



Appendix 1 Recommendations made by Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee September 2023 – March 2025

26 September 2023			
Early Help			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	The council will make full use of school information collection to plan and deliver early help support.	Accepted	Noted
New Herefordshire Local Transport Plan			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Director of Children's Services and improvement partner to deliver workshop on restorative/relational practice.	Accepted	This took place during 2024. Committee member received the opportunity to attend one of a series of training sessions on relational practice.
14 November 2023			
Co-opted member recruitment update			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Recommends to full Council that the candidates in paragraphs 12 to 18 of this report should be appointed to the Committee.	Accepted	Resolved
2	Agrees the suggested amendments and recommend to full Council to change the Constitution with regard to the recruitment of co-opted members.	Accepted	Resolved
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	For a training session around youth provision to be arranged.	Accepted	Resolved
Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Action Plan			

Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	The executive ensure that early intervention in schools is funded adequately in Herefordshire Council's 2024-2025 budget.	Accepted	No response received

23 January 2024			
Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Annual Report 2022/23			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	That a workshop be held including all data analysts from across the partnership.	Unclear	This was not actioned. As the recommendation is now more than a year old it will not be pursued further.

Task and Finish Group - Children and Young People Directorate Budget			T a s k a n d F i n i s h G r o u p - C h i l d r e n a n d
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Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response	
1	Financial performance data to form part of the 'measures that matter' and performance dashboard data, and should be reported back to staff teams so that they are aware of the financial consequences of the service performance alongside other measures.		Noted	
2	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to examine how SEND Transport demand and costs are managed, including a review of operations in other rural local authorities.	Accepted	Action. Resolved - added to list of potential items for inclusion in future meetings	

3	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise work to step children down from residential care, and to reunify families where children have become looked after.	Accepted	Action. Resolved - added to list of potential items for inclusion in future meetings
4	Dedicated financial resource to continue to be embedded within the children and young people directorate to provide challenge and assurance that day-to-day costs are being captured and forecast correctly.	Accepted	Noted
5	Each monthly financial outturn report for the Children and Young People directorate, and weekly Children's Service Analysis Tool (CHAT) be provided to the chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.	Accepted	Noted
6	The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee undertake a piece of work to examine the robustness of the council's data and management information supporting the children and young people directorate.	Accepted	The committee has yet to undertake this work.
7	Savings as proposed to be targeted for Children's directorate to deliver in 2024-25 but assured funding to be found from elsewhere to balance the council's budget.	Accepted	Cabinet acknowledged recommendation - 25 January 2024

12 March 2024**Corporate Parenting Service**

Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Review the future schedule of rates for Section 106 as contained in the Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations dated 1st April 2008 to ensure they reflect current costs, and are updated annually.	Accepted	To consider how the future schedule of rates for Section 106 as contained in the Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations dated 1st April 2008 can be reviewed to ensure they reflect current costs and are updated annually.
2	Introduce interim arrangements for Section 106 funding to ensure changes to schedules of rates can be updated rapidly, while a decision on adopting Infrastructure Levy is reviewed.	Accepted	To consider how the interim arrangements for Section 106 funding to ensure changes to schedules of rates can be updated rapidly, while a decision on adopting Infrastructure Levy can be reviewed.

Corporate Parenting Board

Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
3	Add a visit to the virtual school for consideration as part of the work programme.	Accepted	The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee have added this topic to their work programme long list, and will decide in due

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			course whether or not to scrutinise this topic, and how best to approach this work should they decide to do so.
4	Herefordshire Council to suggest proposals to make Corporate Parenting Board meetings more accessible to elected members and the public	Accepted	Herefordshire Council will develop a Corporate Parenting Board executive summary to be disseminated after each Board in the form of a newsletter
5	Herefordshire Council to extend opportunities to write letters and cards celebrating the success of its looked after children.	Accepted	The Corporate Parenting Board and Corporate Parenting Service welcome the proposal to write to care experienced children and young people and congratulate them on their achievements and successes. It is proposed that corporate celebration cards are designed for this purpose so that these can be completed and sent by senior leaders, including the Leader of the Council, Lead Member, the Chief Executive and members of the Corporate / Directorate Leadership Team.

