

**Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee
3 September 2018**

**Edge of Care Inquiry
Final Report**

Recommendation of the Review Group

That the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee consider the final report and recommendations of the Inquiry Group on Edge of Care, with a view to endorsing its submission for Executive Response and forwarding to the appropriate Cabinet Member.

Report

Report of Scrutiny and Support Officer

Reason for recommendation

The investigation by the Inquiry Group considering children on the edge of the care system is now complete and the Inquiry Group has produced a final report and recommendations. The Select Committee is asked to consider the report and determine whether they endorse the recommendations. They are also asked to agree its submission to the Cabinet for their Executive Response. If forwarding the report the Committee are invited to consider if they wish to make any accompanying comments.

Report

Background

The Head of Families First reported to the MTFs Working Group in 2016/17 that there was a projected overspend of £3.5m in the Looked After Children budget. He reported that there were a significant number of initiatives in train to prevent those 'on the cusp of care' from coming into the system and various projects were showing positive outcomes.

Performance figures on the numbers of looked after children and the performance of the Looked after Service area are regularly reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel (non-public meeting). Wider performance is also reported each month to the Children's Improvement Board. However no recent scrutiny had taken place by the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee.

At the Select Committee meeting of 26 September 2017 Members agreed the scope and terms of reference for this inquiry.

Summary

The Group held an inquiry session on 30 January to consider the work already undertaken around children on the edge of the care system, current services and commissioning, proposed new developments and local member feedback. They held further meetings to address queries raised and gather information. The reasons for children being on the cusp of care are complex. Early identification and preventative work are key to avoiding children coming into the care system. A number of initiatives have been developed to address the issues highlighted and work is ongoing to help support children being able to stay safely within their family setting. The Inquiry Group have a number of recommendations, including extending some services, referrals for further investigation/monitoring of developments and around the importance of current data to inform and develop services.

Next Steps

Subject to the endorsement of the Committee, the final report, together with any accompanying submission that the Committee may wish to make, will be submitted to Cabinet for their consideration and Executive Response.

Link to the Strategic Plan

Ensure Children and Families have a network of support to help manage their own problems and stay safe and well.

Implications

The equalities and legal; resource and value for money; and risk implications are set out in the attached report.

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Appendices/Background papers

- Final Report of the Working Group