

Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 6 July 2021

10:00

Council Chamber, County Buildings, Stafford

NB. The meeting will be webcast live which can be viewed here -
<https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

John Tradewell
Director of Corporate Services
28 June 2021

A G E N D A

PART ONE

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June 2021** (Pages 1 - 8)
4. **Domestic Abuse** (Pages 9 - 16)
Report of the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture
5. **Together4Children Regional Permanency Partnership Update Briefing** (Pages 17 - 24)
Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
6. **Developing Family Hubs in Staffordshire** (Pages 25 - 36)
Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
7. **Work Programme** (Pages 37 - 42)
8. **Exclusion of the Public**
The Chairman to move:-

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

nil

Membership

Gill Burnett (Vice-Chairman (Overview))	Gillian Pardesi
Janet Eagland	Kath Perry, MBE
Richard Ford (Vice-Chairman (Scrutiny))	Bob Spencer (Chairman)
Jason Jones	Jill Waring
Peter Kruskonjic	Mike Wilcox

Note for Members of the Press and Public

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Minutes of the Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 17 June 2021

Present: Bob Spencer (Chairman)

Attendance

Gill Burnett (Overview))	(Vice-Chairman	Gillian Pardesi Kath Perry, MBE
Janet Eagland		Jill Waring
Richard Ford (Scrutiny))	(Vice-Chairman	Mike Wilcox
Jason Jones		
Peter Kruskonjic		

Also in attendance: Jonathan Price and Mark Sutton

Apologies: Julia Jessel

PART ONE

10. Declarations of Interest

There were none at this meeting.

11. Minutes of the Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee held on 22 April 2021

That the meeting of the Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee held on 22 April 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

12. Introduction to the Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee heard from Ruth Martin, Adult Safeguarding Team Manager, considering the role and responsibilities the Council had relating to adult safeguarding. Section 42 of the Care Act placed a responsibility on the Council around safeguarding adults, with a duty to care and support adults needs and to make enquires where concerns may exist around abuse and/or neglect, and to address these. The Act placed adult safeguarding on the same legal footing as children's safeguarding. Whilst there would always be some adults who came under both adult safeguarding and social care they were different services, with adult social care under Section 75, managed by the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT), dealing with the more day to day adult social care services.

Members received details of the Adults Safeguarding Teams and the delivery of services. Adult safeguarding included work with anyone over 18 with care and support needs including learning and/or physical needs, poor mental health, and those vulnerable due to drug and alcohol misuse. Members noted that there was no eligibility

criteria in respect of adult safeguarding, but rather accessed those adults who had care and support needs which prevented them protecting themselves from harm. This need had risen in Staffordshire over the last year, from 1000 per month last year to 1700 per month this year. There was a need to consider how this growth in referrals would be managed and a Transformation Project was currently underway to consider any changes that could improve service delivery and manage increased demand.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were pleased to note that adults safeguarding was well supported by partner agencies and colleagues. They noted the Adults Safeguarding Board Annual Report gave an overview of adult safeguarding across Staffordshire, with this report included annually on the work programme for scrutiny.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from Helen Riley, Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities. Statistics were shared highlighting that most Staffordshire children and young people had good lives. Children's Services provided for those children and families who needed some support and ranged from earliest help low level support to statutory service provision. Members noted that Staffordshire Children's Services had been the first to be rated "Good" by Ofsted in the West Midlands, and they were still a "Good" rated Authority.

Members received details of the range of services provided, including:

- 24/7 365 days a year emergency out of hours service
- First Response/front door entry to services. This was the first thing that any Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services would look at and was crucial to effective service provision
- Early Help local services based on prevention and early intervention. Most Authorities no longer had in-house early help offers and Staffordshire was very fortunate to have kept their in-house offer
- Children in Need statutory social worker lead assessment and intervention for families with more complex needs
- Child protection statutory social worker lead intervention where a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering significant harm
- Children in care which is a double district based statutory support for those children where care by the LA is necessary. The number of children currently in Care in Staffordshire was 1220 at 31 May 2021.
- Children with a Disability, a double district based statutory assessment and support for children with a significant disability.

Previous scrutiny committees have received regular reports detailing the work undertaken to combat Children Sexual Exploitation (CSE). This work had evolved to include a broader look at Contextual Safeguarding, addressing harm that was outside the home including county lines, gangs as well as CSE. This new method had changed the approach to social work, addressing the different threats to children's safeguarding that now existed.

The importance of the Corporate Parent role was stressed, and Members heard that services for children in care included: adoption; fostering; respite and kinship care; the virtual school and Corporate Parenting. Members heard that in some instances it was difficult to find foster placements, often for teenage young people with more complex needs. These children may therefore be placed in residential care. Staffordshire was

looking to develop its own in-house residential care that would enable Staffordshire children to remain in Staffordshire and allow the LA to have more control over the placements. The first new home was opening in Stafford and would accommodate 3 to 4 young people. There was some discussion around the placement of homes and Members heard how important it was to enable children to reside in their county and be given the opportunity to live in a safe, nice environment, helping them to understand the value and responsibilities this gave.

Preventative Services worked in a range of ways to help support and prevent the breakdown of families and to keep children in their home where it was safe to do so. Preventative services included:

- Intensive Prevention Services
- Family Group Conferencing, with most Authorities identifying this as one of the most significant services in helping children remain successfully in the home
- Intensive Prevention Support Service (Drug and Alcohol)
- Breathing Space, an intervention to disrupt the cycle for some vulnerable young women who had multiple pregnancies where the child was taken into care
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), with a number of children ending up in Staffordshire as a result of M6 ease of access. Staffordshire also agreed to support other LAs such as Kent who received a large proportion of UASC. There were currently approximately 40 UASC in Staffordshire, but up to 100 had previously been accommodated. There were also some real success stories with these children, with excellent school results and achievements, university entrants and making a positive contribution to society.
- Care Leavers, with support and ongoing communication being offered past 18 years in finding accommodation, work, budgeting and gaining independence
- Children with disabilities

Details were shared of commissioning within Families and Communities for Children's Services, such as: Healthy Child programme; reducing infant mortality; emotional and physical wellbeing; domestic abuse; early help and building resilient families; children with disabilities; children's centres and family hubs and the vulnerable person resettlement scheme.

Members received details of the District Footprint and how services will work across districts from 1 October 2021.

Community Safety was an area within the remit of this O&S Committee and Members received details of the Safer Communities Team and their close working with the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships, Police, Probation, Health and other community safety partners. Governance was ongoing in relation to future community safety structures. Members also received details of the Community Safety Agreement and the identified partnership priorities, which included domestic abuse, modern slavery, public place violence, contextual safeguarding, anti-social behaviour, fraud and community cohesion.

Regulatory services included the work of Trading Standards, which included the enforcement of 260+ pieces of legislation. Regulatory services also included safety of sports grounds and the Coroners Service in South Staffordshire.

A number of standing items were also highlighted that were considered annually on the work programme, including Safeguarding Children's Board and complaints and representation annual reports.

The retention of social workers remained an issue and Members queried the success of a previous memorandum of understanding that had attempted to remove poaching staff between LAs. Sadly, this had not achieved its aim. Social worker vacancy rates in Staffordshire were currently at 8%, which was higher than their average 7%. However, when considered against some other authorities Staffordshire remained well placed, with the example given of other West Midlands LAs with significantly higher vacancy rates.

The destructive nature of low level neglect was highlighted. Long term low-level neglect had been instrumental in a tragic local incident in 2019. There was a need to understand better the impact of such long-term low level neglect and how to address these issues, considering how to work differently alongside the family to make improvements.

The MacAlister independent report published today on Children's Services highlighting the importance of the restorative practice model. Staffordshire had introduced a restorative practice model 18 months ago. This model looked at "working with" rather "doing to" children and families and avoided over assessment. This approach required excellent risk management skills and appropriate supervision.

Members queried how to evaluate performance success within children's services and heard that in the long term this would be evidenced by fewer children coming into care and more able to stay at home safely.

A significant issue for Shire Counties was ensuring consistency across service provision. The geographical spread of services presented real challenges for senior officers and their staff.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People reiterated the importance of the corporate parenting role all Members had. He reminded them that they had been invited to take part in Level 1 Safeguarding training and urged them to sign up to this training. He then shared the following areas for possible future scrutiny as follows:

- Low level neglect
- Prevention and early intervention
- SEND review – responding to the review and moving forward
- Early years – particularly under 4s children's centres/family hubs
- MacAlister Report – case for change
- Governance Model – how work better together – try and develop more effective model of governance

The Chairman reminded Members that they are the designated crime and disorder panel.

RESOLVED – The detail shared by the Cabinet Member and Officers be used to prompt work programme planning.