7 May 2024			
Introduction to fostering			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council appoints and promotes an elected member champion for foster carers.	Partially accepted	This would need to be discussed with the Leader of the Council as it is within his gift to appoint a champion for foster carers. If agreed, a remit/role descriptor would need to be produced and governance would be able to advise of process.
2	That Herefordshire Council works with the Diocese of Hereford to promote fostering to families who had accommodated Ukrainian families.	Accepted	Meetings with the Diocese of Hereford have already taken place and further meetings are planned. An information event with the Diocese will be held on 7 October is going to be held with the Diocese about fostering to all multi-faith groups will be invited as well which will take place on 7 October.
3	That Herefordshire Council works with the Diocese of Hereford to learn lessons from their successful accommodation of Ukrainian families.	Accepted	A lessons learnt exercise with the Diocese of Hereford has already taken place and has been built into the promotion of foster carers.
4	That Herefordshire Council provides an account of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee of 7 May 2024 to social workers in the fostering service.	Rejected	Meetings of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee are publicly available on the Council's YouTube channel.
5	That Herefordshire Council provides a permanent home for the fostering panel and related activities	Rejected	The fostering panel and related activities have been consistently held at the Shell Store, together with meetings with foster carers. At the current time there are no plans to change this approach given that it is a preferred venue for the foster carers.
6	That Herefordshire Council amends its internet pages to ensure that the council encourages recruitment of foster parents from a diverse range of foster carer households.	Accepted	A task and finish group which includes foster carers is in place to refresh the fostering web pages to ensure that the council encourages recruitment of foster carers from a diverse range of foster carers. We are exploring with the Diocese further meetings with multi-faith groups.
7	That Herefordshire Council appoints and promotes an elected member champion for foster carers.		[this would need to be discussed with the Leader of the Council as it is within his gift to appoint a champion for foster carers. If agreed, a remit/role descriptor would need to be produced and governance would be able to advise of process etc]

13 June 2024			
Workforce Challenges in Children's Services			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council identifies measures of success for each of the strands in the children and young people workforce strategy.	Accepted	Accepted
2	That Herefordshire Council makes clear the links between the council's corporate workforce strategy and its children and young people workforce strategy.	Accepted	Accepted
3	That Herefordshire Council builds links with and invests in local schools and voluntary organisations to encourage people to consider children's services as a career.	Partly Accepted	Accepted in part – It is recognised that investing in activities that encourage people to consider children's services and local government as a career is important, particularly with local schools and colleges.
4	That Herefordshire Council encourages people to consider switching careers to Herefordshire Council's children and young people directorate.	Partly Accepted	Accepted. It is recognised that investing in activities that encourage people to switch careers could be important and this forms part of our corporate work
5	That Herefordshire Council ensures that the voice of children informs the children and young people workforce strategy.	Accepted	Accepted
6	That Herefordshire Council describes the link between activity, outputs, outcomes and impact of the workforce strategy in terms of a theory of change.	Partly Accepted	Accepted in part. It is accepted that this is an approach which could be beneficial. The children's workforce strategy has been 12 months in the making and to adopt a radically different model would mean starting the process from scratch. This model will be considered for future strategy development.
7	Additional information required: Number of agency staff who have become permanent members of staff.	Rejected	The Statutory Scrutiny Officer has requested this information from the service and has received no reply. Due to the time elapsed since these recommendations were made, and given the nature of these recommendations, the Statutory Scrutiny Officer will not pursue them unless as part of a future piece of work agreed by the committee.
8	Additional information required: Number of permanent staff living in the local area, split by job type.	Rejected	The Statutory Scrutiny Officer has requested this information from the service and has received no reply. Due to the time elapsed since these recommendations were made, and given the nature of these recommendations, the Statutory Scrutiny Officer will not pursue them unless as part of a future piece of work agreed by the committee.

