

Agenda

Children and young people scrutiny committee

Date: **Tuesday 12 January 2021**

Time: **1.00 pm**

Place: **Online meeting only**

Notes: To view the meeting please access the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/HerefordshireCouncil>

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Agenda for the meeting of the Children and young people scrutiny committee

Membership

Chairperson Councillor Carole Gandy
Vice-Chairperson Councillor Diana Toynbee

Councillor Graham Andrews
Councillor Paul Andrews
Councillor Kath Hey
Councillor Phillip Howells
Councillor Mike Jones

Co-optees Andy James Parent Governor Representative – SEND Sector
Sam Pratley Church Representative – Diocese of Hereford

Agenda

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|--|---------|
| 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence | |
| 2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee. | |
| 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive declarations of interest in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda. | |
| 4. MINUTES To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 1 December 2020. | 5 - 10 |
| 5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive any written questions from members of the public. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 6 January 2021. Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:</i> councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk . | |
| 6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL To receive any written questions from members of the council. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 6 January 2021. Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:</i> councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk . | |
| 7. 2021/22 BUDGET SETTING To seek the views of the committee on the draft the budget proposals for 2021-22 relating to Children and Families. | 11 - 48 |
| 8. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW To review the attached work programme for 2020/21 and consider a scoping document for a paediatric therapies task and finish group. | 49 - 74 |
| 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next meeting is scheduled for 19 January 2021 at 10.00 a.m. | |

Minutes of the meeting of Children and young people scrutiny committee held at Online meeting on Tuesday 1 December 2020 at 1.00 pm

Present: Councillor Carole Gandy (chairperson)
Councillor Diana Toynbee (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Paul Andrews, Phillip Howells and Mike Jones

Co-optees: Mr James and Mr Pratley

Officers: Director for children and families, Interim Head of Legal Services, Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support, Strategic business intelligence manager Children and Families, Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding Quality and Improvement and Assistant Director Education Development and Skills

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Graham Andrews and Kath Hey.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Sam Pratley declared a other interest in agenda number 8, review of performance and progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan, as the Chairman of Vennture. The report and appendices made reference to the Family First, an early help initiative in Herefordshire involving Vennture.

12. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 15 September are approved as a correct record and signed by the chairperson.

13. UPDATE ON REDUCING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA)

The committee considered a report from the assistant director safeguarding and family support (ADS&FS) which provided an update on reducing the number of children looked after (CLA). The report was introduced by the Head of Children Looked After (HCLA) who explained that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted upon foster placements and the number of children looked after currently in residential units was a concern. An initiative to retain and recruit foster carers was in effect and marketing improvements were being made to the campaign. An update on changes to the Herefordshire Intensive Placements Support Service was provided to the committee.

The committee raised the points below in the debate that followed:

- The edge of care service had been in effect since April 2020 and it was queried what percentage of children had been diverted from care during this period. It was recommended that monitoring and recording of numbers of children prevented from entering care by the edge of care service was undertaken. *The*

- HCLA explained that the service had worked with 14 children and prevented 12 from entering care arrangements. Of the two that had entered care one had returned home and the other had remained in care.*
- *The reason for delays in progressing long-term matching decisions was queried. The HCLA explained that it had not been afforded sufficient priority which had now been corrected by ensuring there was more effective monitoring arrangements including a review at 9 month intervals.*
 - *The reasons that foster carers did not wish to enter into special guardianship orders (SGOs) were queried. The HCLA explained the variety of reasons including concern over reduced financial support and the requirement to manage contact with family members. The ADS&FS explained that the notion of SGOs was being introduced to foster carers at an earlier stage of contact with potential carers.*
 - *Statistics concerning the number of children leaving care and preventing admission to care were raised and how they compared to other areas. The timescales for matching neighbouring areas were queried. The HCLA explained that the number of children leaving care was improving and coming into line with neighbouring areas however the objective of the service was to improve to a level that was better than the performance of neighbours. The ADS&FS explained children would always be taken into care and it was important to avoid drift and delay in decision making over children in care which was potentially harmful to families and children. The HCLA explained that more detail would be available at the end of the financial year and that the year 2024 had been identified to match neighbouring performance. The Director Children and Families (DCF) explained that it was intended that the level of children looked after would not exceed 320 by the end of 2021 and that an increase in the level of children looked after in residential provision was a trend consistent across a number of councils resulting in overspending budgets. There were a number of plans in effect to reduce the number of children looked after and it was important that scrutiny had oversight of how the plans were taken forward.*
 - *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on foster care placements was queried. The HCLA explained that some foster carers had not been undertaking placements during the pandemic due to health concerns. Some respite placements had been held in reserve to care for children looked after who may have been in the care of foster carers who had become infected during the pandemic. Interest and enquiries concerning fostering had continued during the pandemic.*
 - *Where no suitable foster placements were found it was queried what problems prevented a placement and what options were available for those children looked after. The placement of multiple children looked after in residential settings was queried. The ADS&FS explained that it was a decision for individual foster carers to accept children and it was recognised that it was a significant undertaking even with the support received from the council. A very active placements team sought appropriate placements for children but if there were none available placement in residential care would occur. The HCLA explained that no two children who were looked after in Herefordshire were currently placed in the same residential unit. There were a number of residential units and providers inside Herefordshire and outside the county which were regularly monitored to ensure the standard and quality of placements was maintained.*
 - *It was queried whether the construction and operation of a council-owned residential facility for children looked after could be investigated. It was felt that the executive should investigate the cost benefit of the construction and operation of a council-owned residential care facility for children looked after. The DCF explained that this was being looked into together with an investigation into the range of providers in the county and the number of children from outside Herefordshire currently cared for by these providers.*

- The availability of additional funding in the county to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic was raised and how it was being passed onto communities. The impact of the pandemic on the budget for children and families was raised and whether savings or reductions were expected. *The DCF explained that it was an evolving picture with forms of funding being provided, such as the hardship fund, and the possibility that further funding could be announced. It was confirmed that the budget consultation needed to be completed which would ensure that the impact of the pandemic on budgets would be better understood. It was noted that the investment that had occurred in the programme of improvement for children and families had resulted in significant advancements which needed to be sustained in order to avoid the potential for variable performance. The assistant director children's safeguarding quality and improvement explained that an improvement programme could take up to five years to complete and budget reductions could undermine the pace at which improvement was achieved.*

The cabinet member children and families explained that the downward trend in the reduction of children in care was positive and efforts to recruit foster carers were being taken forward.

Councillor Carole Gandy proposed and Councillor Paul Andrews seconded the recommendations below which were agreed by the committee.

RESOLVED: That the committee:

- **Recommends that the children's and families directorate continue the monitoring of the number of children diverted from care by the edge of care service;**
- **Maintains an oversight of plans and initiatives to reduce the numbers of children looked after; and**
- **Recommends that the executive investigates the cost benefit of the construction and operation of a council-owned residential unit for children looked after.**

14. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The committee considered a report by the assistant director for children's safeguarding quality and improvement (ADCSQ&I). The ADCSQ&I introduced the report and explained that there was a shift towards robust audits and there had been an increase in the number of audits that had produced good outcomes. Challenges remained around staff supervision, the timeliness of return to home interview and repeat referrals to the Multi-agency safeguarding hub.

During the course of the debate the committee raised the following points:

- The timeliness of the presentation of data in the quarterly report to the committee. The report before the committee provided data up to the end of September 2020 and it was recommended that the dates of forthcoming meetings of the committee were synchronised more closely with the production of the improvement plan report.
- The committee queried the work that had been undertaken with other areas including Doncaster and Essex. *The DCF, ADS&FS and ADCSQ&I provided detail on the work undertaken with other local authorities to help shape improvements to safeguarding processes and practices.*

- The recommendation from cabinet that the committee undertake a review into barriers to record-keeping for safeguarding cases was raised. It was recommended that future versions of the improvement plan report contain information on the improvements to Mosaic and the use of technology to enable better social work practice. A letter would be sent to the executive to explain that the committee would use the improvement plan to monitor record keeping for safeguarding cases.
- The committee recommended that in future the improvement plan contain detail of the recording of feedback from young people and the use of the mind of my own (MOMO) app.
- The risk assessing of children at risk of exploitation was raised and the action to change the target for the completion of risk assessments. *The ADS&FS explained that the target was being brought into line with targets used in the rest of the country.*
- The categories of need in child protection plans were raised. Assurance was sought that where a case was considered in the emotional or neglect category but a sexual harm element was present, this was taken into account and not missed. *The ADCSQ&I explained that the quality assurance work that had been undertaken had demonstrated that sexual abuse aspects had been identified. The ADS&FS explained that an investigation had been undertaken on the use of the categorisations of abuse and the outcome had shown that there had been no cases where sexual abuse had been missed.*

The cabinet member children and families explained that it was pleasing that the trend was positive and that improvement was being made. It was acknowledged that improvement was still required and it was key to the process that the council had a good understanding of itself.

The recommendations below were proposed by Councillor Carole Gandy and seconded by Councillor Phillip Howells and agreed by the committee.

RESOLVED: That the committee:

- **Recommends that the dates of forthcoming meetings of the committee are timed to coincide more closely with the production of the improvement plan report;**
- **Recommends that future versions of the improvement plan report contain more information on the improvements to Mosaic and the use of technology to enable better social work practice;**
- **Agreed that a letter would be sent to the executive to explain that the committee would use the improvement plan quarterly report to monitor record keeping for safeguarding cases; and**
- **Recommends that in future the improvement plan contain detail of the recording of feedback from young people and the use of the mind of my own (MOMO) app.**

15. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The committee considered its work programme 2020/21 and received the executive responses to the child exploitation task and finish group and the recommendations of the committee on the review of peer on peer abuse cases.