13. Outcome Focused 1-1 Support, and Home Care and Community Support (including Domiciliary Care) for Staffordshire Children with Disabilities

Staffordshire County Council has a legal duty to ensure Children's Community Support (including Domiciliary Care) provision was in place to support children and young people with a range of disabilities who had been assessed by a suitably qualified Social Worker as being eligible for a personal care service within the family home and local community. A further legal obligation for the Council was to offer a range of commissioned community short break opportunities, ranging from community-based breaks of a few hours, to overnight short breaks for Children with Disabilities under the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children regulations 2011. Staffordshire had developed its "Aiming High for Children with Disabilities" programme to support these duties. The programme augmented the in-house and commissioned Overnight Short Breaks Unit, and the support of Short Breaks Foster Carers in providing the range of short breaks for children to give parents and carers a meaningful break from their caring responsibilities. The Council also commissioned a range of providers from across Staffordshire to deliver Children's Community Support and Short Breaks on their behalf, currently commissioned and contracted as two separate support programmes.

Members considered the proposal to bring together arrangements for both these service (short break and community support) under one commission. This suggestion had been made following an in-depth options appraisal, concluding that one commissioned service would provide more flexible, responsive support that drew on children and families' existing strengths, focusing on development, independence, preparedness for adulthood and was cost effective.

Cabinet were due to make a decision on this proposal at their meeting of 21 July.

Members raised concerns around ensuring enough provision and heard that considerable work had been undertaken to increase the marketplace, including working with adult colleagues to maximise the range of care for children and young people. This was of particular interest when considering most service users would transition from children's to adults' services, therefore allowing continuity. Work to continue to grow the market will be ongoing and could include providing training to help support opening up this market. The Place Based approach also encouraged providers from the voluntary sector so every effort would be taken to engage local providers, although Members sought assurances that the voluntary sector was there to add value, not replace statutory service provision. Members also discussed how to ensure service users were receiving fulfilling care and were informed that the quality of provision was monitored and that the CQC inspected homes providing this service. If Members had any specific concerns or examples of care concerns they could raise this with officers directly.

Members also shared concerns around recruitment, particularly where wages were often poor which devalued such an important service. Option 2 proposed the development of more in-house provision and it was felt this would give opportunities for better involvement and ease of awareness of the service provided. This would also avoid any tendency to cherry pick the more financially lucrative work. The Cabinet Member agreed that the profile of social care needed to be raised and the vital importance of the work understood better. He also felt it was important to have an open mind when considering service delivery to ensure best outcomes.

Some concern was expressed around the different skill sets needed to provide for children as opposed to adults and whether seeking to recruit adult providers for the children's service would work well. There was a need to ensure training provided for any skill set gaps. Members also reiterated that whilst the voluntary sector provided excellent services, they were services that should complement those provided by Children's Services, not replace them.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the commissioning of the previously separate arrangements for Children With Disabilities' Community Support and Aiming High 1-1 Intensive support and short breaks be brought together into one contracting arrangement be supported;
- b) the open tender approach and implementation of a Dynamic Purchasing System detailed in the costed Options Appraisal to secure the required provision at optimal Value for Money commencing from April 2022 be supported;
- c) the regular breaks clauses in the proposed contracts (2+1+1 years) which allowed time to develop joint approaches to the commissioning and procurement of this provision with Adult Social Care colleagues and other Authorities including with the West Midlands Authorities to attempt to overcome the current challenges for providers with respect to service volumes be noted;
- d) proposals to use the first two years of the contract to further investigate the merits and risks associated with In-house delivery of this support, and the efficacy of this model within the proposed new Children's System be supported, particularly as the Option Appraisal demonstrated a number of potential strengths to this approach; and
- e) that a future report be brought to the O&S Committee outlining developments with this proposal and its successes/challenges.

14. Work Programme Planning

Members considered the work programme planning report that set out the remit of this committee, methods of scrutiny, standard annual items and areas outstanding from the previous committee. They noted that this was a dynamic and flexible document that would change to accommodate key and emerging priorities and that it would be included on each Scrutiny meeting agenda.

On considering this report and the detail shared with them this morning from Officers and the Cabinet Member, the following areas were raised for possible future scrutiny:

- safeguarding adolescents, particularly a cause for concern over the past year when young people have had time on their hands resulting in disruptive and anti-social behaviour, including these difficulties being more complex in some parts of the County with cross boarder issues.
- Community safety – considering the outcome of the inquest into the Fishmonger Hall incident and the findings that there had been inadequate management of Usman Khan, a resident of Stafford. Looking at what learning had been taken from this incident and giving Members an opportunity to seek the Commissioners reassurance that safeguards were in place to prevent any such further incidents
- young and first time parents of pre-school children and early help in supporting parental skills and development

- young carers and how well they are supported
- sexual harassment, abuse and/or assault in schools and how this is recognised and addressed
- the number of those investigated for child sexual abuse that were ultimately found guilty over the past 5 years and whether these investigations were reasonable and proportionate
- Adults Safeguarding Transformation Project
- Further detail on developments with the outcome focussed 1-1 support, home care & community support (including domiciliary care) for Staffordshire children with disabilities, evidencing how the proposed joining of services progresses and its success and/or challenges and whether those providers that transitioned from adults to children's provision have done so successfully, with any skills gaps addressed.
- low level neglect and the devastating impact of long-term low-level neglect. The current changes to ways of working to address this following the tragedy in 2019, what challenges remain.
- Prevention and early intervention
- SEND review – responding to the review and moving forward
- Early years – particularly under 4s children's centre/family hubs
- MacAlister Report – case for change
- Governance Model – how to work better together, trying to develop a more effective model of governance

Members also noted the following standing items for inclusion:

- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report
- 2 reports – adults & children's complaints & representations
- Regular updates on CSE

The Chairman asked Members to give further consideration to the information received today and forward any further possible work programme items to either himself or the Scrutiny & Support Officer. All items raised would then be considered for inclusion through discussions between the Officer, Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, with thought being given to timing and the range of possible methods for scrutiny, with a draft work programme brought to the July meeting for members consideration.

RESOLVED – That the items suggested for possible inclusion on the work programme be agreed, with a draft programme being brought for Members approval to their July meeting based on these suggestion.

Chairman

Local Members Interest
N/A

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday 06 July 2021

Domestic Abuse

Recommendation

I recommend that:

- a. That the Scrutiny Committee reviews and comments upon the content of this report concerning Domestic Abuse and commissioned services.

Report of Cllr Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

Summary

What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?

1. This report provides an update on the Domestic Abuse services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent with a focus on the impact of the pandemic, as well as updates on key pieces of work associated with Domestic Abuse. The Select Committee is being asked to note and comment upon the progress that has been made.

Report

Background

2. Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO) have jointly commissioned Domestic Abuse (DA) services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with the SCO acting as lead commissioner. Services include provision for victims, perpetrators, children and young people.
3. The service contract for the provision of domestic abuse services for victims was awarded to Victim Support and the service contract for the provision of domestic abuse services for perpetrators of domestic abuse to the Reducing Reoffending Partnership. Both services are provided under the brand name of New Era and the jointly commissioned service began on 1 October 2018.
4. The overall annual contract value for the Victims and Perpetrator provision for is £2,157,000 with the County Council annual contribution being £670,490. This equates to a contribution of 31% of the value of the contract annually, Staffordshire Commissioners Office contribute £1,015,483 (47%) whilst Stoke City Council contribute £544,997 (22%).

5. The Tri-Partite Agreement for both the Victims and Perpetrator services contained an option to extend the contract for each service for a period of two years from 30th September 2020 until 30th September 2023. The decision to action this extension was mutually agreed by all parties and the extension is now in place.
6. The Select Committee previously received a written update on the Domestic Abuse services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in October 2020. This report provides a further update of progress since then.

Performance data - Victim service

7. Since the contract began there have been 14,160 referrals / enquiries for support to the victim service across Staffordshire and Stoke, of which 62.9% (8,907) came from Staffordshire residents. Staffordshire County Council financially contribute 31% of the total value to the domestic abuse contract.
8. The latest quarterly performance report (Q4 20/21) evidences the following:
 - a. 1,096 new referrals were received for Staffordshire residents during quarter 4 of 20 / 21. (This is the total referral figure and includes duplicates, ineligible referrals i.e. out of area and inappropriate referrals).
 - b. Of these referrals, 702 were accepted adult referrals and 511 (72.8%) were supported. 117 were accepted children and young people referrals and, of these, 108 (92.3%) were supported.
 - c. 'Support' is where the victim has been successfully contacted and consented to support or where multi-agency pre-work is being undertaken to identify consent and that it is safe to contact. Those instances which do not result in an adult or child or young person being supported usually occur when contact is made but the individual no longer wants to engage with the service or the service offered is not suitable for their needs.
 - d. The largest proportion of referrals this quarter (45.8%) were from Police followed by self-referral (30.0%) and other sources e.g. Victims Hub, National Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme etc. (14.7%).
 - e. Referrals broken down by district are as follows:

District	No. of referrals	Change from previous Quarter
Cannock	144	↑ 30
East Staffs	165	↑ 4
Lichfield	133	↑ 24
Newcastle	182	↓ 7
South Staffs	103	↑ 3
Stafford	147	↑ 5
Moorlands	110	↑ 4
Tamworth	112	↑ 22

- f. 100% of people receiving support at early intervention level, beyond immediate advice, were satisfied with the service they received.