30 July 2024			
Children's Services Complaints			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council review and revise the information on its website concerning complaints, to include information on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman process, and information on where to seek assistance.	Accepted	https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council/get-involved/7#:~:text=If%20you%20are%20still%20unhappy,or%20call%20024%207682%200000 The link gives the Ombudsman details and explains their role.
2	For the children and young people service to report to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee within six months on the demand, flow, and timeliness of complaints. The report should include an analysis of those complaints and the ongoing development of the complaints process.	Accepted	Further data and analysis of complaints and compliments to be presented at scrutiny within the QA reporting Sept 25
3	That scrutiny recognises the work undertaken in partnership with Leeds City Council around complaints and asks that consideration be given to • having an independent professional investigate and document the complaint and desired outcome • understanding the demographics and protected characteristics of people making complaints and • ensuring that children's young people's and families' views are incorporated into that review.	Accepted	Point 1 completed – Semi Independent investigators in place Nov 24 and now managed through QA services. New process for management of complaints piloted Dec/Jan 25 and revised for final March 25. Point 3 completed – new process ensure all complaints are met with at the beginning of the stage 1 in person to ensure they have shared their view and preferred outcomes. Point 3 will be incorporated into compliment and complain analysis reports 25/26
Families' Commission Update			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council provide analysis of funding provided through the Police and Crime Commissioner and My Family, My School, My Community to demonstrate that funding and resources are focused on delivering sustained early help and support for families and communities.	Accepted	Accepted – All funded project are underway with evaluation on outcomes being completed March – June 25. This was one off funding and all providers were aware of the need to exit plan in 2025. PCC and LA have agreed a 25/26 Early Help and Prevention joint funding pot to consider future projects/services that we might fund / support or fund in part. NB this is in addition to the LA funded early Help provision agreed through tendering process 2025 costed £400k

2	The funding available to support development of a child-friendly Herefordshire is distributed as rapidly as possible.	Rejected	There is no funding for this work
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30 July 2024

Quality Assurance

Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Adopt Unique Children's Services Values: Children's Services should adopt their own set of values and principles, separate from the corporate council values. These should be displayed on a child- and family-friendly page on the Herefordshire Council website alongside a user-friendly guide to the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), ensuring the framework and values are publicly accessible and reinforcing the strengths-based, restorative approach to cultural change.	Accepted	Children's Service and the partnership have worked together on a vision that will set for the Children and Young People plan 2025. This will be consulted on as we consult on the CYPP. A child friendly / service user guide to our QA framework and Restorative Practice approach, developed through Phase 2, will be produced as part of the improvement plan Phase 3 work. Both documents will be available within the Children's Section of the Council Website. We will consider the ability to develop a separate child friendly website page
2	Child and Young Person Involvement in Audits : The service should explore ways to involve children and young people in the analysis associated with the auditing process, ensuring their experiences and feedback contribute to service improvement.	Accepted	Engagement of CYP in our case audits is in place. We will however continue to develop this further in the service area QA programmes
3	That the service explores Quality Circles as a means of getting staff feedback.	Accepted	We have developed the social work health check, are development in 25/26 a Children Services workforce feedback survey to tie into the council workforce survey and we have developed Restorative Practice group sessions and a group based management programme that all provide opportunities for staff to feed back their view and experiences of Herefordshire Council and its Children's services as an employer.

Improvement Plan

Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Publicity Campaign for Feedback: Cabinet should endorse a publicity campaign to ensure maximum feedback from children, young people, and families on	Accepted	Noted. A number of session booked - one successfully attended by families. This work is now completed.

	the "Working Together Consultation" concerning Right Time, Right Place thresholds and managing risk.		Further public engagement will now be led through our implementation of the Families First programme
2	That Herefordshire Council identify a means to report publicly on progress in delivering the improvement plan for children's services.	Accepted	An outcome report will be made available against Phase 2 as we implement Phase 3 – June – Sept 25

26 November 2024**Including children's voices in council policy**

Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council Review and promote good practice in soliciting, capturing and sharing the voice of the child across the service areas of the council, partners and stakeholders, ensuring that: a) this practice builds on the good examples of engagement and consultation which have been developed in some areas of council business and by outside organisations; b) this practice builds on the good examples of engagement and consultation which have been developed in some areas of council business and by outside organisations; c) their ideas and wishes are adopted where possible, and where not possible the reasons for that are explained, and; d) it engages with other services, town and city youth councils and other youth projects to ensure it understands perspectives children and young people have articulated.	Accepted	Officers from Children's Services and Corporate Services are working together to develop and deliver a range of improvements that will importantly be shaped co-productively with children and young people themselves. The proposed improvements are: 1) developing consultation and engagement guidelines for all council services in collaboration with children and young people to ensure that there is a meaningful and consistent whole-council approach. 2) Redesigning the council webpage and intranet to ensure that consultation activity and responses are made accessible to all Directorates, maximising the work we undertake and sharing the views of children and young people across the council. 3) Developing a newsletter that captures recent feedback from children and young people on a range of topics and sharing this across the organisation. This will not be a children's services newsletter, letter but one that reflects CYP feedback etc into wider council business 4) Developing a Children and Young People's Council as a transformational improvement to the way in which children and young people participate in, and shape, the working of the council and public services in Herefordshire. We are in the process of establishing a project group and work plan to take this forwards early this year and will share the detailed action plan with Committee in February.
2	Ensures that its scrutiny committees embed the need to consider the voice of children and young people when carrying out its work.	Accepted	