The Chairperson confirmed that: a scoping document for a task and finish group on paediatric therapies would be brought to the meeting of the committee in January; and a briefing note would be circulated regarding SEND following which a decision would be made whether to initiate a task and finish group on the topic.

The committee requested that the reports to be considered at the meeting in March 2020 contain detail on the effect of lockdown and the period post-lockdown on care referrals.

The recommendations below were proposed by Councillor Carole Gandy and seconded by Councillor Paul Andrews and agreed by the committee.

RESOLVED: That the committee:

(a) reviews the 2020/21 work programme at appendix a, discusses any additional items of business or topics for inclusion in the work programme and agrees the changes to the work programme itemised in paragraph 3;

(b) receives and notes the executive response (appendix b) to the recommendations arising from the child exploitation task and finish group and updates of work undertaken in response to the recommendations;

(c) receives and notes the draft executive response (appendix c) to the recommendations arising from the review of peer on peer abuse cases and the amendment agreed by Cabinet; and

(d) notes the recommendation tracker in appendix d.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairperson confirmed that the next meeting of the committee would be held on Tuesday 12 January 2021 at 1.00 p.m.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm

Chairperson



| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Meeting: | Children and young people scrutiny committee |
| Meeting date: | Tuesday 12 January 2021 |
| Title of report: | 2021/22 Budget setting |
| Report by: | Leader of the council |

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To seek the views of the children and young people scrutiny committee on the budget proposals for 2021/22, both capital and revenue, as they relate to the remit of the committee.

The draft proposals show an overall increase of £4.2m in the proposed base revenue budget for children and families. This follows a review of the base budget requirement and the identification of savings to enable a funded budget to be proposed.

Three new capital projects totalling £1.7m are recommended for consideration, being accessibility and maintenance works at various school sites.

The committee is invited to make recommendations to inform and support the process for making cabinet proposals to Council regarding the adoption of the budget and associated budget framework items, including providing constructive challenge to the cabinet's proposals.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the committee determine any recommendation it wishes to make to Cabinet in relation to the 2021/22 budget proposals specifically affecting children and young people.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternatives to the recommendations; Cabinet is responsible for developing budget proposals for council consideration and it is a function of this committee to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive. The council's budget and policy framework rules require Cabinet to consult with scrutiny committees on budget proposals in order that the scrutiny committee members may inform and support the process for making Cabinet proposals to Council.
2. It is open to the committee to recommend alternative spending proposals or strategic priorities; however given the legal requirement to set a balanced budget should additional expenditure be proposed compensatory savings proposals must also be identified.

Key considerations

3. The proposed 2021/22 revenue budget is based on the provisional local government financial settlement and an assumed total council tax increase of 4.99%, 1.99% increase in core council tax and a 3% adult social care precept. This increases the band D equivalent charge to £1,652.30 representing an increase of £1.51 per week. This is the maximum increase permitted, a higher increase would require the support of a referendum.
4. The current financial year is facing unprecedented pressures in response to the national pandemic Covid-19. Central government has awarded grants to local authorities to manage these pressures, however this is expected to cover around 70% of the cost. Children and Families are currently forecasting a £4.3m overspend in 2020/21 and this largely reflects the cost pressure in placements costs.
5. The council has high ambitions for children in Herefordshire and the services that work with them and their families. Children's Safeguarding and Family Support Services are undertaking a transformation programme which involves fundamental culture and practice change. This includes children's social work as well as multi agency safeguarding and early help practice.
6. The transformation programme encompasses service redesign, recruitment and retention, prevention and intervening early, establishing services that support moving to independence in adulthood. The underlying aim is to improve the quality of services in Herefordshire as well as capacity.
7. The practice and culture change is underpinned by introducing and embedding a practice framework "Signs of Safety" across social work and early help teams, as well as with partner agencies, strengthening management capacity and quality, strengthening the capacity of social work by enabling smaller caseloads through staff recruitment and retention, improving the support for good social work practice including business support and the use of technology. The implementation of Signs of Safety commenced in 2020. Signs of Safety implementation includes significant changes to the MOSAIC recording system to support the practice change. These changes are taking place from January 2021.

8. The children and families whole family approach is set out in the attached presentation slide deck. Further work is being done to map the transformation programme and savings targets to this work.
9. The transformation programme projects covering Signs of Safety implementation, Edge of Care and returning home, fostering sufficiency and moving some children appropriately from residential to fostering, the potential to have a new children's home in Herefordshire, and the enhancement of services for children aged 16 or over, particularly those with care experience moving to adulthood, is overseen by a transformation board and a clear approach to project management, supported by a dedicated senior project manager. In addition there is a continued focus on early help, recruitment and retention, quality of practice and working with the child and family, exploring all age approaches including the provision of short breaks and working with the Talk Community approach to work with local expertise and support.
10. The transformation programme has already started to deliver improvement through investment and a focus on performance and quality. This includes an enhanced approach to early help, including the Early Help Hub (started in September 2020) and Domestic Abuse Hub (in 2020) to augment the work of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub; the Edge of Care (ECHO) service that started in June 2020. These complement the investment in legal services, social workers (including the use of agency workers), managers, family support workers, and business support to support high quality consistent practice. Significant work has been done to improve the accuracy, timeliness, depth and use of performance information. We have also enhanced our quality assurance system and work.
11. The transformation programme is underpinned by practice aims:
 - We will keep children within their families wherever we can and it is safe to do so
 - We will provide a robust early help offer, to prevent issues escalating
 - We will intervene at the lowest level of intervention wherever possible, and in accordance with our Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Right Help Right Time levels of need framework
 - We will work with families, recognising their strengths, and developing positive working relationships
 - We will take swift action to protect children when that is identified as what children need
12. We are at an early stage of our long term transformation programme. It can take councils between five and eight years to achieve sustained cultural and practice change, in how children and families are supported and enabled to achieve change themselves where appropriate. We do have variable practice in some areas and some areas that require improvement.
13. Evidence so far indicates that children and families are:
 - increasingly receiving support earlier and the right support at the right time and staying with or returning to their families
 - increasingly receiving better quality work due to lower caseloads, increase in supervision, informed management practice, more permanent staff and social workers supported by business support
 - experiencing poor practice is picked up through performance information, audit and quality assurance and learning is taken into service improvement
 - increasingly benefiting from multi agency work that supports their needs and achieves change

14. Staff have said to Essex Local Authority our Partner in Practice, sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE) that they are positive about many of the changes and about working for Herefordshire.
15. The DfE, Local Government Association and Ofsted are recognising the positive changes taking place. We have received positive feedback from Essex in the diagnostic work that they have undertaken in 2020 that we know ourselves, our pace of change in some areas particularly during the pandemic has been very impressive and they can see the difference in quality of practice from when they came in 2019. The service and legal services have also received positive feedback from the family court judge on court work. We will continue to work with and seek out external review and feedback to support our improvement.

Proposed children and families 2021/22 revenue budget

16. The proposed children and families revenue budget for 2021/22 is shown below:-

| Directorate | 20/21 revised base £k | Pressures £k | New 21/22 base £k | Savings £k | Base Budget £k |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Children and families | 32,678 | 6,623 | 39,301 | (2,390) | 36,911 |

17. In addition to the net budget proposal above is the dedicated school grant (DSG) budget of £140m devolved to maintained schools throughout the County.

Challenges

18. The children and families budget has for a number of years spent more than allocated, primarily on supporting children in care and care experienced young people. 9 out of 10 councils in a County Council's Network survey in 2020 predicted an overspend on children's social care budget which indicates the level of pressure nationally and locally being experienced by councils.
19. We continue to have relatively high reliance on agency social workers in some particular teams. We value the contribution they make but do want to increase the number of permanent staff. We are being successful in recruiting newly qualified workers. They do and will need support as we grow our own. Our investment in Signs of Safety and in a package of retention and recruitment measures is showing impact. This will take several years but will produce reduced spend if we are able to achieve sustained change over a three year period.
20. We continue to focus on improving the consistency and quality of practice across all teams. There is evidence from audits that this is improving overall and will continue to be a significant area of focus for the next two years, there are some areas of practice that require improvement.
21. Placement choice and price is affected by COVID19. Nationally, demand is increasing cost and reducing choice. Herefordshire has experienced a reduction in the number of children and young people in care overall through 2020, but an increasing use of residential provision. The investment in the early help and edge of care (ECHO) services

is to address some of the longstanding pressure to become open to children’s social care or to become looked after. The reconfiguration of services to place family support work alongside the assessment and child in need work enables more direct work to be undertaken earlier with families.

22. A shortage of foster care placements nationally and an increased pressure on residential placements and specialist placements also affects availability and price. The recent cabinet decision to enhance allowances and fees as well as provide council tax exemption for Herefordshire Council foster carers will support retention and recruitment. This should also enable savings to be made. We plan to invest in enhancing our marketing and recruitment work to support this. The investment made in Widemarsh Street and in Bath Street provides more local supported accommodation that will enable young people in care to be supported towards independence in adulthood. This is right for them and also should achieve savings.

23. The level of savings are the stretch targets and are dependent upon detailed work with individual children and their families, making sure that decisions are right for them. That by doing this the council also achieves value for money and over time reduces the pressure on spend to meet children’s needs with higher cost services and placements.