- g. 97% of people receiving targeted support, beyond immediate advice, were satisfied with the service they received.

Performance data - Perpetrator service

9. Since the start of the contract there have been 918 referrals / enquiries for support into the perpetrator service across Staffordshire and Stoke, with 510 (55.5%) for Staffordshire residents.
10. The latest quarterly performance report (Q4 20/21) evidences the following:
- a. 59 new referrals were received during the quarter from Staffordshire residents; 42 were adults and 17 were children and young people.
 - b. Referrals broken down by district are as follows:

District	No. of referrals	Change from previous Quarter
Cannock	4	↓ 1
East Staffs	3	↓ 5
Lichfield	2	↓ 3
Newcastle	14	↑ 9
South Staffs	10	↑ 4
Stafford	10	↑ 5
Moorlands	6	↑ 5
Tamworth	10	↑ 2

COVID 19 – Impact and Response

11. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted both those affected by domestic abuse and those delivering services nationally, regionally and locally. The following paragraphs outline the impact that COVID-19 has had in terms of demand, service delivery, staffing and waiting times for New Era services. The report also outlines the response and actions taken to mitigate these negative impacts.

Impact on demand and waiting times

12. During the first lockdown, New Era saw an immediate drop in the number of referrals to the services and low figures were recorded for the end of March and April 2020. Referral rates started to pick up again in May and reached the level of the previous year (i.e. 2019) by the end of May / early June. After the first lockdown was lifted, numbers of referrals increased by approximately 5% on those recorded at the same point last year. Following the return to school in September 2020, demand for services increased further. Initially the increase was not unusual, as referrals tend to increase at the start of school terms. However, the number of referrals has continued to increase and has now reached volumes of around 30% greater than the same period last year.
13. Given the considerable increase in demand, the impact of the restrictions on service delivery and the impact of Covid-19 on staff, there are waiting lists for both victims

and perpetrator services. However, the triage process in place allocates individuals to workers based upon a robust assessment of risk, meaning that waiting is kept to a minimum for those who are assessed as higher risk.

14. Not only have numbers of referrals increased considerably, but the complexity of needs presented has also increased. This has added significant pressure on the workforce. Mental health has been highlighted as one of the main issues contributing to the increased complexity of new referrals through the pandemic across both commissioned and non-commissioned services. Commissioners are due to meet with both NHS Trusts and New Era to discuss pathways and referrals routes between domestic abuse and mental health services to ensure that those engaged with New Era with additional needs are able to be supported by appropriate professionals.
15. The victim service reported an increase in the number and complexity of incoming calls to the helpline resulting in increased duration of calls and increased time spent by the Initial Response Officers on triage and outgoing contact.

Impact on service delivery

16. Due to the national restrictions, routine face-to-face service delivery largely ceased. The Perpetrator Service stopped delivering groupwork sessions (which is the usual method of delivery for the programme) and instead delivered their programmes on a 1:1 basis. This has had a significant impact on the number of individuals they are able to support at one time and in turn has increased waiting times.
17. The closure of schools brought complexities to the delivery of support to children and young people. While many of those who were in the Children and Young People's Service were eligible to continue to attend school, some schools had strict policies about allowing visitors onto the grounds and this posed some difficulties. Furthermore, there were some children who were being schooled at home and it was necessary to source safe community spaces for delivery of their support sessions.

Impact on staffing

18. Staffing levels have been affected periodically throughout the pandemic and for a variety of reasons. The impact of school closures left several staff members having to juggle the pressures of work alongside home schooling young children and some had to reduce their hours temporarily. In addition, there were difficulties in making calls to victims and survivors and discussing delicate and confidential situations when children were present in the home.
19. A number of staff were personally affected by COVID-19 and had to take periods of leave due to either contracting it themselves, having to self-isolate after being in contact with someone who has tested positive and bereavement. This has impacted on capacity within the team.

COVID-19 Response / Mitigating Actions

20. Staffordshire Commissioner's Office, as lead commissioner for the pan-Staffordshire contract with New Era, convened weekly meetings with commissioned and non-commissioned providers and other partners throughout each lockdown. These meetings focussed attention on a co-ordinated approach to service delivery across the county and were of great benefit.
21. Commissioners continue to work closely with the provider to ensure that they are responding appropriately to increased demand and that action is being taken to reduce waiting lists. This has included identifying additional resource to contribute further capacity to the contract. Recent funding secured from the Ministry of Justice, along with some identified underspend within the contract, has enabled the Victim Service to fund an additional 3.5 full-time equivalent Children & Young People Workers and recruit to a further 3 Domestic Abuse Practitioner roles. These are both areas of the service where demand is particularly high so the additional staff should alleviate waiting lists.
22. Since Spring 2020, domestic abuse support services have significantly adapted their delivery methods to ensure continuity of service and credit should be given to the dedication of their staff through this extremely challenging period. Services retained their 'front door' to victims and their families and the perpetrator programme has been adapted appropriately. For both victim and perpetrator services, availability of support and services has been maintained throughout the pandemic, largely via remote working arrangements and online delivery but with some face-to-face support where appropriate and safe to do so.
23. The victim service has provided 'in person' support to adults at court in risk assessed courthouses and both the victim and perpetrator services have provided 'in person' support with children and young people in risk assessed venues and subject to COVID related safety measures.
24. The move to virtual delivery methods has worked well for the delivery of some elements of the services and some people have responded better to it. Therefore, elements of this will be continued moving forward, beyond the pandemic. An example of this is where the victim service has supported a service user to attend court via video link from the New Era office and another from their own home. This has given the victims confidence to speak whilst being supported and safe.
25. The approach to the Children & Young People's (CYP) service delivery been jointly developed and refined over the last few months following a review of the needs of those referred into the perpetrator programme. The review highlighted that many referred into the service were exhibiting behaviours because of being a victim of domestic abuse themselves. Referrals for children and young people will now go through one 'front door' (the victim service) who will triage and, based on the risk assessment and an understanding of need and presenting behaviours, will be allocated to either the victim or perpetrator CYP service, as appropriate.
26. The Service has continued to be promoted throughout the pandemic to ensure that victims and their families were aware that support was available and knew how to

access it. This was achieved through traditional mainstream and social media, briefings, campaigns and collaborations with other organisations. There has also been continued presence in the local press.

27. It was previously identified that there is a need to improve communication between front line staff and New Era to enhance both parties understanding of processes and ways of working and to facilitate joined-up working. This is being addressed in several ways. New Era produce a quarterly bulletin which details current service provision and contact details of all relevant staff as well as a reminder of the referral process and a high-level performance overview. This has always been routinely circulated to partners. However, the key messages from this will now be circulated to all frontline staff via an internal newsletter, which staff use as a key source of information. In addition to this, there are quarterly 'interface meetings' between the managers of SCC's Independent Reviewing Officers and New Era, giving an opportunity for feedback (both positive and negative) to be shared and for resolution of any issues identified. Both parties have attended each other's team meetings to give an overview of their ways of working and relevant processes, resulting in a wider understanding and improved working relationships.

Adult Specialist Workers

28. As outlined in the October 2020 report to Scrutiny, funding has been allocated to Adult Specialist Worker provision as part of the 2019 investment of £8.1m into Children and Families service. The introduction of Adult Specialist Workers is intended to support children and families who are open to Safeguarding and will enable us to give dedicated support to the whole family unit, with a focus on helping and supporting parents and their children at the earliest opportunity.
29. Adult Specialist Workers are not intended to duplicate or replace existing services. Instead, they will work with parents and families to understand their needs and the challenges they are facing and to support them to access services where these are available. They will work with parents to get them to a position of 'readiness' for onward referrals and will support transition into services. Where families do not meet the criteria for specialist services, the Adult Specialist Worker can provide tailored interventions.
30. This model of working is currently being piloted in Cannock and involves specialist workers with substance misuse, mental health and financial inclusion expertise, working alongside Children's Social Workers. It is intended that domestic abuse specialists (for both victims and perpetrators) will also feature in the wider roll-out of this model.
31. Building on the lessons learned through the implementation of the pilot, SCC commissioners are working with partners, key stakeholders and those working within the pilot to shape a county-wide model, which will be rolled-out in October 2021, to align with the Children's transformation.

Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Duty

32. The Domestic Abuse Act has now passed both Houses of Parliament and was signed into law on 29 April 2021. There are a number of provisions within the Act, including the creation of a statutory definition of domestic abuse with a recognition that abuse can be emotional, controlling or coercive and economic abuse, as well as physical violence; establishing the role of the Office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner; creating a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in courts; prohibiting perpetrators of domestic abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in courts; and extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse among other provisions.
33. One of the key implications of the Act for Local Authorities is the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Duty. The Duty places a legislative requirement on upper tier local authorities to ensure the provision of support for domestic abuse victims and their families within safe accommodation. This Duty covers a range of types of safe accommodation (including refuge accommodation, specialist safe accommodation, dispersed accommodation, sanctuary schemes, move-on accommodation and other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation).
34. Staffordshire has been allocated £1.5 million from MHCLG for the delivery of the Duty for Staffordshire. Work is underway, under the auspices of the Domestic Abuse Commissioning & Development Board, to ensure that Staffordshire are able to meet the requirements of the new Duty.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

35. Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:
 - a. A person to whom they were related or with whom they were or had been in an intimate personal relationship (an 'intimate personal relationship' includes relationships between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality), or
 - b. A member of the same household as themselves, held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.
36. There are currently eight DHRs underway across Staffordshire (excluding Stoke-on-Trent). In addition, there is a further DHR taking place in North Wales that both Cannock Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the central co-ordinating team are supporting with information however we have no responsibility for the formal process. Four of these cases are at the last stage of the process and Reports are with the Home Office awaiting their decision for Publication, a further Report has been passed to the Home Office Quality Assurance Board in advance of the final report being submitted.

37. There are two DHRs that are currently “live” and the reviews are in progress. The remaining case is on pause awaiting the outcome of a Police Investigation. At the time of the last Report to this Committee there were two DHRs on pause, however, we have since been notified by the Police that following investigation, one of these is not a DHR.
38. Following the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns it is pleasing to report that there has not been an increase in DHRs reported to date. The most recent DHR was received in November 2020.
39. The DHR activity is funded by annual partner contributions and is currently financially stable.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

N/A

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Local Members Interest
N/A

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday 06 July 2021

Together4Children Permanency Partnership Update

Recommendation(s)

- a. Update report for information and consideration

Report of Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Summary

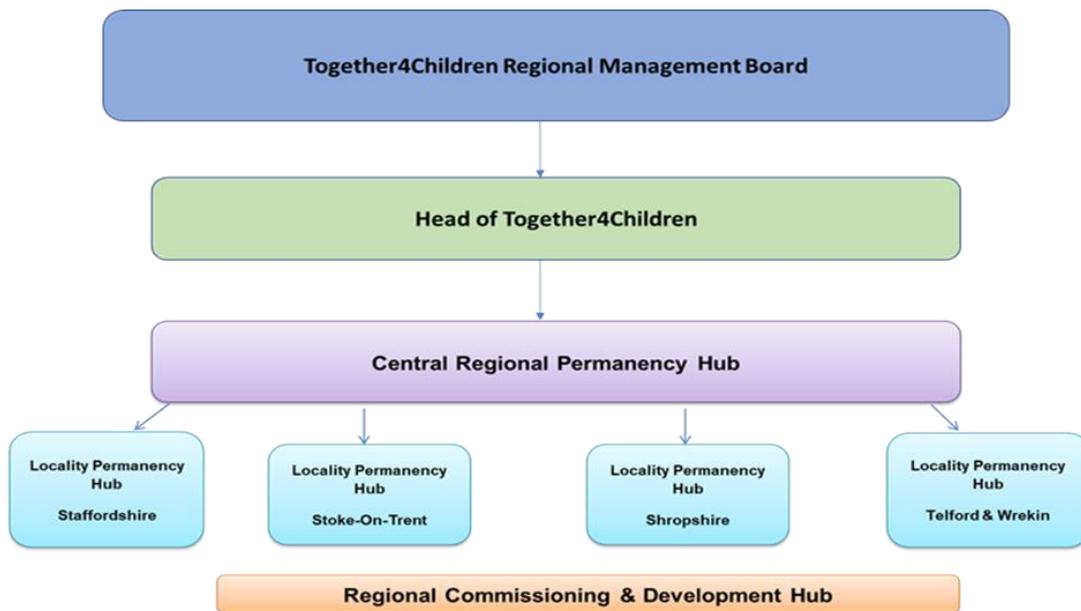
What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

1. The following report provides an update in relation the progress of the regional Together4Children Permanency Partnership which, since going live on 28 September 2020 has been delivering the regional adoption service for Staffordshire County Council, Shropshire Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.
2. Development activity for the Together4Children Partnership commenced in 2018 in response to the Government's 'Regionalising Adoption' agenda. This brought together 4 Partner Council's, to plan the delivery of adoption services regionally.
3. Through the development phase, we created a vision which goes beyond the delivery of Adoption Services and focuses on a broader range of activities to ensure that children entering care achieve permanency. We are working together to improve outcomes for those children who enter care and are not able to return to their birth parents.
4. Together4Children is a partnership between Shropshire Council, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.
5. Our Vision is to ensure that our children achieve emotional, physical, and legal permanence; growing up in loving homes with adults who provide them with a strong sense of security, continuity, commitment, and identity.
6. We aim to:
 - a. Make best use of our collective resources to recruit, assess and support prospective adopters across the region.
 - b. Improve the quality and speed of matching for children through better planning and by having a wider choice of adopters.
 - c. Provide high quality support to children and their families delivered through a combination of direct provision and effective partnerships.

- d. Provide all children and their families the right support at the right time through a consistent permanency support offer across the region.

Together4Children Partnership Adoption Agency Functions, Governance, and Operational Structure

- 7. Whilst Together4Children has broader ambitions, the first key deliverables relate to the provision of our partner Council’s Adoption Services via a hub and spoke model – a combination of core central functions and networked regional delivery (via a Central Permanency Hub).
- 8. Partner Council’s retain direct service delivery functions within Locality Permanence Hubs, working within the Together4Children practice framework whilst maintaining clear links to local Children & Families Services.
- 9. The Partnership is governed via Regional Management Board Chaired by the Director of Children’s Services for Shropshire Council. Each partner council is represented on the Board by the Assistant Director (or equivalent) with responsibility for Children in Care.



- 10. Senior Operational leadership is provided through the Together4Children Senior Leadership Team, which is comprised of the Head of T4C, the Principle Manager for the Central Permanency Hub and the Head of Service (or equivalent) with responsibility for Adoption in each partner council.

Together4Children Partnership Financial Arrangements

- 11. Regional financial arrangements were agreed across the 4 partner Council’s Cabinets in November and December 2019. For 2020/21 and 2021/22 the Together4Children budget is set on the basis that each Partner contributes 100% of “in scope” budgets (Adoption Service), as disaggregated from the 2019/20 budget.

12. The Partnership's financial formula ensures that each partner Council contributes a proportionate level of resource in line with the level of demand generated to meet the needs of children within their localities.

13. Within the governance arrangements risks (cost pressures/overspends) are managed collectively (through a Regional Finance Board and the T4C Regional Manage Board) for centrally delivered functions, and locally for provisions that are delivered through each of our locality hubs.



14. In the financial year 2020-2021 the partnership's Central functions were delivered within budget, as were Staffordshire's locality-based functions.

Together4Children Launch and Impact of Covid 19 Pandemic

15. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the planned launch of Together4Children was delayed from 01 April 2020 to 28 September 2020. This delay, and the challenges brought about more generally by the pandemic have had some inevitable impacts on the partnership during 2020-2021, making this year unique in many ways. These impacts include:

- a. Launching midway through the financial year and performance reporting year - leading to practical challenges reporting performance pre and post go-live.
- b. Operational challenges to service delivery especially through the initial stages of the pandemic and national lockdown.
- c. The loss of organisational capacity (due to the pandemic) in relation to finance, performance, and other technical areas of support for the Partnership arrangement.

Together4Children Activity & Performance 2020-2021

Regional Branding and Adopter Recruitment

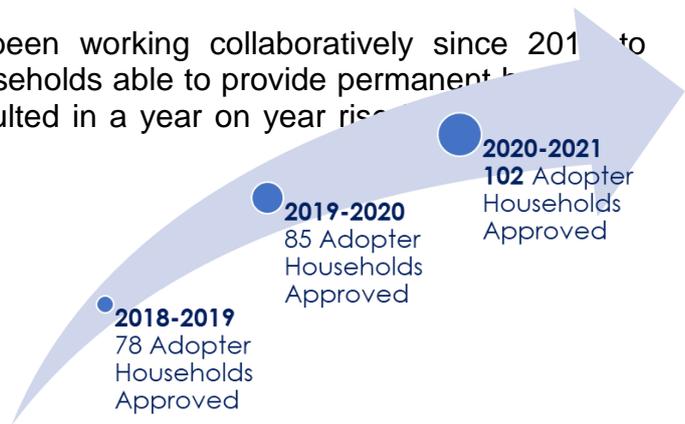
16. The recruitment of potential adopters for our children has been supported by strong and effective marketing activity. This has included:

- a. A successful launch campaign in September and October 2020.
- b. Successful launch of social media channels.
- c. The launch of the Together4Children website.
- d. Development of downloadable digital Information Event and Microsoft Teams based Information Events.
- e. Delivery of a marketing campaign focusing on finding adopters for children in sibling groups and other priority children.

