the recommendations. If the Committee agree with the findings and recommendations from the review, the attached report will be submitted to the Executive for consideration. It will be for the Executive to decide whether some, all or none of the recommendations are approved.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from: S Clay
(Lead Officer for the Review) (01432 261657) or D Penrose, Governance Services (01432) 383690

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 This Committee commissioned a Task & Finish Group to look at Safeguarding Arrangement for Children. The Task & Finish Group has completed its task and its report is required to be submitted to this committee for approval. The recommendations also set out how the report should be progressed in accordance with the Council's Constitution, if approved by the Committee.

Introduction and Background

- 3 On 27th July 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of Safeguarding Arrangements for Children in Herefordshire, and agreed a scoping statement for that review. The reason for the review was to understand the current awareness of the safeguarding arrangements in Herefordshire specifically in relation to the roles and responsibilities of councillors and to understand the function of corporate parenting.
- 4 The Review has been undertaken and the resultant findings and recommendations are to be reported back to Committee for its consideration prior to being referred to the Council's Executive for consideration and approval.

Community Impact

- 5 The Review links to the priority in the Corporate Plan of improving health care and social care and the long term outcome of improved intervention and support for children and keeping them safe.

Equality and Human Rights

- 6 If the Committee agree with the findings of the Group the report will need to be considered by the Executive and, depending on their decision, any resultant revised policy and guidance will need to be assessed against the Equality Analysis and be reported to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

- 7 The cost of undertaking any outcomes from the Review will have to be considered by the Executive, and met from within existing resources.

Legal Implications

- 8 The Council is required to take into account the changes to recent government guidance to which the review report refers. If the Committee and the Executive agree with the findings of the Group, legal input will be given to the resultant revised policy and guidance.

Risk Management

- 9 There is reputational risk if the Council does not operate a sound policy. The recommendations in the Review report should help mitigate this risk. The potential risk has been highlighted to the relevant department to assess whether the risk warrants inclusion in the risk register.

Consultees

- 10 As part of the Review, interviews were held with David McCallum, Independent Chairman of the Children's Safeguarding Board, the Director for People's Services, the Assistant Director Children & Young People Provider Services, the Councils Referral and Assessment Team, Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children and the Looked After Children Team. Interviews were also held with looked after children in Centre 18 in Hereford and foster carers in Moor House, Hereford.

Appendices

- 14 Task & Finish Review Group Report – Safeguarding arrangements for Children in Herefordshire.

Background Papers

- 15 Department for Education:
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review
 - The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
 - Family and Friends Care: Statutory guidance for Local Authorities.
 - Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards



Task & Finish Group Report

**Safeguarding Arrangements
for Children in Herefordshire**



Safeguarding Arrangements for Children in Herefordshire—draft Review Report

1 Background

- 1.1 On 27th July 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of Safeguarding Arrangements for Children in Herefordshire, and agreed a scoping statement for that review. The reason for the review was to understand the current awareness of the safeguarding arrangements in Herefordshire specifically in relation to the roles and responsibilities of councillors and to understand the function of corporate parenting

The agreed terms of reference of the task and finish group were:

- To consider the arrangements for Looked After Children in Herefordshire in relation to partnership working in education, health, Youth Offending Service and social care
- To consider the arrangements for 16/17 year old homeless young people

The full Scoping Statement for the review is set out in Appendix 1, together with a list of elected Members who served on the Group.

- 1.2 Between September and July 2012 the group carried out research and convened meetings, interviews and a site visit to gather as much background information and seek as many views as was required to make recommendations. The Group were provided with a background information pack, set out in Appendix 2.

2 Overview

- 2.1 This review was designed to ensure that officers, members of the council and partner organisations understood their role and responsibility as corporate parents in ensuring that children in Herefordshire are safe and that they have the opportunity to meet their milestones and achieve comparably with targets set nationally in safeguarding children, with a particular focus on looked after children

- 2.2 The outcomes that are expected from the report include:

- That the safeguarding board is made aware of the recommendations of the review
- Information about Safeguarding is available to members by way of regular briefings
- Consider what priorities looked after children are being given by agencies

3 Introduction

3.1 **Herefordshire Children’s Safeguarding Board**

The Safeguarding Board provides the multi-agency strategic leadership for safeguarding children in the County. The Board’s work increasingly dovetails with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults’ Board in order to ensure that robust safeguarding process are in place across Herefordshire which adequately safeguard people from cradle to grave.