24. The above challenges relate primarily to children and families supported through early help, family support and social care. There are additional challenges as a result of the pandemic and also some longer term challenges which were national issues prior to the pandemic. These include:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - increases in numbers of children with Education, Health and Care plans, specialist provision “full” locally and across the country. The national picture of High Needs Block spending over nationally provided budget across many local authority areas is an illustration of this. Herefordshire, whilst traditionally being able to manage the overall dedicated schools grant within allocation, is also facing significant pressures. National government is looking at a longer term solution for this issue and there is due to be a national SEN review.
- Lack of opportunity for young people for education, training, employment with training significantly increased by the effects of pandemic and recession. Herefordshire Council is taking part in national initiatives to address this. This includes the potential to develop a multi-agency youth hub to provide guidance and advice for young people including those with care experience.
- Increase in children eligible for free school meals, around 25% increase in October 2020 from October 2019. Anticipate this will increase further due to an expected recession.
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.
- There may therefore be further demand for early help and safeguarding services and other council and partner services and support as a result of the impact of the pandemic and economic impact on families.

25. To enable a funded budget to be proposed for 2021/22 savings are required, these are summarised below:

| Description | £000 |
|--|------|
| Supported accommodation for care leavers | 320 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Step down residential to in house foster carers | 1,000 |
| Prevention of children becoming looked after; reunification of looked after children with families | 400 |
| Recruit 30 new foster carers per annum for 5 years | 200 |
| Full cost recovery of traded services | 20 |
| Manage inflation and secure contract efficiencies | 450 |
| TOTALS | 2,390 |

26. A full equalities and environmental impact assessment of these savings is underway. The savings targeted are grouped by theme in the table below:-

| Market intervention | Streamlining business | Income generation |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Supported accommodation for care leavers | Manage inflation and secure contract efficiencies | Full cost recovery of traded services |
| Step down residential to in house foster carers | | |
| Prevention of children becoming looked after; reunification of looked after children with families | | |
| Recruit 30 new foster carers per annum for 5 years | | |
| 1,920 | 450 | 20 |

27. Attached at appendix 1 is the key directorate challenges & issues of delivering the above.

Capital investment proposals

28. There are three new capital investment proposals (proposed to be added to the existing capital investment budget) in relation to children and families, these are summarised below and a business case is provided at appendix 2:-
- School Accessibility Works (£240k). There are two known children with EHC Plans who are transitioning into schools. One into primary, the other from primary into secondary. The final places will not be known until April/May 2021, however,

these children will need an accessible school for September 2021. Therefore this budget has been put in place to provide what adaptation works may be required.

- Schools Maintenance Grant (£1,195k). This is an annual grant award from the Department of Education to carry out capital improvement works across maintained schools. The programme of work is prioritised using condition surveys.
- Childrens S106 (£300k). S106 arrangements are put in place with developers and education are allocated their share once paid. The work progresses based on the area and spent in line with the agreement.

Budget setting timetable

29. Council will be asked to approve the 2021/22 budget on 12 February 2020; this will follow confirmation of the final financial settlement for 2021/22 which is expected in late January. Council will also be asked to approve the updated medium term financial strategy (MTFS), treasury management strategy, council tax reduction scheme and the capital strategy at the same meeting.
30. This paper is the first in the 2021/22 budget setting timetable shown below:-

| Action | When |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Consultation with parish and town councils | Nov-20 |
| Independently led focus group consultation (this will include businesses) | Nov-20 |
| Online survey | 19 December 2020 – 8 January 2021 |
| Children and young people scrutiny | 12-Jan-21 |
| Adults and wellbeing scrutiny | 13-Jan-21 |
| General scrutiny | 15-Jan-21 |
| Cabinet – consultation responses, proposed budget, capital and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) | 28-Jan-21 |
| Council – approval of budget, capital and MTFS | 12-Feb-21 |
| Council – council tax setting | 05-Mar-21 |

Community impact

31. The budget proposals demonstrate how the council is using its financial resources to deliver the priorities within the County plan.
32. The council is committed to delivering continued improvement, positive change and outcomes in delivering key priorities.

33. In accordance with the principles of the code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development, and review.

Environmental Impact

34. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
35. Whilst this overarching budget setting document will not detail specific environmental impacts, consideration is always made to minimising waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy. A specific environmental impact assessment for the service specific budget proposals will be considered as appropriate to seek to minimise any adverse environmental impact and actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.

Equality duty

36. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
37. Service specific equality impact assessments will be completed when the service specific proposals are developed to assess the impact on the protected characteristic as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The duty means that the potential impact of a decision on people with different protected characteristics is always taken into account when these assessments have been completed then we will consider mitigating against any adverse impact identified,

Resource implications

38. The financial implications are as set out in the report. The ongoing operational costs including, human resources, information technology and property resource requirements are included in the draft budget and will be detailed in separate governance decision reports as appropriate.

Legal implications

39. When setting the budget it is important that councillors are aware of the legal requirements and obligations. Councillors are required to act prudently when setting the budget and council tax so that they act in a way that considers local taxpayers. This also covers the impact on future taxpayers.
40. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires a council to set a balanced budget. To do this the council must prepare a budget that covers not only the expenditure but also the funding to meet the proposed budget. The budget has to be fully funded and the income from all sources must meet the expenditure.
41. Best estimates have to be employed so that all anticipated expenditure and resources are identified. If the budget includes unallocated savings or unidentified income then these have to be carefully handled to demonstrate that these do not create a deficit budget. An intention to set a deficit budget is not permitted under local government legislation.
42. The council must decide every year how much they are going to raise from council tax. The decision is based on a budget that sets out estimates of what is planned to be spent on services. Because the level of council tax is set before the year begins and cannot be increased during the year, risks and uncertainties have to be considered, that might force higher spending more on the services than planned. Allowance is made for these risks by: making prudent allowance in the estimates for services; and ensuring that there are adequate reserves to draw on if the service estimates turn out to be insufficient.
43. The council's budget and policy framework rules require that the chairmen of a scrutiny committee shall take steps to ensure that the relevant committee work programmes include any budget and policy framework plan or strategy, to enable scrutiny members to inform and support the process for making cabinet proposals to Council.
44. Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 restricting councillors voting on certain matters where they are in arrears of council tax, does not apply to scrutiny function as the views from scrutiny on the budget are not a recommendation for approval, a resolution or any other type of decision. As a result a s106 check of councillors arrears has not been undertaken.

Risk management

45. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the S151 officer to report to Council when it is setting the budget and precept (council tax). Council is required to take this report into account when making its budget and precept decision. The report must deal with the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of reserves.
46. The budget has been updated using the best available information; current spending, anticipated pressures and the provisional settlement. This draft will be updated through the budget setting timetable.
47. The impact of the worldwide pandemic, Covid 19, continues to provide uncertainty and have far ranging consequences throughout the county. The challenges to our economy, to the vulnerable members of our communities and to our continued wellbeing are huge. The budget proposals prioritise keeping resident's safe.

48. The known most substantial risks linked to the pandemic have been assessed as part of the budget proposals in this report and reasonable mitigation has been made where possible. Continued financial support from central government has been confirmed as part of the provisional financial settlement for 2021/22. Risks will be monitored through the year and reported to cabinet as part of the budget monitoring process.
49. There are also the additional general risks to delivery of budgets including the delivery of new homes, EU exit, government policy changes and unplanned pressures. We are maintaining a general fund reserve balance above the minimum requirement and an annual contingency budget to manage these risks.
50. Demand management in social care continues to be a key issue, against some specific areas of inequalities amongst families and young people. This report provides an update on the measures being implemented to address these risks.

Consultees

51. Local consultation with parish and town councils, businesses and organisations was completed in November, 17 events were held with 96 participants. Responses supported:-
 - People said it was important to avoid short-termism
 - Working with partners was supported
 - Transferring assets to communities was supported
 - Discretionary services least valued were street lighting, archive services and parks and open spaces
 - Increasing charges for parking and cremation was least popular
 - People wanted a high quality service and VFM for social care
 - Use of technology was seen as both an opportunity and a threat to vulnerable residents
 - 45% of people thought the proposed council tax & social care precept increase of 4.99% was about right
 - Over 70% of people wanted to support households in financial difficulty
 - The majority said they would support a Herefordshire Community Lottery and Herefordshire Voluntary Community Contribution Scheme
 - Overall local priorities matched the council's priorities in the County Plan and Delivery Plan
52. An online public consultation was open between 18 December 2020 and closes on 8 January 2021 in the form of a Residents Survey and Organisation (business) Survey. The results of this survey will be reported to Cabinet.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Savings key directorate challenges & issues
- Appendix 2 Capital investment proposals business cases
- Appendix 3 Committee presentation

Background papers

None identified

Glossary of terms

- MOSAIC The council's care management system
- S151 officer Chief finance officer

**Children & young people
scrutiny committee**

12 Jan 2021

Savings Proposals

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Supported accommodation for care leavers

£320k

Consequences

More care experienced young people will be able to have their accommodation needs met in Hereford rather than relying on independent providers, often resulting in young people being placed outside of Herefordshire.

What will change

Changes already in place. Building was purchased and refurbished during the pandemic. Support services in place via contract

Challenges

- The figure is a stretch target and depends on care experienced children not requiring higher cost independent provision. The accommodation provided at Bath Street in 2021/22 may also support this savings target.
- The council will review whether a further house should be purchased based on an evaluation of Widemarsh.

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Step down residential to in house foster carers

£1,000k

Consequences

Some children in care will be supported in foster care placements rather than in residential placements, considering their situation, views and needs.

What will change

A number of children in residential placements have been identified as potentially able to step down. Work has already begun to take this forward. The result should be that some children are supported in foster care rather than in residential care.