17. This has led to strong performance in relation to enquiries and referrals through to our 3 assessment teams

Assessment & Approval of Adopters

18. Together4Children partners have been working collaboratively since 2017 to increase the number of adopter households able to provide permanent homes for children in our region. This has resulted in a year on year rise in the number of families we have assessed and approved as prospective adopters. This represents a positive outcome, meaning that we can find more homes for children within our regional 'pool' of adopters.



19. In turn, this supports positive transitions for children and means that we can better support children and their families as they move through their adoption journeys.

20. It also means that we avoid the costs involved in using adopters approved by other agencies.

Activity & Outcomes for Children in 2020-2021

21. Like other parts of the Children's Services system, activity and outcomes for children with a plan of adoption has been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic during this reporting period.

22. Levels of activity have dropped over the last year with overall fewer plans of adoption agreed, a drop in the number of Placement Orders granted by Courts, and a subsequent drop in the number of children placed for adoption compared to 2019-2020.

23. We know that activity increased during the last 2 quarters of 2020-2021, and that this has continued into the current year. This is what we would expect to see given the relaxation of lockdown measures, a return to more normal practice, and a freeing up of other key parts of the children's system and Family Courts.

Finding Homes for Our Children within Our Region

24. One of the key aims of Together4Children is to ensure that, where we can, we find homes for our children within our region. This supports good transitions which we know are a critical part of the adoption journey for children and adoptive parents; and helps us to support children and their families into the future.

73% of the children we placed for adoption during the year were placed with adoptive families from our region.

25. However, where no families are identified who can meet the particular needs of a child or children within our region, we look to other agencies across the Midlands and nationwide to ensure that we explore every possibility of finding the right families for our children.

Achieving Permanence for Children in a Timely Way

26. We know how important it is to secure children's permanency through adoption in a timely way. During 2020-2021 delays across the children's system, including significant delays with our regional Courts, have led to an increase in some of the timescales that we measure our performance for children against. We are awaiting publication of national data for 2020-2021 to compare and benchmark the impact that we have experienced with the adoption sector nationally.
27. Staffordshire's performance continues to be better than the England national average for the key performance indicators relating to adoption.

Children Adopted in 2020-2021

28. Despite the challenges of the past year **103** Adoption Orders were granted for children across our region, securing their legal permanence within their new families. Of the children who were adopted:
 - a. 23 children were aged over 5 years
 - b. 28 children achieved permanency alongside one or more of their siblings
 - c. 11 children came from ethnic backgrounds other than 'white British'.
29. These children represent our 'priority children' as we know that it is more challenging for us to find the right families for children with these characteristics. It is very positive that overall, 48 children (47% of all children adopted) were priority children. This shows good outcomes for children who may not have found adoptive homes without the dedication and ambition of practitioners across the Together4Children partnership.

Together4Children Regional Adoption Support Delivery

30. In May 2020 the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund made exceptional provisions for Regional Adoption Agencies to apply for funding to provide therapeutic and other support to families impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic and lockdown measures.
31. From May-December 2020 Together4Children jointly identified, commissioned, and delivered approximately £225,000 of support provisions for adoptive families and Special Guardians on behalf of our 4 partner councils.

Adoption UK 'TESSA' and Together4Children

32. Together4Children are proud to be partners in delivering Adoption UK's innovative 'TESSA' support program for adoptive families. We are one of only two Regional Adoption Agencies in England to be offered the opportunity to pilot this program which is currently funded through the Big Lottery Community Fund. The program aims to create the conditions for healthy development and family wellbeing in adoptive families at risk of the effects of early childhood trauma.

33. Since TESSA went live in October 2020 **40** families across the Together4Children region have received support through this provision.

Locality Permanency Support Activity

34. Our 3 locality Permanency Support Teams based in Shrewsbury, Stoke and Uttoxeter have been key in implementing and delivering the regional initiatives above.
35. During the year our teams completed 349 support assessments and reviews, 549 applications to the Adoption & Special Guardianship Support Fund for the specialist therapeutic interventions; and supported over 1400 'Post Box' arrangements, facilitating and supporting the exchange of information between birth families and adoptive parents.

Key Development Priorities 2021-2022

36. We are working to continually improve our service delivery and performance. We have set out the following key development priorities for the current year:
- a. Target recruitment activity to ensure enough enquiries from potential adopters who can meet the needs of our children.
 - b. Support prospective adopters to consider providing homes for our priority children (e.g. those children likely to wait longer) through effective, high quality assessment, training, and support.
 - c. Support prospective adopters considering offering early permanence to a child, through effective, high-quality assessment, training, and support.
 - d. Support practice development across the region to increase the number of children placed with early permanence carers where that is the right plan for the child.
 - e. Address capacity issues across our regional adoptions panels to ensure that there is no delay in accessing panel for children's matches and adopter approvals.
 - f. Address capacity issues in relation to the adoption agency advice we provide to key decision-makers in each of our partner councils.
 - g. Move to fully regionalised panels to improve consistency, diversity and expertise and support quoracy across the region's 3 adoption panels.
 - h. Reduce the time it takes to match children with their permanent families by making best use of all Together4Children resources and supporting timely decision-making for children.
 - i. Improve the range and consistency of support offered to our adoptive families across the region, focusing on delivering the support that our families have told us they want.
 - j. Improve the way we communicate and keep in touch with our adopter community to ensure that we promote the support available and facilitate strong peer to peer networks.

Conclusion

37. Despite the significant challenges over the past year, the Together4Children Partnership has delivered significant achievements, including:
- a. A successful and well publicised launch at the end of September 2020.
 - b. Delivery of a strong brand and very effective marketing and recruitment activity.
 - c. Launch of the 'Central Hub' delivering critical elements of service delivery across the whole region.
 - d. Design and delivery of remote provision of service critical activity including adopter recruitment and preparation, assessment, adoption panels, adoption support assessment and the delivery of adoption support interventions.
 - e. Delivery of Regional workforce development events.
 - f. Building stronger relationships with our adopter community through our partnership with Adoption UK and our Adopter Advisory Board.
 - g. Implementing the 'TESSA' pilot (an early intervention model of support delivered through our partnership with Adoption UK).
 - h. Joint delivery of the Covid-19 Adoption Support Fund resources to 450+ adoptive and Special Guardianship families.
 - i. Significant progress in moving to regionalised adoption panels.
38. Since we went live, we have seen more of our children moving into their new families with adopters from within the T4C region.
39. In addition to the delivery of Regional Adoption Services, we are developing other areas of regional practice, supporting children who come into care to achieve stability and permanence within the foster or kinship care families.
40. We are very proud to be the first ever Local Authority Partnership to receive funding for, and jointly launch the 'Mockingbird Family Fostering Model' by working together across our four fostering services.
41. We are excited to be able to announce the launch of the first regional Mockingbird 'constellation' (a group of foster carers supported by an experience 'hub' carer) in June/July 2021.

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Local Members Interest
ALL

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday 06 July 2021

Developing Family Hubs in Staffordshire

Recommendation(s)

I recommend that the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the:

- a. Emerging national context for the development of Family Hubs across England.
- b. Emerging local strategic vision for the development of Family Hubs across Staffordshire.
- c. Future commissioning intentions in relation to Family Hubs, specifically in respect of Family Support Services and the Early Years Coordination Service (Children's Centres).
- d. Proposed incremental development of Family Hubs across Staffordshire through the development of an integrated model of working; and
- e. further development of Family Hubs and is considered by the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee within twelve months following public consultation.

Report of Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Summary

1. This Committee Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People is intended to provide the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee with early details of the emerging vision for the development of Family Hubs in Staffordshire, demonstrating how our ambitions for Family Hubs contribute to the delivery of the Families Strategic Partnership Children, Young People and Families Strategy, the Early Help Strategy and the development of the Place Based Approach for Children and Families.
2. The outcome of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee will directly inform the development of the emerging Family Hub Model and will be given due consideration by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Cabinet in September 2021. The Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the development of the Family Hub Model within twelve months following public consultation.