The Board’s functions include:

- Multi agency policies and processes
- Training strategies and delivery

- Strategic planning
- Developing inter agency relationships
- Public and professional awareness
- Performance management and Quality Assurance
- Member agency compliance and holding individuals and multi agency work for looked after children to account

4 The National Picture for Looked after Children

- 4.1 Nationally the number of children in care has continued to rise over the last three years, this has inevitably led to many challenges for agencies and in particular for authorities who have a responsibility to find regulated and suitable accommodation, preferably within a family environment.
- 4.2 Since the death of Peter Connelly at the age of 17 months in the London Borough of Haringey in 2008 the numbers of children nationally coming into the care system has risen by 33% from 6,488 in 2008 to 8,684 in 2009/10. In March 2010 there were 832 applications made to the courts for care proceedings, the biggest number ever recorded.
- 4.3 Nationally authorities report that they continue to struggle to meet the rise and demand for foster placements and subsequently the number of children being placed in external agencies has also risen. Private and third sector organisations report an increase in requests for both foster placements and residential placements. Demographically the national picture of fostering is that there is an aging population of carers and the picture evolving is that numbers of foster carers are likely to reduce.

5 Local Picture

- 5.1 In the last year Herefordshire has seen a rise in the number of children being accommodated by the authority and entering into the care system. This number has gradually risen over the last two years from 150 to 215, this is in line with the national picture. Herefordshire's number of looked after children is average and comparable to statistical neighbours
- 5.2 The number of foster carers nationally has reduced. Locally, Herefordshire has also experienced this trend, seeing the numbers of carers drop from 79 households in 2009 and in 2010 to 75 households at the beginning of 2011. In 2011 the service worked hard to prevent a further fall in the number of foster carers and to increase the numbers through a specific 'invest to save' project. The number of foster carer households has recovered, and currently sits at 84, bucking the national trend
- 5.3 As a result of the rise in the number of looked after children and the challenge in increasing fostering households the number of external agency foster placements has continued to rise. There are currently 37 children in external agency foster placements. Whilst this remains an area of concern, the number has reduced from 45 in April 2011. Considering that this number has reduced at the same time that the number of looked after children has increased demonstrates that the invest to save project to increase foster carer households has been successful
- 5.4 The average cost of the independent fostering resource also rose from £844 per week in 2009 to £1,004 in 2010. There was a subsequent review and decision to join the West

Midlands framework for fostering and this has seen the cost of fostering placements reduce to an average of £850 in 2011.

6 Children aged 16-17

- 6.1 The Care Leaver Regulations came into force from April 2011. This guidance relates generally to young people aged 16+ to 25 and who have ceased to be looked after or who at the age of 16/17 have been identified as a 'child in need' of a service.
- 6.2 The research for this specification related particularly to the key issue of whether a homeless 16/17 year old if found to be in need of a service would need to be accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act
- 6.3 Research findings from the Southwark ruling and the new care leavers regulations have concluded that this is a complex matter. To achieve good outcomes for young people it is considered that a working together ethos with general principles and good partnership working with housing colleagues will be required.
- 6.4 It is clear from the regulations and ruling in the Southwark case that where a young person aged 16/17 presents as homeless a joint assessment should be undertaken by Children's Services and housing. Where it is determined that the young person is 'in need' the Southwark case would argue that being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act should be applied. This decision is taken in conjunction with the views of the young person, what their wishes are and their life ambitions/opportunities
- 6.5 In Herefordshire the numbers of young people presenting themselves as homeless had continued to rise following the ruling in the Southwark case. In Herefordshire this review established that the looked after children's service had developed a good working relationship with housing colleagues and have now launched a 16+ service for care leavers and those young people between the ages of 16-17 who have met the threshold for a service. It is evident that in the last year the numbers of young people aged 16-17 entering the care system have begun to reduce. The data available acknowledged that in most cases referred the newly developed family support worker in the 16+ service was able to work with the family and young person, and find a solution that allowed the young person to remain within the family home, demonstrating that the relationship between early intervention through the family support worker to be successful

7 Interviews

- 7.1 The Review Group undertook a number of interviews and Group discussions throughout the course of the Review, and the list of witnesses is attached as Appendix 3.
- 7.2 On the 15th September 2011 the Review Group interviewed members of the Referral and Assessment Team, Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children and received a presentation on a case regarding an unborn child. This was as an example that demonstrated the co-operation between agencies. A number of issues were highlighted during the discussion:
 - The Multi-agency team worked to ensure that the mother and the unborn child were kept in the optimum health. This included work with both the drug and alcohol related teams. The family as a whole was considered when looked at by substance

misuse services. GP's had an obligation to report concerns over child protection, and followed the multi-agency protocols. This was also true of teachers, and additional guidance on the issue had been provided by Ofsted. There was an increased willingness amongst the Police to utilise their powers in this area, as staff were trained up in the safeguarding matters.