Challenges

- Dependent on significant work to ensure that this is right for the child, that the match with carers is right and there is availability of foster carers
- Average annual saving per placement estimated as £200k. The actual figure will be dependent on the individual circumstances of each child.
- There may be additional pressures as a result of more children to be looked after by the council.

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Prevention of children becoming looked after; reunification of looked after children with families

£400k

Consequences

- Some children who are looked after will return to their families and will no longer be looked after by the council.
- Some children who might otherwise have become looked after by the council remain with their families with intensive support.

What will change

- The Edge of Care (ECHO) service is now up and running during 2020/21 and has started to report on its effectiveness.
- Early indications show that there has been success in preventing children becoming looked after and also in reunifying children with their families.

Challenges

- The target is a stretch target and depends on the service diverting children from otherwise high cost placements and support.
- Some children will necessarily still require being looked after by the council

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Recruit 30 new foster carers per annum for 5 years

£200k

Consequences

- More children will be cared for by Herefordshire council foster carers

What will change

Assumes employment of external agency to provide expertise in marketing and campaigns.

Challenges

- Recruitment in first year will be reliant on recruitment activity in 2020/21. External agency work due to commence 2021.
- Assumes current trends continue ie. no greater loss of existing foster carers. NB recent cabinet decision on allowances and rates should assist.

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Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Full cost recovery of traded services (£20k)
- Manage inflation and secure contract efficiencies (£450k)

£470k

Consequences

- Schools and settings will be charged an increased amount for some education traded services
- Costs of placements and contracts will be secured in line with medium term financial strategy target.

What will change

- Continued use of regional frameworks and directorate's placement team to achieve value for money through negotiation. Will introduce cost calculator for 2021/22 which has evidenced achievement of savings in placement fees in other local authorities. Progress will be reported quarterly.

Challenges

- Schools and settings may decide not to buy back services due to increased cost
- Contract inflation and increased costs being demonstrated in the residential and fostering market on an individual basis due to national lack of supply.

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

Accessibility Improvement Works

Release: Draft

Date: 10 November 2020

Author:

Document Number: V.1

Document History

Document Location

The source of the document will be found at:

...sufficiency\capital\capital bids and submissions\2020

Revision History

| Revision date | Summary of Changes | Changes marked |
|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| | First issue | |
| 30/11/2020 | Funding information clarified | Yes |

Approvals

This document requires the following approval.

| Name | Signature | Title | Date of Issue | Version |
|------|-----------|-------|---------------|---------|
| | | | | |

Distribution

This document has been distributed to

| Name | Title | Date of Issue | Version |
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1. Purpose of document

This outline business case contains information that describes the justification for undertaking accessibility improvement works in schools. The Business Case is to be submitted to the Children & Families Capital Programme Board and if accepted, a more detailed business case will be developed.

2. Project aims and objectives

If the business case is approved then the project can move into the implementation phase and deliver the following:

- Ensure the council's estate is safe and fit for purpose
- Ensure that sufficient pupil places in suitable accommodation are available to meet demand in schools
- Ensure that appropriate facilities are in place to meet the needs of children with special educational needs

The business case sets out the work required in schools to ensure the identified children with special educational needs requiring a place in a school can attend as all adaptations and improvement works required to meet their needs will be implemented.

3. Background

All children in Herefordshire should have a good start in life and be safe. Children with special educational needs or a disability may need extra help and support to make the most of educational and learning opportunities.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a legal term. It describes the needs of a child or young person who has a difficulty or disability which makes it harder for them to learn than the majority of others of the same age.

A disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. Not all children and young people with a disability have SEN but there is often an overlap.

When children and young people have either or both SEN and a disability it can affect their learning and education.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people.

Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs, **must** have regard to certain aspects, these include:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood

All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential.

The child's parent or the young person has the right to request a particular school be named in their Education Health and Care (EHC) plan.

If a child's parent or a young person makes a request for a particular nursery, school or post-16 institution in these groups the local authority **must** comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless:

- it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or
- the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources

Where a local authority is considering the appropriateness of an individual institution, 'others' is intended to mean the children and young people with whom the child or young person with an EHC plan will directly come into contact on a regular day-to-day basis.

The Herefordshire Council accessibility strategy (a requirement under the planning duty in the Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Section 88 (Schedule 10)) sets out the approach that the council is taking to increase access to education for disabled children and young people, so that they can benefit from educational provision to the same extent which children without disabilities can.

The Equality Act requires ALL providers to make **reasonable adjustments** to avoid disadvantaging pupils with disabilities, but schools have an additional duty to plan for better access for disabled pupils. The reasonable adjustments duty and a wider and more strategic planning approach for schools are intended to complement each other.

The council has a planning duty to improve the physical accessibility of school buildings over time. The council strategy has been i) improvement of physical access for known pupils in the system, ii) investment to create a geographical spread of accessible schools.

A system of physical accessibility ratings has been devised, based on the council's expected standards of accessibility. The accessibility of all schools was audited in 2015 using these criteria, and 78% of county schools were found to be fully or mainly accessible.

A capital investment strategy for the school estates was published in 2016. One of the aims of this is to improve the standard of physical accessibility alongside planned capital investment.

Where there is a new build, extension or refurbishment, it is expected that the school will incorporate any access facilities needed for existing pupils, as well as, in accordance with its statutory responsibilities, anticipate the needs of future pupils (e.g. level access, height adjustable work stations).

3.1. Project Drivers and High Level Issues

The council has a planning duty to improve the physical accessibility of school buildings over time. The council strategy has been i) improvement of physical access for known pupils in the system, ii) investment to create a geographical spread of accessible schools.

Councils receive no dedicated funding for adaptation, improvement or alteration at any schools. It remains the case, therefore, that central funding for accessibility improvements related to pupils joining or transferring to an individual school will need to be considered by the council. There is a requirement on schools to notify the council of access needs, and parents need to identify on school admission forms that their child has physical access requirements.

There are two known children with EHC Plans who are transitioning into schools. One into primary, the other from primary into secondary. The schools that the children will ultimately be attending has not been determined. This will be ascertained as part of the admissions process which takes place at the start of each calendar year. The final places therefore will not be known until April/May 2021, however, these children will need an accessible school for September 2021. Early indications of the preferred school can be provided once the admissions round has opened for applications and plans for potential adaptations can commence at that point.

4. Scope

4.1. Included in Scope

Accessibility improvement works at the primary and secondary schools named in the EHC Plan.

4.2. Out of scope

Accessibility improvement works at all other schools in the county.

5. Stakeholders

- Headteachers of the affected Schools
- Chairs of Governors of the affected Schools
- Parents/guardians of children at the affected Schools
- Parents/guardians of the children with the EHC Plans
- Ward Councillors
- Children & Families Directorate
- Property Services
- Procurement
- Finance
- Health & Safety

- Legal

6. Constraints and dependencies

6.1. Initiatives which depend on this project are:

None

6.2. This project depends on:

- Appropriate levels of resource and expertise
- Contractor availability
- The required level of engagement from stakeholders

7. Budget provision

Councils receive no dedicated funding for adaptation, improvement or alteration at any schools. It remains the case, therefore, that central funding for accessibility improvements related to pupils joining or transferring to an individual school will need to be considered by the council. The funding of adaptations to schools for children with special educational needs has been discussed in the Children & Families Capital Programme Board, chaired by Director for Children & Families, where it was agreed with finance that funding requests should be made for children requiring these adaptations.

7.1. Estimated costs and assumptions

The adaptations required are not known at this stage as it would depend upon the school to be attended and the ability of that school to meet the needs of the child in question. Works may be required for ramps and handrails to enable the child to move around the school to larger scale works for example the provision of hygiene and physiotherapy rooms.

New build hygiene and physiotherapy rooms, by way of an extension to the school, in previous years have cost around £40-50k per room. This is the worst case scenario. Every attempt would be made to find an internal remodelling solution initially without compromising on the quality of education provided for the children at the school.

Two children therefore would equate to an approximate cost of £200k plus contingency and professional fees, a total cost in the region of £240k.

| Child 1 | | Child 2 | |
|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| Hygiene room | £50,000 | Hygiene room | £50,000 |
| Physiotherapy room | £50,000 | Physiotherapy room | £50,000 |
| Contingency (10%) | £10,000 | Contingency (10%) | £10,000 |
| Fees (10%) | £10,000 | Fees (10%) | £10,000 |

| | | | |
|-------|----------|-------|----------|
| Total | £120,000 | Total | £120,000 |
|-------|----------|-------|----------|

8. Benefits

The anticipated benefits of the proposed project are listed below:

8.1. Cashable benefits

None

8.2. Non-cashable benefits

- Compliance with government guidelines
- Fit for purpose accommodation and associated infrastructure
- A fully accessible school that could meet the needs of all future children with EHC Plans

9. High level timeline

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Funding approved in capital programme | February 2021 |
| Schools identified following admissions application | February 2021 |
| Assessment of need and adaptations required at schools | March/April 20201 |
| Accessibility improvement works completed | August 2021 |

10. Risks

Risks are potential threats that may occur but have not yet happened. Risk management will monitor the identified risks and take any remedial action should the risk happen.

10.1. The key risks of not doing the project are:

- Council does not fulfil their statutory duty to place children with SEN and/or disabilities in schools
- Impact on service delivery
- Reputational risk

10.2. The key project risks are:

- Insufficient budget
- Insufficient resource
- Disruption to school
- Contractor availability

11. Environmental Impact

An assessment will be carried out once the location and work required are identified.

Children and families

- 2021/22 budget proposals

Our ambition for Herefordshire



“Respecting our past, shaping our future - we will improve the **sustainability, connectivity** and **wellbeing** of our county by strengthening our **communities**, creating a thriving local **economy** and protecting and enhancing our **environment**”.