Overview:

3. Evidence shows that a child's experiences from conception to five plays a critical role in their development, and that the early years represent an opportunity for families, policymakers and the economy to benefit longer term. We know that measurable gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged and vulnerable children and their peers can emerge early before children are two years of age and these are difficult and costly to close. In particular, the evidence is clear that a child's home environment, and parent-child relationships, are central to early development and there is a strong financial case for providing Early Help at this age to prevent later more costly support.
4. Some families need extra help and support to understand their role as a parent/carer and enable them to be independent longer term. Sometimes families struggle to understand who is there to support them and get lost within a complex service landscape 're-telling their story' to different services. Family Hubs are a way in which we can improve how national and local services are coordinated and delivered to vulnerable and disadvantaged families with children aged from conception to nineteen. While the pandemic provides a challenging backdrop, it has also sharpened awareness of how some disadvantaged and vulnerable families risk being left behind and has encouraged local agencies to explore greater integration and enhanced partnership working which we plan to build on.
5. To support our strategic ambitions for children, young people and families, Staffordshire County Council is seeking to work together with families and partners across the statutory, private, community and voluntary sectors to develop Family Hubs, which ensure families, with children aged 0-19, have access to the right help, at the right time. The emerging development of Family Hubs can help families access and navigate services and receive a joined-up, holistic experience where they don't have to constantly re-tell their story. The development of Family Hubs will involve active partnerships across the statutory, private, community and voluntary sectors in Staffordshire.

Background:

6. Staffordshire is a great place to live. Most children are happy, safe and have loving homes, but there are some families who face challenges that mean they cannot thrive in the way they want to.
7. At all stages in their lives we want Staffordshire's families to lead their best life possible. We have a clear vision where: "Families and communities have the strength, skills and knowledge they need to ensure their children and young people are healthy, happy, safe and achieve their potential."
8. We want to see children, young people and families who are supported to:
 - a. Start Well: every child has the best possible start in life to reduce differences in the quality of their health and wellbeing in the future.

- b. Grow Well: children and young people are supported to reach their potential so that they can have greater control over their lives.
 - c. Live Well: children, young people and adults are supported to make good lifestyle choices.
9. Children, young people and families have said they don't want to be in systems. They want to be supported by people they trust, their friends and families and to resolve the day-to-day challenges they face.
 10. Supporting families is not about 'doing it for them'. It's about enabling families to find their own solutions to challenges and to give them the tools they need to continue with the positive changes they make. We want to encourage families and communities to make use of the support they have around them, help each other and be able to tackle problems using the strengths they have.
 11. From time to time, some families will need early help, and a few will need statutory services and intervention. Where it is required, this input from services will be effective and timely, helping families to get back on track and to stop their situation worsening.
 12. Children, families and communities in Staffordshire benefit from good services, provisions and activities which are facilitated across the statutory, private, community and voluntary sector. These are accessed by the all, the some and the few. We also know that the majority of our children and families are supported by their communities who have their roots in local neighbourhoods and villages and are therefore well-placed to both provide support to families with relative informality and to apply a practical approach to meeting needs.
 13. However, children, families and communities tell us it can be challenging to navigate our complex systems, structures and delivery processes which can sometimes prevent children and families getting the right information, advice, guidance and help at the right time.
 14. To overcome these challenges, and to support our strategic ambitions for children, young people and families, Staffordshire County Council is seeking to work together with partners across the statutory, private, community and voluntary sectors to develop Family Hubs, which ensure families have access to the right help, at the right time.

National Context:

15. Many publications have highlighted the significance of the period from conception to age two, outlining the need for action to improve support for families during this period and beyond. These include:
 - a. Building Great Britons', published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Conception to Age 2 – The First 1001 Days in February 2015.
 - b. 'Evidence-based Early Years Intervention', published by the Science and Technology Select Committee in November 2018.

- c. 'Tackling Disadvantage in the Early Years', published by the Education Select Committee in February 2019.
 - d. 'First 1000 Days of Life', published by the Health and Social Care Select Committee in February 2019
 - e. 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review)', published by University College London in 2016 and 'Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On', published by University College London in February 2020
 - f. 'Lockdown Babies', published by the former Children's Commissioner in May 2020
 - g. 'Best Beginnings in the Early Years', published by the former Children's Commissioner in July 2020
 - h. 'Out of Routine: A Review of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) in Families Where the Children are Considered at Risk of Significant Harm', published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in July 2020
 - i. 'Babies in Lockdown', published by Best Beginnings, the Home Start Foundation and the Parent Infant Foundation in August 2020
 - j. In November 2020, HRH the Duchess of Cambridge and the Royal Foundation published '5 Big Questions' at the conclusion of a nationwide tour, survey and open online questionnaire
 - k. 'Working for Babies: Lockdown Lessons from Local Systems', published by the 'First 1,001 Days Movement' in January 2021
 - l. The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report, published by the Department for Health and Social Care in March 2021
16. The Government's 2019 Manifesto pledged to champion Family Hubs across England. In December 2020 the Minister for Children, Vicky Ford, set out plans to create a National Centre of Excellence for Family Hubs, funded by the Department for Education (DfE).
17. A further announcement was made in May 2021, by the Education Secretary, to announce that the Anna Freud Centre would run the National Centre of Excellence, whose role would be to champion Family Hubs, spread best practice and evidence on integrated family service models and work with areas to help them set up and deliver world-leading models of support for families from conception to nineteen.
18. The vision set out by the Minister for Children has been further endorsed by the Department of Health and Social Care's Early Years Healthy Development Review, which recommended the nationwide development of Family Hubs. This vision endorsed the development of Family Hubs to be welcoming, family-focused centres for every new family during pregnancy and beyond.

19. The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Care are seeking for Family Hubs, through integrated models of delivery, to improve access, range and quality of services, activities and provisions across the statutory, private, community and voluntary sectors to give families the best start in life by providing the right support, at the right time. Family Hubs will work together with families from the early years of children's lives and in the years following, by improving families access to vital services.
20. Effective integrated working along with Early Help can improve children's wellbeing, educational attainment and life chances, reduce family poverty, improve mental health and lead to lower crime, unemployment and other negative outcomes which carry significant cost to the public purse. The integrated Family Hub model enables easier access to support, better outcomes for families, more effective service delivery and smarter use of budgets.

Local Context:

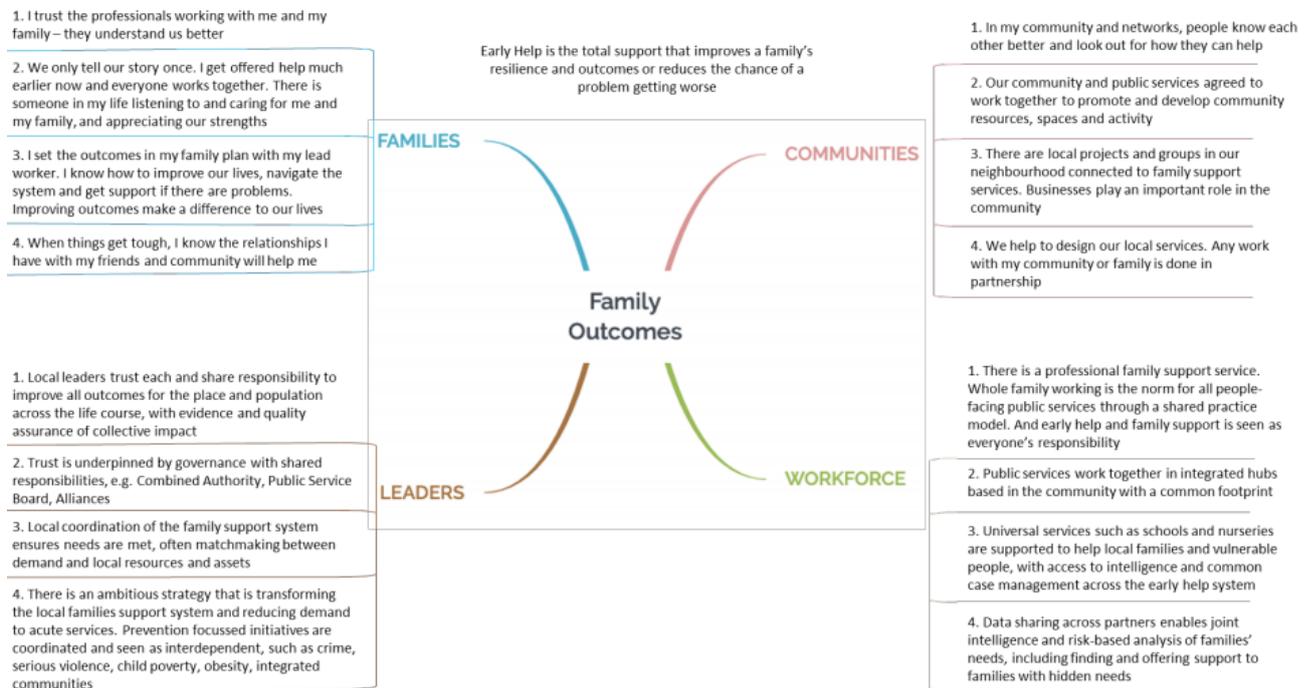
21. There are 168,935 children and young people aged 0-19 years across Staffordshire, an area which spans 1,010 square miles. Children, families and communities already benefit from a range of services offered across the statutory, private, community and voluntary sectors in the county. We have an existing network of Children's Centres; a universal, digital reach via Staffordshire Connects and a broad portfolio of commissioned and in-house services which offer information, advice, guidance and support to families.
22. Staffordshire has a well-developed existing network of Children's Centres which currently focus provision on the Early Years. This network of Children's Centres, operated through the Early Years Coordination Service, seeks to deliver a seamless integrated service within communities in relation to the Early Years. The delivery of Staffordshire's Children's Centres is underpinned by the Children Centre Statutory Guidance.
23. The statutory guidance states that Local Authorities are required to consult with families if they plan to make changes to the delivery of the Children's Centre Services. As such we are seeking support to engage in a period of consultation with families to develop the Children's Centres into Family Hubs with a broader age remit and offer of holistic placed based support working with partners.
24. The Family Hubs will be a core component of our Place Based Approach. This approach seeks to ensure that families are able to access the right support, at the right time, within their local communities, increasing families' resilience and preventing needs from escalating.
25. Family Hubs build upon our existing offer, providing both a virtual and a physical space seeking to support our ambitions by creating, as far as possible, a seamless integrated service within communities, where families need to tell their story only once and can then access joined-up support, as part of an holistic offer, which helps to address their needs early.