- That co-location of Children Service's teams, health professionals and the police would help to both speed up processes and prevent any cases from being missed. A police officer would be located in the Children Services team from October 2011, and the intention would be to site the Public Protection Team and the Child Abuse Team in one building.
- That early intervention by the children provider services was delivered by co-located locality teams in the market towns and the City. These consisted of social care staff, psychologists, educational, youth services, health services and welfare officers who all shared the same office, supported by a local network of other agencies, such as Police Community Support Officers and midwives. Possible boundary issues between localities were removed by a single point of contact for the locality teams. Any safeguarding issue would mobilise the appropriate local team. The information and Assessment Co-ordinators ensured that information was shared about children, and liaised with the police and youth offending teams. Multi Agency Group Meetings took place every six weeks, but special meetings could be held at very short notice when required in order to review case work or to receive referrals for complex cases which needed support
- That reputational damage from over-reaction had never occurred as the Service had never been accused of over-reacting. The safeguarding processes were evidence based, and any complaints from parents had been dealt with through the appropriate legislation.
- That children would be sent back to the home environment by the Placement Panel only when it was deemed safe and appropriate. The panel took expert advice from specialists where needed, and the final decision was made by the Assistant Director - Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children, Children were supported by a multi-agency package when returned home.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 1 There should be regular scrutiny of the activities of the Children's Safeguarding Board by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2 Co-location of Children Service's teams, health services and the police should be encouraged. Co-location of the Public Protection Team and the Child Abuse Team in order to prevent cases from being missed should also be put in place as soon as possible.**
- 3 There should be greater use of tele-conferencing systems in order to facilitate Strategy Meetings of the partner agencies.**

7.4 Looked After Children Team

On the 22 November 2011, the Review Group interviewed members of the Looked After Children (LAC) Team and received a presentation on a case regarding a 15 year old girl who had been taken into care in March 2011 following concerns about the behaviour of her 'stepfather' that first appeared in 2009. A number of issues were highlighted during the ensuing discussion:

- Communication between agencies was an area that could be improved, as the first referral period did not always meet the appropriate standards.
- Issues surrounding Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) referrals were being addressed but remains a serious concern. The service was provided by the ²gether NHS Trust and a specialist LAC post was being appointed.
- Social workers should not reasonably be expected to hold a caseload of more than 17, as they were statutorily required to undertake 13 days a years on each case, so a caseload of 20 would leave them short of 56 days in a given year. There was no national recommendation for caseloads. Five agency social workers were employed because of the number of cases that had to be dealt with. Three social workers cost the Council £111k, whilst three agency staff cost £174k. Whilst it was important to recruit social workers, it was important that the right individuals with the best skill sets were in place.
- That paperwork and caseloads were the biggest problems for social workers. A project to look at how the paperwork for looked after children could be simplified was underway.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 4 That a realistic establishment of the costs of the Looked After Children Service should be set, to allow for staff recruitment and retention.**
- 5 All attempts should be made to simplify, rationalise and reduce the amount of recording in Frameworki**
- 6 That Frameworki should be reviewed, with regular reports to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**
- 7 A review of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMH'S) by the ²gether NHS Trust and the commissioning team should be undertaken to investigate how the needs of looked after children are being met by the service**

7.6 Senior Management

On the 14th May 2012, the Review Group interviewed the Director for People's Services and the Assistant Director Children & Young People Provider Services. The following areas were addressed: That;

- Concerns regarding the quality of safeguarding training had been raised, but had been addressed, and a revised training program designed. The Assistant Director Children & Young People Provider Services said that further improvements would be made to provide schools with the facility to train their staff.
- Where safeguarding cases had been closed, the information would not be shared with the child's school, as there was no system for passing such information on. Whilst it had been appreciated that this could potentially cause problems if a child moved between several schools, a more targeted service was being put into place as part of the common assessment framework (CAF) and through localities working. Schools were incentivised to attend these meetings, which took place every six weeks, and which would provide bespoke support services.
- It was considered that the legal support provided to the service was appropriate and provided by an experienced legal team. The Family Justice Review panel had announced a package of recommendations aimed at tackling delays in the family justice system which included a new six month time limit in care cases so delays were significantly reduced whilst enabling people to make their own arrangements for their children when they separate, and only use courts when necessary. These changes would be enacted this year. The interim period whilst the changes were brought in would prove challenging.

