

Report To:	OVERVIEW (AUDIT) PANEL
Date:	11 September 2017
Executive Member / Reporting Officer:	Cllr Jim Fitzpatrick – First Deputy (Performance and Finance) Sandra Stewart – Director Governance and Pensions
Subject:	REVIEW AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT
Report Summary:	The report identifies and informs members of arrangements for the review and monitoring of Children's Services improvement activity and preventing duplication.
Recommendations:	That Overview (Audit) Panel is asked to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content of the report • The reporting mechanisms for such monitoring activity as detailed in paragraphs 2.6, 2.11 and 2.19
Links to Community Strategy:	Tameside Children's Services are an integral part of the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan Priorities to maximise the wellbeing of people in Tameside and to protect the most vulnerable.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	The management of the contract will need to be managed within existing resources noting that significant additional funding has been allocated to children's services over the last couple of years prior to the Ofsted Inspection and this has continued although is not sustainable and affordability is a key area of review.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	It is important that there is effective governance and oversight of service delivery in particular given the additional resources being provided to the service.
Risk Management:	The improvement of Children's Services seeks to mitigate associated risks to outcomes for Tameside Children.
Access to Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Sandra Stewart by: <p> Telephone: 0161 342 3028</p> <p> sandra.stewart@tameside.go.uk</p>

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the Ofsted inspection of Tameside Children's Services in September 2016, the Council has taken a number of direct and positive steps to ensure that effective monitoring takes place for all activity associated with the improvement journey.
- 1.2 In addition to the ongoing work and responsibility of the Council's Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel, the creation of a dedicated improvement board and an additional outcomes focused panel has created a comprehensive overview function.
- 1.3 Work is ongoing within Children's Services and the Safeguarding Board to monitor the impact of improvements. This is complemented by three separate bodies outside of the service with specific roles and responsibilities. These are:
- Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board
 - Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel
 - Voice of the Child Overview Panel (a sub-committee of Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel)
 - First Deputy (Finance & Performance) Ofsted Working Group
- 1.4 In response to the concerns raised by Ofsted a Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan has been developed setting out how Tameside Council and partners across the borough are addressing the recommendations made by Ofsted to deliver sustainable improvement. The Improvement Plan includes a range of actions to be delivered by partners and staff at all levels with a focus on improving outcomes and supporting successful lives for children and their families in Tameside.
- 1.5 The activity in the Improvement Plan is grouped around 6 themes:
- Leadership and Strategy
 - Demand and Need
 - Resources and Capacity
 - Quality, Practice and Compliance
 - Outcomes for Children
 - Sustainability
- 1.6 The Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan is monitored monthly by the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board, which is a multi-agency group with an independent chair. Updates from the Improvement Board are reported to Executive Cabinet and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.7 Progress against the Improvement Plan will be assessed in a number of different ways to ensure a clear and balanced understanding of changes made and their impact. This will include quantitative and qualitative information such as management information, performance data, outputs from audits, critical friend reviews of practice, service user feedback and voice of the child.

2.0 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING

- 2.1 It is of the utmost importance that a structure is effectively established to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and to prevent duplication. The groups established to oversee and drive improvement in Children's Services are summarised in the table below and subsequent paragraphs.

Group	Main areas of focus
Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board	Strategic direction across the multi-agency partnership

	Oversight of progress against the Improvement Plan
Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel	Scrutiny and challenge of implemented change. Critical friend to improvement process and plan.
Voice of the Child Overview Panel	Ensure voice and lived experience of children reflected in improvement activity.
Children's Service Cabinet Working Group	Improvement in performance, compliance and quality. Capacity and resources – finances, staffing, caseloads.

Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board

- 2.2 Inadequate authorities are required to have a Children's Services Improvement Board with an independent chair. The role of the Board is to provide challenge and support for the improvement process. It also forms a key forum to discuss specific challenges within the service and across partner organisations.
- 2.3 The Improvement Board is not a decision making body and does not duplicate any existing decision making within organisations, however the members are of sufficient seniority to feed learning and improvement into their own organisational process and to be held accountable.
- 2.4 The Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board was established in January 2017 and meets on a monthly basis to deliver an improvement programme. The objective of the improvement is for a multi-agency partnership, to achieve sustainable improvements across the full range of services for children and young people in Tameside.
- 2.5 The Improvement Board will lead and guide this process through the implementation of Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan and alongside the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern identified in the Ofsted report and to develop a sustainable model for the future.
- 2.6 The Improvement Board will report on progress to Tameside Council, the Health and Wellbeing Board and both Ofsted and the Department for Education. Agencies represented on the Board will be responsible for leading and driving the improvement process within their own organisations to ensure a coordinated and multi-agency approach.
- 2.7 The Chair of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel is a member of this Improvement Board.

Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

- 2.8 Children's Services is positioned firmly within the remit of the Council's Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel. Following outcomes from the Ofsted inspection the Panel has an important and significant role to establish and maintain a comprehensive overview and monitoring function across a range of improvement interventions.
- 2.9 The Panel's Annual Work Programme for 2017/18 is a document which clearly sets out a plan of activity for the municipal year. The programme details the need for an increased level of contact with Children's Services during the next 2 years, with frequent updates to review improvement. Scrutiny's involvement with the improvement journey will be frequent and ongoing.