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Environment

Protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live



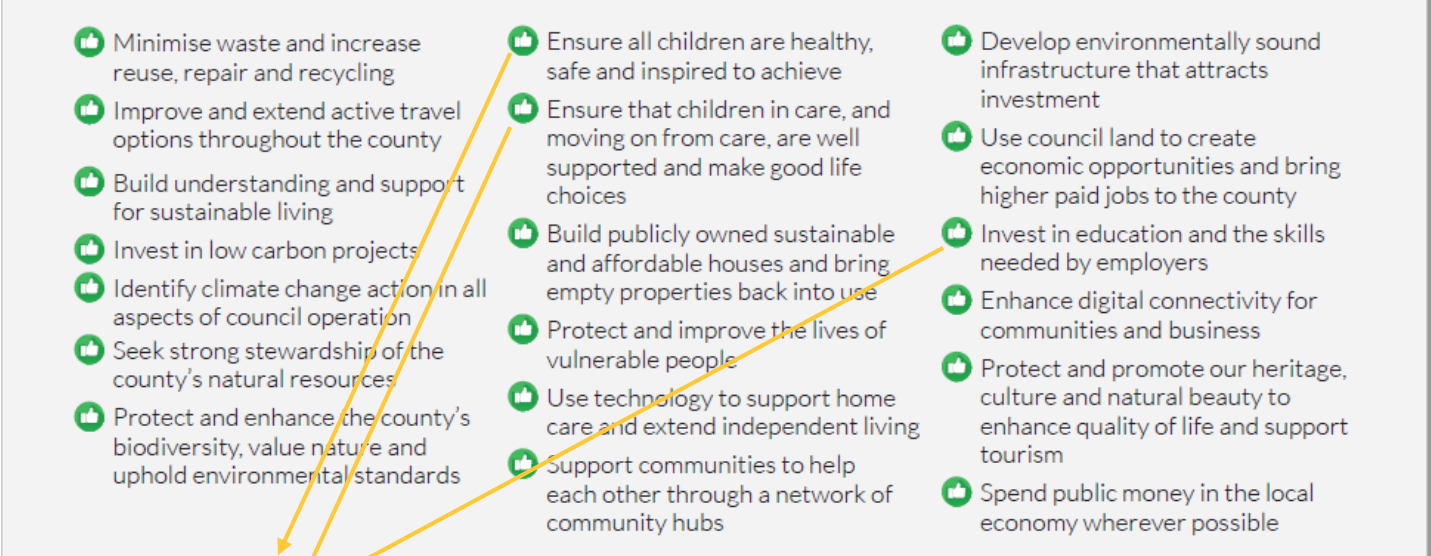
Community

Strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together



Economy

Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources



WE WILL



Ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve

Ensure that children in care, and moving on from care, are well supported and make good life choices

Invest in education and the skills needed by employers

Children and families

- We have high ambitions for children in Herefordshire and the services that work with them and their families
- We are transforming children and families services, particularly safeguarding and early help
- Still at an early stage of a long term transformation programme – it can take Local Authorities 5-8 years to achieve sustained cultural and practice change, sustained change in how children and families are supported and enabled to achieve change themselves
- Good initiatives taking place – Signs of Safety, early help, edge of care (ECHO) started in 2020. Builds on investment in legal services, social workers, managers, family support, business support, use of technology, to support high quality consistent practice – an area of focus.

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Our practice aims

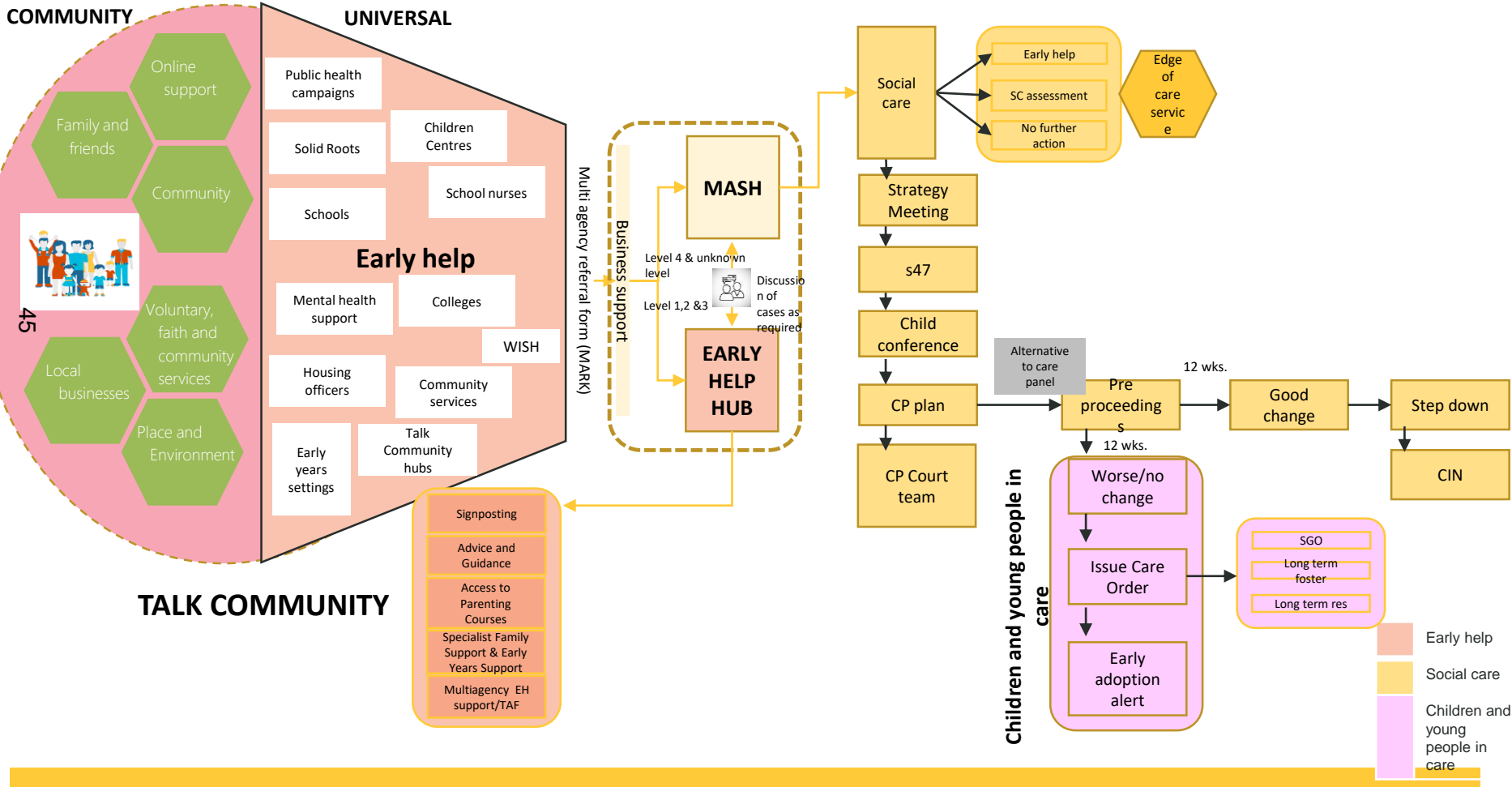
- We will keep children within their families wherever we can and it is safe to do so.
- We will provide a robust early help offer, to prevent issues escalating
- We will intervene at the lowest level of intervention wherever possible, and in accordance with our Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Right Help ⁴³ Right Time levels of need framework
- We will work with families, recognising their strengths, and developing positive working relationships
- We will take swift action to protect children when that is identified as what children need

Impact of our improvement work (“so what”?)

- Children and families:
 - increasingly receiving support earlier and the right support at the right time and staying with or returning to their families
 - increasingly receiving better quality work due to lower caseloads, increase in supervision, informed management practice, more permanent staff and social workers supported by business support
 - experiencing poor practice is picked up through performance information, audit and quality assurance and learning is taken into service improvement
 - increasingly benefiting from multi agency work that supports their needs and achieves change
- Staff positive about many of the changes and about working for Herefordshire
- DfE, LGA, Ofsted are recognising the positive changes taking place. Positive feedback from Essex Partner in Practice, Positive feedback from judge on court work.

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Children and Families – whole family approach



Pressures

- Still have relatively high reliance on agency social workers in some particular teams; we are being successful in recruiting newly qualified workers. They do and will need support as we grow our own.
- Placement choice and price affected by COVID19. Nationally, demand is increasing cost and reducing choice.
- A shortage of foster care placements nationally and locally.
- An increased pressure on residential placements and specialist placements which affects choice, availability and price. 23 residential placements which could be supported in foster care.
- 9 out of 10 Local Authorities in a County Council's Network survey 2020 predicted an overspend on children's social care budget
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities- increases in numbers of children with EHC plans, specialist provision "full". National picture of High Needs Block spending over nationally provided budget. Herefordshire also facing significant pressures
- Lack of opportunity for young people for education, training, employment with training
- Increase in children eligible for free school meals c.25% increase in Oct 2020 from Oct 2019. Anticipate this will increase due to recession; increases in demand for early help and safeguarding services.
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people

Proposed savings

| Description | £000 |
|--|--------------|
| Supported accommodation for care leavers | 320 |
| Step down residential to in house foster carers | 1,000 |
| Prevention of children becoming looked after; reunification of looked after children with families | 400 |
| Recruit 30 new foster carers per annum for 5 years | 200 |
| Full cost recovery of traded services | 20 |
| Manage inflation and secure contract efficiencies | 450 |
| Totals | 2,390 |

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| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Meeting: | Children and young people scrutiny committee |
| Meeting date: | Tuesday 12 January 2021 |
| Title of report: | Work programme 2020 - 2021 |
| Report by: | Democratic Services Officer |

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To: review the attached work programme for 2020/21; consider the draft scoping document for the paediatric therapies task and finish group; and note the recommendations tracker.