7.7 RECOMMENDATION

- 8 **That following a number of incidents in the County involving children who had been placed with private contractors in the County from other local authorities without the knowledge of the Council or the Safeguarding Team, that the Council be strongly urged to lobby the Government in order to make it compulsory that all local authorities placing children outside their counties, should inform the local authority into whose area the child is placed.**

7.8 Independent Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Board

On the 3rd July 2012, the Review Group interviewed David McCallum, the recently appointed Independent Chairman of the Children's Safeguarding Board. The following areas were highlighted:

- That nationally there had been reluctance between agencies involved in safeguarding to co-operate to promote the welfare of children. This was reflected locally in a lack of clarity as to the extent of the problem. Improved multi-agency performance data was required to provide a more accurate picture of local performance.
- increasing numbers of children (higher than the national average) were subject to a child protection plan and LAC numbers had risen substantially, with a 300% rise in applications for care proceedings in four years. Despite the additional numbers, there had been a marked improvement in the management of child protection cases

by Children's Services. However, Agencies directly working in the child protection process were struggling with the weight of extra work, and if the increases were to continue, the levels of work would not be sustainable.

- Early intervention using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was not fully embedded, and was seen more as a burden than a pathway to services to promote the welfare of children. In addition, each agency had its own short term targets and tended to priorities these above the safeguarding agenda. There was a collective will to work collaboratively to improve multi-agency safeguarding, but there was a need for greater mutual understanding between agencies.

8 VISITS

8.1 Moor House

The Review Group met a number of Foster Carers in Moor House in an informal discussion group.

8.2 CENTRE 18

The Review Group met a number of Looked after Children in Centre 18 in an informal discussion group.

8.3 Burghill School

The Review Group visited Burghill School and held an informal discussion with the Head Teacher, Mrs V Walker.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 9 There should be regular briefings to all Members on safeguarding and child protection and that these briefings should be made mandatory for all Members. These briefings should be led by the safeguarding board and the directorate**
- 10 There should be absolute commitment to information sharing between all Local Authority multi-agency partners operating within the County with regard to children in care in Herefordshire, and that this commitment is implemented and effective**

8.5 Acknowledgement

The Review Group would like to thank the members of the public and Officers for their part in the Review.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That there should be regular scrutiny of the activities of the Children's Safeguarding Board by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2 That co-location of Children Service's teams and the police should be encouraged. Co-location of the Public Protection Team and the Child Abuse Team in order to prevent cases from being missed should also be put in place as soon as possible.**
- 3 There should be greater use of tele-conferencing systems in order to facilitate Strategy Meetings of the partner agencies.**
- 4 That a realistic establishment of the costs of the Looked After Children Service should be set, to allow for staff recruitment and retention.**
- 5 All attempts should be made to simplify, rationalise and reduce the amount of paperwork should be given to ways of rationalising the amount of paperwork that was involved in casework.**
- 6 That Frameworki should be kept under constant review, with regular performance reports to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**
- 7 A review of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMH'S) by the ²gether NHS Trust and the commissioning team should be undertaken to investigate how the needs of looked after children are being met by the service;**
- 8 That following a number of incidents in the County involving children who had been placed with private contractors in the County from other local authorities without the knowledge of the Council or the Safeguarding Team, that the Council be strongly urged to lobby the Government in order to make it compulsory that all local authorities placing children outside their counties, should inform the local authority into whose area the child is placed.**
- 9 The Children's Safeguarding Board should provide regular briefings to all Members on their responsibilities as corporate parents and that these briefings should be made mandatory for all Members.**
- 10 There should be absolute commitment to information sharing between all Local Authority multi-agency partners operating within the County with regard to children in care in Herefordshire.**