26. We have a strong base upon which to build a robust and effective Family Hub delivery model, which will make it easier for families to access the help they need and avoid them struggling to navigate complex delivery structures.
27. We are committed to investing in and working together to deliver effective early help for families, as outlined in our Early Help Strategy. The Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) programme is Staffordshire's response to the Government's Supporting Families initiative (previously known as Troubled Families). A key driver of the programme is to develop and transform the approach to early help. BRFC is delivered through locality-based partnership working, takes a whole-family approach, focusses on early intervention and prevention and aims to build lasting, sustainable resilience in families and communities.

Emerging Strategic Vision for Development of Family Hubs

28. Our emerging vision for Family Hubs is to build upon and develop from the existing strong base of provision which we have in Staffordshire. We will work with partners to seek opportunities to bring services together and align the support offers that are available, so that families have access to the help they need, when they need it, in the communities where they live.
29. It is anticipated that the development of Family Hubs will build upon Children's Centres, which will be redesignated Family Hubs in line with the emerging strategic vision.
30. We aim to develop a Staffordshire Family Hub model which:
 - a. Brings together a range of provision into a coherent, connected and accessible offer to families around a local place. This will support them to achieve and maintain positive outcomes and seek to prevent needs from escalating.
 - b. Places a focus on early help and prevention with the communities of Staffordshire.
 - c. Takes a whole-family approach and is available to families with children aged 0-19 (and up to 25 for those with SEND), providing services for the all, the some and the few; and
 - d. Has a physical presence within a community as well as an online offer and maximises the use of existing resources within a locality, as part of our Place Based Approach.
 - e. Adopts a Restorative Practice Model, which seeks to build and maintain healthy relationships and a sense of community.
31. Through the development of the Family Hub Model, we are seeking to build upon the Early Help Systems Guide, developed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, MHCLG. This Guide outlines MHCLG's vision for the early help landscape and has been informed by over 10 years work in delivering the national Supporting Families programme. This has evidenced a number of factors

which contribute towards delivering improved outcomes and preventing problems from getting worse. The model is outlined in the diagram below.



Families:

- I trust the professionals working with me and my family – they understand us better.
- We only tell our story once. I get offered help much earlier now and everyone works together. There is someone in my life listening to and caring for me and my family and appreciating our strengths.
- I set the outcomes in my family plan with my lead worker. I know how to improve our lives, navigate the system and get support if there are problems. Improving outcomes make a difference to our lives.
- When things get tough, I know the relationships I have with my friends and community will help me.

Communities:

- In my community and networks, people know each other better and look out for how they can help.
- Our community and public services agreed to work together to promote and develop community resources, spaces and activity.
- There are local projects and groups in our neighbourhood connected to family support services. Businesses play an important role in the community.

- We help to design our local services. Any work with my community or family is done in partnership.

Workforce:

- There is a professional family support service. Whole family working is the norm for all people-facing public services through a shared practice model. And early help and family support is seen as everyone's responsibility.
- Public services work together in integrated hubs based in the community with a common footprint.
- Universal services such as schools and nurseries are supported to help local families and vulnerable people, with access to intelligence and common case management across the early help system.
- Data sharing across partners enables joint intelligence and risk-based analysis of families' needs, including finding and offering support to families with hidden needs.

Leaders:

- Local leaders trust each and share responsibility to improve all outcomes for the place and population across the life course, with evidence and quality assurance of collective impact.
 - Trust is underpinned by governance with shared responsibilities, e.g. Combined Authority, Public Service Board, Alliances.
 - Local coordination of the family support system ensures needs are met, often matchmaking between demand and local resources and assets.
 - There is an ambitious strategy that is transforming the local families support system and reducing demand to acute services. Prevention focussed initiatives are coordinated and seen as interdependent, such as crime, serious violence, child poverty, obesity, and integrated communities.
32. Over the Summer 2021, we are seeking to work together with stakeholders to further develop the Early Help Systems Guide to reflect the local context of Staffordshire and the needs of our children, young people and families to inform a report to Cabinet in September 2021.
33. Access to the Family Hub will not be dependent upon a formal assessment. Formal assessments will be undertaken where appropriate in relation to the level of need.

Future Commissioning Intentions

Family Support

34. As a key component of our early help offer, Family Support was commissioned on a countywide basis, but with a locality footprint. In line with the Place Based

Approach, commissioners worked with the VCSE to develop the community and voluntary sector market in localities. This resulted in local community organisations being commissioned to deliver whole-family tier 2 support, which joins up services around the family to tackle root causes.

35. Family Support delivers across a range of outcomes identified and works alongside families to engender positive outcomes. They do this by increasingly growing the family's ability to manage themselves within their own community, so that they know where to turn to in times of difficulty. The commissioned Family Support services make a significant contribution to our achievement of the targets set for us by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in relation to the BRFC programme.
36. We performance manage service delivery and monitor demand for the service. Our monitoring indicates that there continues to be a need for this service provision across the county.
37. The current investment into the Family Support Service contract is circa £2 million per annum. This includes Staffordshire County Council investment of £700,000 and external funding from our Building Resilient Families and Communities budget. We are seeking to invest BRFC money for 21/22, but this is subject to an MHCLG decision regarding the continuation of this funding beyond March 2022.
38. Based on previous years' performance, we anticipate that external funding will be required to meet the demand expectations for the service. We will continue to work with partners to explore other contributions, as it is a service that contributes to a range of outcomes.
39. The existing commissioned Family Support contract comes to an end in March 2022. Commissioners are seeking to undertake activity to commission community based early help support beyond March 2022. The commissioners intend to work together with Partners to develop a service specification which allows for flexibility in provision and methods of delivery, so that the service can be adapted to align with the emerging Family Hub model.
40. The Family Support Service will continue to embed the Restorative Practice Model.

Children's Centres/Early Years Coordination Service:

41. The core purpose of Children's Centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:
 - a. Child development and school readiness.
 - b. Parenting aspirations and parenting skills
 - c. Child and family health and life chances.
42. Children's Centres have adopted a model of working which enables integrated working around the family through greater collaboration across a partnership to meet the needs of families and their young children more effectively. Children's Centre delivery is closely aligned with a range of key priorities, programmes and

services, including Children's Public Health and the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme (BRFC).

43. In Staffordshire, we have worked hard to deliver this model of working and there have been significant improvements most notably:
 - a. Prior to COVID-19, more families in Staffordshire were accessing Children's Centres and the services available both from the Centre, within the community and in the family home.
 - b. Governance has improved significantly and is operating effectively offering both support and challenge to deliver more effective outcomes for families locally, through a multi-agency approach.
 - c. Over 319 volunteers have been recruited and support the Centre's through the delivery of administration support, community communicators, administration support, data collection, caretaking, event planning and marketing. Two have been recognised this year for their contribution as volunteers through Support Staffordshire Volunteer Awards.
 - d. The Good Level of development in Staffordshire continues to rise and is above the national average where the majority of children are now starting school ready to learn and achieving a Good Level of Development.
44. The Children's Commissioner (2020) noted that the Evaluation of Children's Centres in England study found that using Children's Centres had a beneficial effect on parent/carer-child relationships, parental stress and the home learning environment. Considering this, Staffordshire's Children's Centres, through its integrated approach, play a fundamental role in a child's development because of the focus on the most disadvantaged families. This makes a vital contribution to the reduction of inequalities in; child development and school readiness, supported by improving; parenting aspiration, self-esteem and parenting skills and child and family health and life chances.
45. Whilst it is anticipated that Children's Centres will form the foundation of the emerging Family Hub Model, the staffing model that is in place will need to be further developed to support the evolving role of the Family Hub.
46. The management of Children's Centres is currently facilitated through a commissioned Early Years Coordination Service working together with the Internal Children and Families Business Support Service with contractual arrangements due to come to an end in March 2022.
47. Prior to April 2022, it is therefore proposed to work together with key stakeholders to undertake a review of the Early Years Coordination Service and the Internal Children and Families Business Support Service (in connection to Children's Centres) to develop a model which ensures the continued delivery of the Children's Centre Core Offer, whilst developing an integrated infrastructure for the emerging Family Hub.