Recommendation(s)

That the committee:

- (a) reviews the 2020/21 work programme at appendix a, discusses any additional items of business or topics for inclusion in the work programme and agrees the changes since the previous meeting of the committee, as listed in paragraph 3 below;
- (b) approves the scoping document (appendix b) for the paediatric therapies task and finish group, its membership (including any co-optees) and the appointment of a chairperson; and
- (c) notes the recommendation tracker in appendix c.

Alternative options

1. It is for the committee to determine its work programme to reflect the priorities facing Herefordshire. The committee needs to be selective and ensure that the work programme is focused, realistic and deliverable within existing resources. The committee needs to develop a manageable work programme to ensure that scrutiny is focused, effective and produces clear outcomes. Topics selected on the work programme should reflect issues of current importance facing children's services at Herefordshire council.

Key considerations

Work Programme

2. The work programme needs to focus on the key issues of concern and be manageable allowing for urgent items or matters that have been called-in. Should committee members become aware of any issue they think should be considered by the committee they are invited to discuss the matter with the chairperson, vice chairperson and the statutory scrutiny officer. The current version of the work programme is attached at appendix a.
3. Since the previous meeting of the committee on 1 December an additional meeting has been added to the work programme on 19 January to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on Provision of children centre service in Bromyard area.

Constitutional Matters

Task and Finish Groups

4. A scrutiny committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. A committee may determine to undertake a task and finish activity itself as a spotlight review where such an activity may be undertaken in a single session; the procedure rules relating to task and finish groups will apply in these circumstances but the review is likely to be attended by all members of the committee and chaired by the chairperson.
5. The scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken by a task and finish group, the membership, chairperson, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. A task and finish group will be composed of a least 2 members of the committee, other councillors and may include, as appropriate, co-opted people with specialist knowledge or expertise to support the task. The committee will appoint the chairperson of a task and finish group.
6. The committee is asked to determine matters relating to the convening of a task and finish group including the scope of the review to be undertaken, the chairperson, membership, timeframe, desired outcomes, what will not be included in the review and whether to co-opt any non-voting members to the group. Such co-optees could consist of individuals with valuable skills and experience that would assist a task and finish group to undertake a review (see below).
7. During its work programming session on 20 November the committee agreed the convening of a paediatric therapies task and finish group. The draft scoping document for the task and finish group is attached, as appendix b, for the committee to consider and approve. The committee is also asked to agree the membership of the task and finish group and the appoint a chairperson.

Co-option

8. A scrutiny committee may co-opt a maximum of two non-voting people as and when required, for example for a particular meeting or to join a task and finish group. Any such co-optees will be agreed by the committee having reference to the agreed workplan and/or task and finish group membership.
9. The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to exercise this power in respect of any matters in the work programme.

Tracking of recommendations made by the committee

10. The recommendations of the committee concerning the review of peer on peer abuse cases at the previous meeting on 15 September and the draft executive response to those recommendations are attached as appendix c. Cabinet will consider the draft executive response at its meeting on 26 November; any updates or changes resulting from the Cabinet's deliberations will be reported to the committee at the meeting on 1 December.
11. A schedule of recommendations in the current administrative council term is appended to this report as appendix d.

Forward plan

12. The constitution states that scrutiny committees should consider the forward plan as the chief source of information regarding forthcoming key decisions. Forthcoming decisions of the children and families directorate are listed below:

| Decision and purpose | Date of decision and decision maker |
|--|---|
| Schools Capital Investment Programme To approve the proposed expenditure of the preliminary works budget included in the capital programme. The distribution of this funding is determined in accordance with the principles set out in the schools capital investment strategy and is based on regular condition surveys, suitability assessments and assessments of current and forecast demand for places. | 14 January 2021 by Cabinet |
| Strengthening the recruitment of Council Foster Carers To approve the business case for investment in marketing and engagement services to strengthen the council's in-house fostering service, increase the number of general and specialist foster carers and reduce the reliance on the more costly IFA (independent fostering agency) sector. | 15 January 2021 by Cabinet member children and families |
| Provision of children centre service in Bromyard area To approve proposals for the integration of early help children's centre services for the Bromyard area with the existing in-house provision. The Bromyard Reach area is the only part of Herefordshire where Children's Centre provision is externally commissioned. All other | 22 January 2021 by Cabinet member children and families |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>areas are supported via an in-house service which is centrally governed and managed.</p> <p>It is intended that all children centre services are integrated across Herefordshire</p> | |
| <p>Schools Budget 2021/22</p> <p>To approve school forum's recommended budget proposals for school budgets, central school services and early years within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2021/22</p> | <p>28 January 2021 by Cabinet member children and families</p> |
| <p>High Needs Budget 2021/22</p> <p>To approve the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) high needs budget for 2021/22 as recommended by Schools Forum</p> | <p>31 March 2021 by Cabinet member children and families</p> |

Suggestions for scrutiny from members of the public

13. Suggestions for scrutiny are invited from members of the public through the council's website, accessible through the link below. There have been no suggestions for scrutiny received from members of the public since the previous meeting of the committee.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200148/your_council/61/get_involved/4,

Community impact

14. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

Equality duty

15. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
16. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this report concerns the administrative function of the children and

young people scrutiny committee, it is not felt that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

17. The costs of the work of the committee will have to be met within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny can be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.
18. The councillors' allowance scheme contains provision for co-opted and other non-elected members to claim travel, subsistence and dependant carer's allowances on the same basis as members of the council. If the committee agrees that co-optees should be included in an inquiry they will be entitled to claim allowances.

Legal implications

19. The council is required to deliver a scrutiny function. The development of a work programme which is focused and reflects those priorities facing Herefordshire will assist the committee and the council to deliver a scrutiny function.
20. The Scrutiny Rules in Part 4 Section 5 of the Council's constitution provide for the setting of a work programme, the reporting of recommendations to the executive and the establishment of task and finish groups, as below.
21. Paragraph 4.5.28 of the constitution explains that the scrutiny committee is responsible for setting its own work programme. In setting its work programme a scrutiny committee shall have regard to the resources (including officer time) available.
22. Under section 4.5.10 of the constitution a scrutiny committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. A committee may determine to undertake a task and finish activity itself as a spotlight review where such an activity may be undertaken in a single session; the procedure rules relating to task and finish groups will apply in these circumstances. The relevant scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken, the membership, chairperson, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. It will be a matter for the task and finish group to determine lines of questioning, witnesses (from the council or wider community) and evidence requirements.
23. Under section 4.5.19 of the constitution task and finish groups will report their findings/outcomes/recommendations to the relevant scrutiny committee who will decide if the findings/outcomes/recommendations should be reported to the cabinet or elsewhere.

Risk management

24.

| Risk / opportunity | Mitigation |
|--|--|
| There is a reputational risk to the council if the scrutiny function does not operate effectively. | The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help mitigate this risk. |

Consultees

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Matthew Evans, Tel: 01432 383690, email: Matthew.Evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

25. The work programme is reviewed at every committee meeting.

Appendices

- Appendix a – Work Programme 2020/21.
- Appendix b – Scoping document paediatric therapies task and finish group.
- Appendix c – Recommendation tracker.

Background papers

None identified.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

12 January 2021

Work Programme 2020/21

| Meeting date: 2 June 2020 – 1.00 p.m. | | Despatch: 22 May | |
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| Item | Description | Report Author | Form of Scrutiny* |
| Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan. | To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan. | Liz Elgar | Performance Review |
| Child Exploitation task and finish group – outcomes and recommendations | To receive the outcomes and recommendations of the child exploitation task and finish group. | Matthew Evans | Policy review and development |
| Meeting date: 28 July 2020 – 1.00 p.m. | | Despatch: 20 July | |
| Schools update | To provide an update on the reopening of schools including detail of the number of children who have returned to school and how schools will continue to support children who have not returned. The report should include detail the known situation of the mental health impact and educational deficit experienced by pupils during the lockdown. | Ceri Morgan/Alison Naylor | Performance review |
| Corporate Parenting Strategy – 2020-2023 | To consider the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023 and the Care Leavers covenant. | Gill Cox | Pre-decision scrutiny |
| Adoption Service and Fostering Service annual reports | To receive the annual reports from the adoption and fostering services and consider the outcomes and recommendations. To make recommendations to the cabinet member on the operation of the services during 2020/21. | Gill Cox | Performance review |
| Meeting date: 15 September 2020 – 1.00 p.m. | | Despatch: 7 September | |