TITLE OF REVIEW:	Safeguarding Arrangements for Children in Herefordshire
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SCOPING**Reason for Enquiry**

To understand the current awareness of the safeguarding arrangements in Herefordshire specifically in relation to the role's and responsibilities of councillors and to understand the function of corporate parenting

Links to the Community Strategy

The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy, including the Council's Corporate Plan and other key plans or strategies:

Summary of Review and Terms of Reference**Summary**

It is important that officers of the council understand their role and responsibility in ensuring that children in Herefordshire are safe and that they have the opportunity to meet their milestones and achieve comparably with targets set nationally in safeguarding children, with a particular focus on looked after children

Terms of Reference

- To consider the arrangements for Looked After Children in Herefordshire in relation to partnership working in education, health, YOS and social care
- To consider the arrangements for 16/17 year old homeless young people

What will NOT be included

- Specific arrangements of child protection

Potential outcomes

To

- That reporting to the board is achieved
- Information about safeguarding is available

Key questions

To

- Consider what the priority service is for looked after children in each agency

Cabinet Member (s)

Councillor PM Morgan (Cabinet Member, Health & Wellbeing)

Key Stakeholders/Consultees

- **Children in Care Council**
- **Housing**
- **Health**
- **Education**
- **Youth Offending Service**

Potential Witnesses

- **To be considered at first meeting on 25th August**

Research Required

Benchmarking across authorities would be valuable in ascertaining the safeguarding arrangements in other comparable authorities

Potential Visits

To

- **Children in Care Council**
- **Housing**
- **Health**
- **Education**

Outline Timetable (following decision by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to commission the Review)	
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Collect current available data for circulation to Group prior to first meeting of the Group.	Care Leavers regulations Fostering Service regulations Report for first meeting on data
Confirm approach, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/meeting dates	First meeting of the Review Group. September 2011
Carry out programme of interviews	
Present interim report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if appropriate.	December 2011
Prepare options/recommendations	
Present Final report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee	September 2012
Present options/recommendations to Cabinet (or Cabinet Member (s))	
Cabinet/Cabinet Member (s) response (Within 2 months of receipt of Group's report)	
Consideration of Executive's response by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	
Monitoring of Implementation of agreed recommendations (within six months of Executive's response)	
Members	Support Officers
Councillors:	Councillor TM James (Chairman)
	Councillors WLS Bowen, Brigadier P Jones CBE, FM Norman and SJ Robertson
Lead Support Officers	Stephanie Clay, Head Of Service for Looked After Children Tim Fewell, Head of 11-19 Integrated Services
Democratic Services Representative(s)	David Penrose

SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN HEREFORDSHIRE

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The Centre for Public Scrutiny

- Safeguarding Children – Scrutiny Guide.

Department for Education

- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
- Family and Friends Care: Statutory guidance for Local Authorities.
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards

SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN HEREFORDSHIRE

WITNESSES

Referral and Assessment Team, Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children

Lynne Renton Head of Safeguarding
Tina McGrath Head of Locality Services
Debbie McMillan Head of Locality Services
Natasha Dunlop Assistant Team Manager, Referral and Assessment Team

Looked After Children (LAC) Team

Sarah Duerden Team Manager, LAC and Young People's Team
Steve Field Assistant Team Manager LAC and Aftercare
Hilary Jones Senior LAC Education Officer
Debbie Barnett Student Social Worker
Hazel Blankley Named Nurse Safeguarding Children

Senior Management

Jo Davidson, Director for People's Services
Kathy O'Mahony Assistant Director Children & Young People Provider Services

Children's Safeguarding Board

David McCallum, Independent Chairman of the Children's Safeguarding Board

Foster Carers

Looked After Children in Centre 18.

Primary School Teacher

Mrs V Walker, Headteacher of Burghill Primary School.

MEETING:	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	16 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – LAW, GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the Committee's work programme.

Recommendation

THAT: the work programme as appended be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make.

Key Points Summary

- The Committee is asked to note its work programme and to note progress on current work. .

Alternative Options

- 1 It is for the Committee to determine its work programme as it sees fit to reflect the priorities facing Herefordshire. Any number of subjects could be included in the work programme. However, the Committee does need to be selective and ensure that the work programme is focused on the key issues, realistic and deliverable within the existing resources available.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The Committee needs to develop a manageable work programme to ensure that scrutiny is focused, effective and produces clear outcomes.