- 2.10 Scrutiny will concentrate on the way outcomes for children need to improve. From the offset there has been a need to ensure that scrutiny members are brought up to speed with published findings from the inspection and the way by which the Executive and the Director responsible for Children's Services plan to respond to the challenges.
- 2.11 Following updates received on 26 January 2017 and 16 March 2017 the Scrutiny Panel has recommended that reported information and data needs to be more specific to areas within the Children's Services Improvement Plan. The aim is to allow a greater level of detail to be observed with the way improvement activity is planned, implemented and how outcomes are monitored. It is also important that all information and data is presented in a way where panel members are able to identify what has improved.
- 2.12 Going forward Scrutiny will work with the service to monitor specific areas of the Children's Services Improvement Plan. It is important for the panel to prioritise its activity to ensure the desired impact and outcomes are achieved. In order to do this the Panel have agreed to focus attention on some of the key themes that sit within the improvement plan. These include:
- Leadership and Strategy
 - Demand and Need
 - Resources and Capacity
 - Quality, Practice and Compliance
 - Outcomes for Children
- 2.13 The formal Scrutiny Panel meetings will provide an opportunity for the service to evidence improvement, based on the questions asked by members. With recommendations being made and responded to in an open and public setting.
- 2.14 The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel has invited a small number of panel members to join a Children's Services working group. The group will be flexible and responsive to prevent any restrictions in progress. An example of this may involve the working group visiting an area of the service shortly after an update is received at a panel meeting. It is planned for all findings from the working group to be reported back to the main panel at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.15 The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel, will use the information obtained from the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board together with the Ofsted Monitoring reports to determine which areas need to be scrutinised and to ensure that improvements remain sustained.
- 2.16 The reporting of all scrutiny in-depth reviews will remain unchanged. Scrutiny reports are presented at the appropriate Overview (Audit) Panel meeting before being published on the Council's website for public viewing.

Voice of the Child Overview Panel

- 2.17 It is the strategic priority of Tameside Children's Services to place the voice and influence of all children and young people at the centre of the service. To achieve this, it is necessary to ensure that there are sufficient mechanisms in place to allow children's views to be promoted and for the service to make sure that this drives the work and support which follows. The purpose of this Panel is not to look at just how the Services are being delivered from a Council and partners together with Ofsted and other regulator perspective but to understand how services are received by those whose lives they are intended to affect.
- 2.18 The Voice of the Child Overview Panel will support these aims by providing supportive and constructive checks to existing activity, which will include current policies, procedures and partnership working. The Panel does not make decisions about service provision but it will

make recommendations to support the service in ensuring the voice and experiences of children have an increased focus across all areas.

- 2.19 The scope and objectives of the Voice of the Child Overview Panel are:
- To seek to hear and enhance the input of children and young people by providing appropriate ways for views and experiences to be translated into meaningful actions and support.
 - To ensure that children and young people are aware of decisions which will or may affect them.
 - To ensure that children and young people feel safe and are able to voice any concerns they may.
 - To ensure that there is sufficient variety and opportunity for children of all ages and ability to be able to communicate their views, which may be through conversation, play and drawing.
 - To ensure that the service uses all forms of evidence and feedback available.
 - To promote challenge to the improvement process and ensure opportunities are created to facilitate the gathering and reporting of the experiences of children.
- 2.20 The Panel will meet formally six times during the year, with the first meeting to take place on Wednesday 13 September 2017 and with other work taking place outside of these meetings. The Panel will engage directly with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board and appropriate sub-groups, the Children in Care Council (2BeUs) and the Practitioners Improvement Group.
- 2.21 The Panel's activity, findings and recommendations will report to the Council's Executive Board, with findings also shared with the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board where necessary.

Children's Service Cabinet Working Group

- 2.22 The group is a sub-group or working group of the Executive Cabinet chaired by the Executive Member with responsibility for Children's Services. Two other Executive Members sit on the group including the Deputy Executive Leader and Cllr Allison Gwynne, who formerly had the Children's Services Portfolio. The group ensures the Executive Cabinet has a more direct involvement with the detailed improvement work. Currently, the First Deputy (Finance & Performance), Cllr Jim Fitzpatrick, is undertaking this role owing to incapacity of the Lead Member Cllr Robinson through his need to undertake some medical procedures. Cllr Jim Fitzpatrick's portfolio has been reallocated to enable him to undertake this role in the interim and provide additional capacity.
- 2.23 The rationale for this decision and appointment is that Cllr Fitzpatrick has considerable experience and knowledge in the two key areas of: (1) performance and effectiveness, and (2) capacity and resources, which the working group are focussing upon and he is supported by two Executive Members who both have considerable knowledge and experience in children's having both held this brief over the last 20 years.
- 2.24 The sub-group considers two core areas to determine the performance and effectiveness of the improvement process.

Compliance and Performance Improvement – core indicators are monitored on a weekly basis to determine the extent and sustainability of day to day improvement practice. Additional intelligence and data is considered at each meeting to provide analysis of key focus areas. To date these have included; Caseloads, Leaving Care, and Placements for Looked After Children.

Quality and Practice – the sub-group examines information and feedback from the audit process, supervisions and other elements of the quality assurance framework in order to

determine the extent of improvement and remaining challenge in relation to quality improvement. The information considered include; feedback from practitioners, outcomes of the audit process, and updates on training and development activity to address deficits identified through the quality assurance process.

- 2.25 In order to ensure that the service is equipped to respond effectively to underlying demand within the local community the sub-group considers the capacity and resources in place within the service to deliver Children's Services this includes social worker numbers, business and administration support capacity and alignment of resources to within the service. The sub-group also considers the resourcing in place to support future improvement activity within the service.
- 2.26 The group meets weekly and informs the wider Executive Cabinet through updates from the lead executive member to the Executive Leader and other Executive Cabinet members.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As set out on the front of the report.