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| Review of peer on peer abuse cases | To provide the outcome of the review (including lessons learned) into cases of peer on peer abuse referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). | Ceri Morgan | Performance Review |
| Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan | To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan. | Andy Gill | Performance Review |
| Decision on accommodation and support framework for care leavers. | To conduct pre-decision scrutiny on developing proposals for a local contract framework for purchasing accommodation based services for care leavers and other vulnerable young people ahead of a key decision in 2020. | Ewen Archibald, Christa Jackson | Pre-decision call-in |
| Meeting date: 1 December 2020 – 1.00 p.m. | | Despatch: 23 November | |
| Update on reducing the number of looked after children (LAC) | Updates concerning efforts to reduce the number of looked after children (LAC). To include an update on the 49 cases presented to the meeting on 25 November 2019 that had been identified for Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) or reunification. | Liz Elgar | Performance Review |
| Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan | To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan. | Andy Gill | Performance Review |
| Child Exploitation Task and Finish Group | To receive an update on the work undertaken in response to the recommendations of the Child Exploitation task and finish group. | Action owners | Policy review and development |
| Meeting date: 12 January 2021 – 1.00 p.m. | | Despatch: 4 January | |
| Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) | To seek the views of the committee on the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS), the budget proposals for 2021-22 relating to Children and Families. | Andrew Lovegrove, Josie Rushgrove | Pre-decision call-in/Policy review and development |
| Paediatric therapies – task and finish group | To consider a scoping document for a task and finish group concerning access to children and young people's community therapies and performance during the COVID19 pandemic. | Matthew Evans | Policy review and development |

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| Meeting date: 19 January 2021 – 10.00 a.m. | | Despatch: 11 January | |
| Pre-decision scrutiny of decision: Provision of children centre service in Bromyard area | To undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Provision of children centre service in Bromyard area. | Richard Watson | Pre-decision call-in |
| Meeting date: 23 March 2021 – 1.00 p.m. | | Despatch: 15 March | |
| Children and Young People's mental health | To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A review of schools pastoral support and a mental health pathway for looked after children; - Briefing from CCG on CYP mental health and impact of COVID19; and - Presentation by Healthwatch on Schools Mental Health Forum and Youth Watch | Ceri Morgan CCG Healthwatch | |
| School Examination Performance | To consider available data concerning school performance of summer 2020 and make recommendations to cabinet on how the effectiveness of the school improvement framework and strategy could be enhanced. | Alison Naylor | Performance review |
| Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan | To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan. | Andy Gill | Performance Review |
| Work programme 2021/22 | To agree the work programme and meeting dates for the 2021/22 administrative year. | Matt Evans | |

Business to allocate

- Early Help Strategy – policy review and development item – scrutiny panel - **Proposed**
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) – task and finish group – **Proposed**

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| Oral Health Needs Assessment | To provide a report on the high-level action plan for improving oral health in Herefordshire and details of any progress against the recommendations in the oral health needs assessment. | Public Health | Performance Review (agenda item) /Briefing note |
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| Childhood obesity | Update on work of the council to address childhood obesity – to be scheduled for a meeting in 2021 | Public Health | Performance Review (agenda item) |
| Report of work of prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation and the current risk of exploitation in Herefordshire. Child Exploitation summit, to include modern day slavery | To provide detail on the work of the prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire. To facilitate the child exploitation summit to include a focus on modern day slavery. | Liz Elgar | Performance Review (agenda item) |
| Impact of pandemic on opportunities for school and care leavers | To provide a report concerning how the council is intending to address the impact on school and care leavers of the potential economic downturn and reduced employment opportunities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. | Ceri Morgan | Briefing Note – potential Performance Review (agenda item) |
| Leaving care and preparing for adulthood | To receive details of what services exist to prepare care leavers and unaccompanied child asylum seekers for adulthood. | Andy Gill | Performance Review/Briefing note |
| Briefing note concerning the NEETs project | | | Briefing note |
| Outcome of the audit of the reduction in child protection plans | | | Briefing note |
| Current risk of exploitation in Herefordshire | | | Briefing note |
| Public Health England BSIL Programme | | | Briefing note |
| Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) annual report | | | Performance Review |
| Elective Home Education and current trends | | | Briefing note |
| Signs of safety briefing | | | Training |

* Pre-decision call-in, Performance review, Policy review and development

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Paediatric Therapies Task and Finish Group – Scoping Document

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| Title of review | Paediatric Therapies Task and Finish Group |
| Scope | |
| Reason for review | <p>To consider how the coronavirus has impacted on the provision of paediatric therapies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) • Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) • Children’s Physiotherapy • Children’s Occupational Therapy |
| Links to the county plan | <p>The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Herefordshire county plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together |
| Summary of the review and terms of reference | <p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider the performance of paediatric therapies and any delays between referral to treatment in paediatric therapies. • To consider the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on paediatric therapies and how working practices have adapted. |
| | <p>Terms of Reference:</p> <p>The task and finish group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive performance data (prior to the pandemic and since the outbreak) including waiting times for assessment and referral to treatment. To consider in the context of national and regional statistics. • Receive detail of the range of therapy services available to children and young people in Herefordshire. • Receive and consider referral pathways and clinical criteria to access the services; including urgent and routine referrals. • Receive an assessment of the impact of health needs, such as SALT, on childhood development, e.g. social inclusion and friendships, engagement in education. • Receive detail of the group of children and young people receiving therapeutic services, e.g. CYP with SEND, CYP with cancer, CYP with complex health needs, CYP with eating disorders and CYP with gender dysphoria • To receive and consider feedback concerning services from CYP, families, staff and stakeholders. To determine any themes or predominant issues and where improvement could be realised. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive detail of service resources, current workforce and clinicians' caseloads. • To receive details of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on therapeutic services and adaptations that have been necessary to respond to demand during the periods of lockdown/social distancing. • To develop an understanding of what are the main issues or themes that lead to a referral to therapeutic services from the experience of the clinical staff and why – are there health inequalities? <p>Membership (to be determined):</p> |
| What will NOT be included | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination of any individual cases. However anonymised case studies might assist the Group in completing the review. |
| Potential outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the current performance of paediatric therapies; and • An understanding of the impact of the coronavirus on the provision of paediatric therapies. |
| Key Questions | <p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance data (prior to the pandemic and since the outbreak) including waiting times for assessment and referral to treatment and how does this compare with national and regional statistics? • What are the referral pathways and clinical criteria to access services? • Receive an assessment of the impact of health needs, such as SALT, on childhood development, e.g. social inclusion and friendships, engagement in education. • What groups of children and young people receive therapeutic services, e.g. CYP with SEND, CYP with cancer, CYP with complex health needs, CYP with eating disorders and CYP with gender dysphoria? • What feedback exists concerning the experience of CYP, families, staff and stakeholders of therapeutic services? • What information can be presented of service resources, current workforce and clinicians' caseloads. • What has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on therapeutic services and what adaptations have been necessary during the periods of lockdown/social distancing. • To develop an understanding of what are the main issues or themes that lead to a referral to therapeutic services from the experience of the clinical staff and why – are there health inequalities? • |
| Cabinet Member(s) | Cabinet member children and families |

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| Key stakeholders / Consultees | Internal – Children and Families Directorate External – Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group – Wye Valley Trust |
| Potential witnesses | Representatives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) • Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) • Physiotherapy • Occupational Therapy • Teachers • Families using paediatric therapy services • Primary school teachers |
| Research Required | |
| Potential Visits | |
| Publicity Requirements | Following the conclusion of the task and finish group, to report back to the children and young people scrutiny committee. |

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| Outline Timetable (to be determined): (following decision by the children and young people scrutiny committee to commission the Review) | |
| <i>Activity</i> | <i>Timescale</i> |
| Confirm approach, Terms of Reference, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/meeting dates | Committee meeting – 12 January 2020 |
| Meeting One | |
| Meeting Two | |
| Meeting Three | |
| Present final report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee | |

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| Group Members | <i>Tbc</i> |
| Chair | <i>Tbc</i> |
| Co-optees | <i>Tbc</i> |
| Support Officers | M Evans |

Schedule of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee recommendations made and actions in response

| Meeting | item | Recommendations | Action | Status |
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| 15 July 2019 | Corporate Parenting Annual Update – 2018/2019 | <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A briefing note is provided concerning the multiagency panel relating to looked after children mental health services; • A briefing note is provided on the introduction of the care leavers covenant; • A response is provided to the question relating to the implications of the national funding changes on A Levels undertaken by looked after children; • A letter is sent to Herefordshire clinical commissioning group to seek clarification regarding the resourcing of the looked after children health team; and • A briefing note is provided on SHYPP referral levels. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulated on 3 October 2019 • Circulated on 3 October 2019 • Response circulated on 31 July 2019 • Letter sent to CCG on 31 July 2019 • Circulated on 3 October 2019 | Completed |
| | Fostering and adoption service annual reports 2018/19 | <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The achievements in the adoption annual report and the compliments in the fostering report are recognised and the officers working in those | | Completed |

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| | | <p>teams and carers of the council's looked after children are commended;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A briefing note on proposals to increase the retention of foster carers and details of the training provided be provided; • A letter is sent to the Wye Valley Trust (WVT) to request details of the provision of occupational therapists in Herefordshire; and • A session is organised to look at case samples of how appropriate forms of care are determined for looked after children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster carers training programme circulated on 31 July. • Letter sent to WVT on 31 July. • Included in safeguarding training delivered to members of the Council. | |
| 16 September 2019 | Accommodation based support service for care leavers | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports the introduction of the accommodation based support service for care leavers; • supports an ongoing review of the service to determine its effectiveness and possible replication in future; and • requests that a site visit to the facility is arranged once completed. | Approved at cabinet on 26 September | Completed |
| | Youth Justice Plan 2019-2020 | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorses the Youth Justice Plan for presentation to full Council; and • Asks that an addendum is added to the report, in forthcoming years, providing up-to-date statistics. | Approved at full Council on 11 October | Completed |