Introduction and Background

- 3 An outline work programme only is appended for this meeting. This is because the programme is under review.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
David Penrose, Democratic Services, on (01432) 383690

Community Impact

- 5 The topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to the County's residents.

Financial Implications

- 6 The costs of the work of the Scrutiny Committee will have to be met within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny will be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.

Legal Implications

- 7 The Council is required to deliver an Overview and Scrutiny function.

Risk Management

- 8 There is a reputational risk to the Council if the Overview and Scrutiny function does not operate effectively. The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help to mitigate this risk.

Consultees

- 9 Following initial consultation on topics for scrutiny with Directors and Members of the Cabinet, all Members of the Council were invited to suggest items for scrutiny.

Appendices

- 10 Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee outline Work Programme
Herefordshire Public Services Rolling Programme

Background Papers

- None identified.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ITEMS IDENTIFIED FOR INCLUSION IN THE WORK PROGRAMME**

DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

14 DECEMBER 2012	
Discussion with 2gether NHS Trust	NOTE: Content of future updates to ensure they present clear picture of service delivery; with performance information to be provided in advance of the meeting and with each meeting to have a particular purpose. (May 12)
Completed Task & Finish Reviews: Monitoring progress against the Executive Action Plans	To monitor progress against the Executive Action Plan arising from the Task & Finish Review on Adult Safeguarding in Herefordshire.
Discussion with Wye Valley NHS Trust	To receive a report on the financial position of the Trust, and to discuss potential out comes should the Trust's required savings not be achieved
Work Programme	To consider the Committees Work Programme
11 JANUARY 2013	
Discussion with: Clinical Commissioning Group NHS West Mercia Cluster	NOTE: Content of future updates to ensure they present clear picture of service delivery; with performance information to be provided in advance of the meeting and with each meeting to have a particular purpose. (May 12) Cluster performance data to be monitored quarterly. Committee to assess the impact on population. (July 12)
Executive Responses to Task and Finish Review - Safeguarding of Children	To receive the Executive response to the Task & Finish Review into Safeguarding of Children and to consider the Executive's Action Plan.
Recovery Plan for Children Safeguarding	To receive a progress report on the Action Plan.
Work Programme	To consider the Committees Work Programme
7 FEBRUARY 2013 at 7pm	
Health & Wellbeing Board – governance and operation	To receive a report on the Health & Wellbeing Board prior to the Board becoming formally constituted on 1 April 2013
Governance of Health Watch	To receive a report on the Governance of Health Watch
Work Programme	To consider the Committees Work Programme
22 MARCH 2013	
2gether NHS Trust	To provide a report on the Trust's Annual Plan for 2013/14.
West Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust	To provide a report on the Trust's Annual Plan for 2013/14.
Strategic Plan for Delivering Adult Services	To consider a quarterly report containing a schedule of performance reports outlining the savings that are being achieved through the Strategic Plan. (July12)
Recovery Plan for Children Safeguarding	To receive a progress report on the Action Plan.
Work Programme	To consider the Committees Work Programme
12 APRIL 2013	

Wye Valley NHS Trust; Clinical Commissioning Group; and NHS West Mercia Cluster.	To provide a report on the Trust's Annual Plan for 2013/14. Content of future updates to ensure they present clear picture of service delivery; with performance information to be provided in advance of the meeting and with each meeting to have a particular purpose. (May 12) Cluster performance data to be monitored quarterly. Committee to assess the impact on population. (July 12)
Stroke Services	To receive an update.
Work Programme	To consider the Committees Work Programme
3 MAY 2013 at 7pm	
Quality Accounts: Wye Valley NHS Trust West Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust 2gether NHS Trust	To consider the Quality Accounts
Work Programme	To consider the Committees Work Programme
JULY 2013	
Recovery Plan for Children Safeguarding	To receive a progress report on the Action Plan.
Strategic Plan for Delivering Adult Services	To consider a quarterly report containing a schedule of performance reports outlining the savings that are being achieved through the Strategic Plan. (July12)

The following issues have been identified for consideration but not scheduled:

Root and Branch Reviews – (relating to this Committee - pre consideration by Cabinet)
Children's health and wellbeing (a focus on Childhood obesity)
Access to health – Task and Finish Group
Health Trust Quality Accounts (annually in spring if required)
National Health Policies
Committee visit to 2Gether Trust followed by update on user feedback.