48. We will develop a full options appraisal for the core staffing structure which will deliver the Family Hub aspirations.

Proposed Phased Development of the Family Hub Model

49. The National Centre of Excellence for Family Hubs will continue to develop and the model in Staffordshire will evolve over time in line with this work. This will allow us to take into account emerging best practice and the growing evidence base.

50. While this work is progressing, there are a number of short to medium-term priorities which we will need to progress. This will result in a phased approach to the development of the Family Hub model.

51. The first phase will involve the recommissioning the Family Support Service and the redesign of the Early Years Coordination Service to reflect the emerging vision relating to Family Hubs.

52. Subsequent phases will develop this approach and build upon work taking place both locally and nationally. These phases are still in development and will involve engaging with partners, ongoing commissioning activity and developing our approach to supporting families across the county, but will include the integration of:

- a. Birth Registrations
- b. Children and Families Health and Wellbeing Services
- c. Early Years Services
- d. Family Support Services
- e. Parenting Support Services
- f. Integrated Financial Capability Services
- g. Training and Employment information and advice
- h. Voluntary and community activities, provisions and services.

Link to Strategic Plan

The work with regard to Family Hubs contributes to the strategic priorities:

- Support more families and children to look after themselves, stay safe and well
- Inspire healthy and independent living

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

[The National Family Hub Centre of Excellence](#)

[The Early Help Systems Guide](#)

[The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report, Department for Health and Social Care](#)

[The Best Beginnings in the Early Years](#)

[Children's Centres Statutory Guidance](#)

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DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2021/22

This document sets out the work programme for the Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee for 2021/22. The Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising: children and adults' safeguarding; community safety and Localism. The Council has three priority outcomes. This Committee is aligned to the outcome: The people of Staffordshire will feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

We review our work programme at every meeting. Sometimes we change it - if something comes up during the year that we think we should investigate as a priority. Our work results in recommendations for the County Council and other organisations about how what they do can be improved, for the benefit of the people and communities of Staffordshire.

Councillor Bob Spencer
Chairman of the Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Membership – County Councillors 2021-22

Bob Spencer (Chairman)
Gill Burnett (Vice Chairman - Overview)
Richard Ford (Vice Chairman – Scrutiny)
Janet Eagland
Peter Kruskonjic
Jason Jones
Gillian Pardesi
Kath Perry
Jill Waring
Mike Wilcox

Calendar of Committee Meetings - 2021-2022

17 June 2021 at 10.00 am
6 July 2021 at 10.00 am
3 August 2021 at 10.00 am
14 September 2021 at 10.00 am
4 November 2021 at 10.00 am
10 January 2022 at 10.00 am
28 February 2022 at 10.00 am
21 April 2022 at 10.00 am

Meetings usually take place in either the Council Chamber or the Oak Room in County Buildings.

Work Programme 2021-22

Date of meeting	Item	Details	Action/Outcome
17 June 2021 10.00 am	Community Support (including Domiciliary Care) and 1-1 intensive support for Children with Disabilities Cabinet Member: Lead Officer: Martyn Baggaley	Pre-decision scrutiny prior to its inclusion on the July Cabinet agenda	Members agreed the recommendations. They want to receive details in the future of how this has progressed, and will specifically want to see how any gaps in skills have been addressed for those adults providers that have moved to provision for children.
	Introduction to the remit of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Officers: Helen Riley & Ruth Martin	To consider the remit of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Detailed presentations and discussions will form the basis of work programme planning
	Work programme Planning Lead Officer: Helen Phillips	Within the remit of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, begin planning the work programme for 2021-22.	A long list of suggested scrutiny items has been drawn up from Members suggestions and from details shared in the presentations and discussions with Officers and the cabinet Member. These will be discussed by the Chairman and Vice Chairmen, along with the Scrutiny Officer and included on the draft work programme for Members consideration at the July meeting.
July 2021 10.00 am	Domestic Abuse Cabinet Member: Lead Officer: Trish Caldwell	A briefing note had been considered by the previous Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee during the Pandemic. A report was requested for post lockdown to outline the impact of the Pandemic on DA.	
	Family Hub Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Joseph Sullivan	Item for pre-decision scrutiny Also requested at 17 June for inclusion on work programme around support for new and young parents and the importance of early years parenting support	
	Regional Permanency Partnership Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Deborah Ramsdale, Scott Crawford & Jo Sullivan	Following consideration of the arrangements at their 7 November Select Committee Members had requested an up-date on progress with the arrangements.	
3 August 2021 10.00am	Customer Feedback & Complaints Annual report – Adults Social	Report brought annually	

	<p>Care Cabinet Member: Julia Jessel Lead Officer: Kate Bullivant</p>		
	<p>Customer Feedback & Complaints Annual report – Children’s Social Care Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Kate Bullivant</p>	Report brought annually	
14 Sept 2021 10.00am			
4 Nov 2021 10.00 am			
10 January 2022 10.00am			
28 Feb 2022 10.00 am	<p>Community Support (including Domiciliary Care) and 1-1 intensive support for Children with Disabilities Cabinet Member: Lead Officer: Martyn Baggaley</p>	This was requested at 17 June meeting – looking at progress made and particularly how well those adult carers who have moved to provide care for children have filled skill gaps and how successful this provision has been	
21 April 2022 10.00 am			
tbc	<p>Safeguarding Adults on the cusp of care Cabinet Member: Johnny McMahon Lead Officer: Jo Sutherland</p>	At the 7 November Triangulation meeting it was proposed to look at any gaps in provision between what is happening in the community for adults on the cusp of care, the neighbourhood coaches/provisions and any safeguarding issues this may present.	
tbc	<p>Low Level Neglect Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Helen Riley</p>	Suggested by the Cabinet Member at 17 June meeting to look at impact of long-term low-level neglect, the current changes to ways of working and challenges that remain.	

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tbc	Early Intervention & prevention Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Helen Riley	Suggested by the Cabinet Member at 17 June meeting.	
tbc	Community safety & the Outcome of the Fishmonger Hall Investigation Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Officer:	Findings from the Fishmonger Hall incident showed there had been inadequate management of Usman Khan. Suggested at 17 June meeting Members want to satisfy themselves that changes have been made to prevent further such incidents. This also impact on the Committee's role as the designated crime and disorder panel. A further proposal at 17 June meeting was concerns around adolescent anti-social behaviour, including cross boarder issues. This is a further community safety concern that could be raised as part of this scrutiny A discussion is proposed between the Chairman, Commissioner and PFCP Chairman to consider ways forward and avoid duplication	
tbc	MacAlister Report Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Helen Riley	Suggested at 17 June meeting – looking at the report's proposals and how they impact on Staffordshire's Children's Services	
tbc	Sexual Harassment in Schools Cabinet Members: Mark Sutton & Jonathan Price Lead Officer:	Suggested at 17 June meeting, considering the concerns recently in the media of sexual harassment and abuse in schools. A need to consider the issue within Staffordshire schools and how this is addressed.	
tbs	Adult Safeguarding Transformation Project Cabinet Member: Julia Jessel Lead Officer: Ruth Martin	Suggested at 17 June meeting to look at the rise in service demand and whether changes to service delivery are needed to manage this increase.	
tbc	Young Carers Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Helen	To consider how well young carers are supported within Staffordshire Suggested at 17 June meeting.	

	Riley		
tbc	SEND Review Cabinet Members: Mark Sutton & Jonathan Price Lead Officers: Tim Moss & Helen Riley	Suggested by the Cabinet Member at 17 June meeting. Responding to the Review and moving forward.	
tbc	Governance Model Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Helen Riley	Suggested by the Cabinet Member at 17 June meeting. Considering how to work better together. Trying to develop a better and more effective governance model.	

Standing Items 2021-22

Item	Details	Action/Outcome
Themes emerging from Serious Case Reviews Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer:	Where Serious Case Reviews have taken place the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will consider any learning that can be taken from the Review	Some areas picked up by the DHR review process

Briefing Notes/Updates/Visits 2021-22

Date	Item	Details	Action/Outcome
	Sexual abuse investigations	Requested at 17 June meeting – details of the number of child sexual abuse investigations over the last 5 years, how many of these resulted in prosecution and if the investigation was proportionate and reasonable.	

Working Group and/or Inquiry Days 2021-22

Date	Item	Details	Action/Outcome

Children's Improvement Board – monitoring of the Children & Families Transformation System progress			
Date	Who attended from the Select Committee	Items discussed	Information