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| 25 November 2019 | Review of budget and corporate plan proposals for 2020/21 relating to the remit of the children and young people scrutiny committee | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the planned investments for looked after children, edge of care and improving social care services and requests further information is submitted to the committee regarding proposals for these services; and • Asks that a report concerning the dental health initiatives is provided to the committee setting out key performance indicators for the proposals. | | Completed |
| | Update on reducing the number of looked after children | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises the work that has been undertaken and the progress made in implementing systems to reduce the numbers of looked after children; and • Asks that a report is submitted to a meeting in 12 months times which provides a breakdown of the progress made in regard of the 49 children identified for SGOs or reunification. | Added to work programme for committee on 1 December 2020. | Completed |
| | Review of performance and progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan | RESOLVED: That the committee notes the report and the improvements made since the previous quarter. | | Completed |

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| | 2019 / 2020 | | | |
| 14 January 2020 | Review of budget and corporate plan proposals for 2020/21 relating to the remit of the children and young people scrutiny committee | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the additional areas of investment identified in the budget; • Writes to the local MPs to request details of actions to lobby central government to improve oral health in Herefordshire; and • Requests a report to a forthcoming meeting of the committee containing the high-level action plan for improving oral health in Herefordshire and details of any progress against the recommendations in the oral health needs assessment. | <p>Correspondence sent on 30 January 2020.</p> <p>Added to work programme for committee on 2 December 2020.</p> | Completed |
| | Spotlight review – outcomes and recommendations | RESOLVED: That the committee agrees the recommendations and outcomes of the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review (appendix b) for submission to the executive, subject to the amendments to recommendations outlined above and evaluation of appropriate factual corrections. | Executive response reported to the committee meeting on 2 June 2020 | Completed |
| 16 March 2020 | School Examination Performance | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the report and the good results in key | | Completed |

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| | 2019 | <p>stage 1 and key stage 2; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request that in future the presentation of the results is set against performance in earlier years. | | |
| | Review of performance and progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan 2019/20 | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requests that in future details of the changes that the directorate was trying to accomplish be presented in a one page briefing document including details of the intention of a project, who was responsible for it and how change would be measured. requests a briefing note on the mind of my own (MOMO) app. proposes that all members of the children and young people scrutiny committee be invited to the performance challenge session. agrees that meetings are scheduled four weeks after the release of the quarterly report concerning the safeguarding and family support improvement plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This suggestion is being looked into and future reports of progress against the improvement plan will outline how the recommendation could be taken forward. Circulated on 15 April 2020. Arrangements are being looked into. The scheduling of meetings is being looked into. | |
| 2 June 2020 | Review of peer on peer abuse cases | <p>RESOLVED - That the committee agrees the deferral of the report to the next meeting on 28 July to allow for the inclusion of the 2017 review and risk assessment pro forma and clarification of gaps identified in the information provided.</p> | <p>It is proposed that the report is considered at the meeting of the committee on 15 September 2020.</p> | |
| | Review of performance and | <p>RESOLVED: The committee agrees that:</p> | | |

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| | <p>progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan 2019/20</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consideration is given to how future versions of the report could provide details of the prioritisation of actions in the improvement plan; • consideration is given to how third sector organisations could be resourced to support actions in the improvement plan; • the children and families directorate works with the adults wellbeing directorate to undertake joint work on establishing a clear transition pathway for vulnerable young people; • all members of the committee should be invited to attend performance challenge sessions; and • the outcomes of the audit of the reduction in child protection plans to be made available to the committee. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations to Council members of the committee have been circulated. • added to the committee's work programming. | |
| <p>28 July 2020</p> | <p>Schools update</p> | <p>RESOLVED – That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee recommends that a further survey is undertaken concerning children's mental health and schooling arrangements during the pandemic; • A briefing note is circulated providing details of the number of private nurseries that have opened in September 2020 and stayed open in October and November; • An update is provided regarding the national catch-up programme; | <p>An update briefing on the recommendations relating to the schools update will be circulated.</p> | |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work on children’s mental health is prioritised by the committee and includes a review of school pastoral support and a mental health pathway for looked after children; • Further detailed examination of the outcomes of the survey is undertaken to determine how the provision and effectiveness of mental health services were impacted during the lockdown; • An update is provided regarding the attendance rates after the return to school in September. | | |
| | Corporate parenting strategy 2020-2023 | <p>RESOLVED - That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wording of the bullet point in the care leavers covenant concerning commissioning and procurement required clarification; • A role for members of the council in respect of assisting looked after children could include the signposting of children in care and care leavers to local organisations offering work experience and apprenticeship opportunities; and • Priority 5 of the corporate parenting strategy should include mention of market towns, the involvement of local communities and the youth games. | <p>Detail from the cabinet report – 24 September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been reworded to provide clarity • This is to be considered by councillors. • Priority 5 applies across the County and consideration of children and young people taking part in the youth games can be considered as part of the feasibility assessment. | |
| 15 September 2020 | Accommodation and support framework for care leavers | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes and supports the proposal for the accommodation and support framework for care | Update from Ewen Archibald – 7 November | |

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| | | <p>leavers; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends that the timetable for the introduction of the framework is reviewed and a view reached if it is too ambitious or realistic and achievable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the timescales required to establish the proposed framework effectively, cabinet members have determined that there will be a change to the timetable for mobilising. The decision to be considered by Cabinet retains the original timetable for procurement. However, when the framework is launched in early April, it is now proposed that it operates in shadow form for three months with other purchasing arrangements continuing in parallel. This will allow time to test some elements and phase in controls and features. The framework will be fully operational from July 2021. | |
| | <p>Review of performance and progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan 2020/2021</p> | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends that the executive considers the possibility of a working group to examine the issue of recruitment in Herefordshire, to include a focus on the recruitment of social workers and to engage with projects currently in progress; and • Requires that meeting dates are reviewed to ensure more up to date performance data is presented to meetings of the committee. | <p>There is a Children's social worker recruitment and retention working group which meets regularly to address this matter. It is chaired by Andy Gill and includes attendees from the directorate as well as Recruitment and Organisation Development. Examples of its recent work include updating and promoting the 'core offer' for social workers and developing service workforce development strategy to ensure that recruitment, retention and service needs are addressed holistically.</p> | |
| | <p>Review of peer on peer abuse</p> | <p>That the committee:</p> | <p>Executive response to scrutiny recommendations agreed at the meeting of</p> | |

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| | cases | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls on the executive to consider the recommendations of the committee during its finalisation of the Peer on Peer Review Herefordshire MASH 2017 - 2019 report; • Recommends that the report is strengthened to provide an explanation as to why the CSO report of April 2017 was not circulated to schools prior to the commencement of the summer term in 2017 together with the risk assessment template. An explanation as to why it was not shared or mentioned at the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review is also required. The use of the term 'unhelpful', to describe the decision to not share the report, should be reconsidered and a stronger term adopted; • Recognises that risk posed to victims of peer on peer abuse is not merely physical but also emotional and psychological. In light of the handling of some cases detailed in the review report the committee recommends that there is a reassessment of the finding in the review that no children were put or left at risk; • Retains a watching brief, through the quarterly performance report, on the reporting rates of peer on peer abuse and the performance of the council in response to reported cases. This progress will be monitored at meetings of the children and families performance challenge. Any concerns with reporting rates or the performance of the council will prompt a report to the following meeting of the committee to | Cabinet on 26 November 2020. | |
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explain concerning trends;

- Recommends that the *Response to Reports* flowchart for Herefordshire schools (appendix 1 of the review report) is enhanced with yes and no actions and is regularly scenario-tested with schools by the council. The flowchart should incorporate details of individuals accountable for actions and timelines for the completion of actions;
- Recommends that schools that do not implement the model policy are held to account for the decision not to implement. Schools should be encouraged to share any policy which they feel supersedes or is superior to the model policy produced by the council;
- Recommends that when consideration is given to the process of reconciliation there should be an assessment of long and short term processes to provide a variable response tailored to needs of children and families affected by peer on peer abuse. A longer term process would provide for comprehensive engagement with children and families who required and requested this level of reconciliation. A shorter term process would provide for those children and families who did not want or did not need to engage with the longer term approach
- Recommends that a comprehensive plan of help and support for victims of peer on peer abuse and their families is developed by the

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| | | <p>council. This should include detail of what ongoing mental health support for children and families would be available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends that clarification is provided in the report around the distinction between policy and guidance. There should be an explanation of who was responsible for: providing peer on peer abuse policies for use in Herefordshire schools; the adoption of such policies; the production of guidance; and the sharing of new guidance. • Recommends that the timelines in the recommendations in the review report should be finalised and include the title of those officers responsible for actions. • Recommends that a summary is provided at the foot of the review report detailing the scrutiny committee's recommendations and providing a recognition that the report was the start of a process to understand and address peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire. The summary should explain that not all elements of peer on peer abuse were understood and that improved data gathering, new guidance and new processes were being developed to attempt to come to terms with and address the issue. | | |
| 1 December 2020 | Update on reducing the number of children looked after (CLA) | <p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends that the children's and families directorate continue the monitoring of the number of children diverted from care by the edge of care service; | Recommendations relating to Children and Families are being taken forward. | |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains an oversight of plans and initiatives to reduce the numbers of children looked after; and • Recommends that the executive investigates the cost benefit of the construction and operation of a council-owned residential unit for children looked after. | | |
| | Review of performance and progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends that the dates of forthcoming meetings of the committee are timed to coincide more closely with the production of the improvement plan report; • Recommends that future versions of the improvement plan report contain more information on the improvements to Mosaic and the use of technology to enable better social work practice; • Agreed that a letter would be sent to the executive to explain that the committee would use the improvement plan quarterly report to monitor record keeping for safeguarding cases; and • Recommends that in future the improvement plan contain detail of the recording of feedback from young people and the use of the mind of my own (MOMO) app. | Recommendations relating to Children and Families are being taken forward. | |