21 January 2025			
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership - Yearly Review of Effectiveness Report 2023-24			
Rec.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	The partnership ensures that recommendations from the 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness onwards have an identified partnership lead and an indicative timeframe for completion;	Accepted	Noted and will be incorporated into business plan 25/26
2	The partnership appends an implementation plan for the recommendations in its 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness; and	Accepted	Noted and will be created for the business plan agreed for 25/26
3	Herefordshire Council's director of children's services and director of governance and law provide guidance to elected members on their corporate parent responsibilities in the event of a significant incident, or death, concerning a care leaver under the age of 25.	Accepted	The role of members as Corporate parents: The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the council, or is a "qualifying care leaver" (someone who between 16 and 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their fourteenth birthday), the council becomes their corporate parent. This means that they should: • act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people • encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, • make sure they have access to services • make sure children and young people are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work • promote high aspirations and try to secure the best outcomes for them • prepare them for adulthood and independent living. All councillors and officers are corporate parents. It is therefore every councillor's responsibility to make sure that the council is meeting these duties towards children in care and care leavers. Children can be in care in a range of different settings, with the authority acting as corporate parent to all of them. This includes foster care, children's homes, secure children's homes, young offender institutions, secure training centres and some types of kinship care. Every councillor and officer within a council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent

			would for their own child. Lead members, those on corporate parenting panels, and overview and scrutiny committees will have particular responsibilities, but for all councillors, there is a role of being the “eyes and ears of the community”. The role of the council in child deaths The death of a child is a tragedy, and subsequent enquiries / investigations should keep an appropriate balance between forensic and medical requirements and the family’s need for support. There is a strict statutory framework to be adhered to following the death of a child, this is led in Herefordshire by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) under strict legislative guidance, and the Council does not have a role independently in such matters. Statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines child death review partners as “local authorities and any Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) for the local area as set out in the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017”. The HSCP therefore has a legal duty to undertake reviews of serious cases (Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) where a child has died or suffered serious harm, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. When a child dies, in any circumstances, it is important for parents and families to understand what has happened and whether there are any lessons to be learned. HSCP must make arrangements to review all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and, if they consider it appropriate, for any non-resident child who has died in their area. Key scrutiny responsibilities in children’s services Through legislation, scrutiny committees have several critical roles: • Examining Children's Services Performance: They assess whether local authorities and partners are effectively delivering services such as social care, education, and youth support. • Scrutinising Safeguarding Practices: Ensuring that child protection measures, multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and social work interventions are effective. • Monitoring SEND Services: Reviewing how well councils and health partners implement the SEND reforms and improve outcomes for children with disabilities. • Assessing Children’s Health and Well-being Services: Overseeing
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		the effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), public health initiatives, and early intervention programmes. • Reviewing Education and Skills Provision: Evaluating school performance, alternative provision, post-16 education, and how councils support vulnerable learners. Limitations Despite their statutory powers, scrutiny committees have limitations in scrutinising children's services, particularly where other statutory processes are already in place. The Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation outline that scrutiny committees cannot duplicate or interfere with statutory decision-making processes. This restriction affects their ability to intervene in certain cases, including: • Individual Casework and Complaints: Committees do not have the power to scrutinise individual cases of child protection, SEND disputes, or social care interventions, as these matters are subject to separate statutory complaints and appeals mechanisms, such as the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. • Regulated Inspection Processes: Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Ofsted has a statutory role in inspecting children's services, including safeguarding and SEND provision. Scrutiny committees cannot override or replace the findings of Ofsted or direct the regulatory body's work. • Judicial and Tribunal Matters: Matters that are subject to legal proceedings, such as care proceedings in the Family Court under the Children Act 1989, are beyond the remit of scrutiny committees. They cannot influence court decisions or interfere in ongoing legal cases. Statutory Safeguarding Boards: The Children and Social Work Act 2017 established Local Safeguarding Partnerships, replacing Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Scrutiny committees cannot take over or interfere with the statutory duties of these multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including serious case reviews, which have legal responsibility for protecting children at risk. They can, however scrutinise the safeguarding partnership itself.
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