

Agenda

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Thursday, 25 October 2018, 10.00 am
County Hall, Worcester

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

This document can be provided in alternative formats such as Large Print, an audio recording or Braille; it can also be emailed as a Microsoft Word attachment. Please contact Democratic Services on telephone number 01905 844963 or by emailing democraticservices@worcestershire.gov.uk

DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:
'Disclosable pecuniary interests' and **'other disclosable interests'**

WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3rd party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
 - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests** **OR** relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
 - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Thursday, 25 October 2018, 10.00 am, County Hall, Worcester

Membership

Councillors:

Mr C J Bloore (Chairman), Mrs E A Eyre (Vice Chairman), Mr A A J Adams, Mrs J A Brunner, Mr P Middlebrough, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr C B Taylor and Mr P A Tuthill

Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters)

Bryan Allbut (Church of England)

Parent Governor Representatives (for education matters)

Two vacancies (primary and secondary)

Agenda

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	Apologies and Welcome	
2	Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip	
3	Public Participation Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in writing or by e-mail indicating the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case 24 October 2018). Enquiries can be made through the telephone number/e-mail address below.	
4	Children at the Edge of Care and Children's Homes	1 - 16
5	Future Use of the Grange, Kidderminster	17 - 26
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7	Member Update and Cabinet Forward Plan	31 - 34

Agenda produced and published by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. To obtain further information or hard copies of this agenda, please contact Alyson Grice (01905 844962)/Samantha Morris 01905 844963 email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website [here](#)

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 25 OCTOBER 2018

CHILDREN AT THE EDGE OF CARE AND CHILDREN'S HOMES

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility (CMR) for Children and Families and the Assistant Director Safeguarding Services (Children's Social Care) have been invited to the meeting to update the Board on the 18 October 2018 Cabinet decision in respect of the Children at the Edge of Care and Children's Homes Report.

Background

2. As the Children at the Edge of Care and Children's Homes was a new entry on the Cabinet Forward Plan for the October Cabinet meeting, the October Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) Meeting was the most timely for the issue to be discussed.

3. The Cabinet Report is attached at Appendix 1.

Purpose of the Meeting

4. The OSPB is invited to:
- consider the CMR and Assistant Directors update in the context of the attached Cabinet Report; and
 - agree if it wishes to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1- Cabinet: 18 October 2018 - Children at the Edge of Care and Children's Homes

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Alyson Grice and Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, 01905 844962/844963, scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

CABINET
18 OCTOBER 2018**AGENDA ITEM 7****CHILDREN AT THE EDGE OF CARE AND CHILDREN'S HOMES**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr A C Roberts

Relevant Officer

Director of Children, Families and Communities

Local Members

Ms P Agar, Mr R W Banks, Mr B Clayton, Mr A I Hardman, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Ms T L Onslow, Dr K A Pollock, Prof J W Raine, Mrs E B Tucker, Ms S A Webb

Recommendation

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families recommends that Cabinet:**
 - (a) **notes the context around children at the edge of and moving into Local Authority care and the current mix of service provision in Worcestershire;**
 - (b) **agrees the development of an Edge of Care Outreach Service to support children to live at home with their families where it is safe do so;**
 - (c) **approves in principle the revised approach to in-house children's homes as set out in the report;**
 - (d) **approves the consultation process with children, young people and families and stakeholders in relation to the revised approach to children's homes, and authorises the Director of Children, Families and Communities to finalise the consultation documentation and undertake such consultation;**
 - (e) **approves engagement with children, young people and families and stakeholders to inform the new model of the Edge of Care outreach Service; and**
 - (f) **delegates decision-making in relation to the proposals for specific children's homes to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families, having regard to the outcome of that consultation.**

Introduction

2. Worcestershire Children's Services were judged inadequate by Ofsted following a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspection in October/November 2016. The Council responded to this with the development and introduction of a fundamental and detailed Service Improvement Plan that has resulted in sustained improvement in the quality of practice across all aspects of the service. Ofsted have described a positive trajectory of change over their last five monitoring visits.
3. The inadequate judgement has had significant impact across the system and part of the continued development of the Service Improvement Plan is to ensure that Worcestershire's system is appropriately balanced to achieve our ambition for a good children's service.
4. This report focuses specifically on children in the care of the Local Authority (often referred to as Looked After Children) and proposes a changed approach to prevent children entering care where it is safe to do so. A fundamental principle for our practice will be to ensure that we have the right children in care and that we work with families and extended families to care for their children with our support.

National position on Looked After Children numbers

5. Nationally there has been significant increased demand pressure on children's services, including the numbers of children in care.
6. There are 11.8 million children in England and 3 in 10 of these are living in poverty. Between 2010 and 2016 there has been an increase in children assessed as being in need by 5%, an increase of looked after children by 10% and an increase of children subject to a child protection plan by 29%. For every £1 spent on prevention, £4 is spent on care (ADCS Position Paper: A Country that Works for all Children October 2017).
7. The West Midlands region has also experienced an increase in Children in care numbers over the last year. In response, the region is developing an approach to managing risk and demand to allow an appropriate debate with partners and Local Safeguarding Children Boards.
8. The purpose of Children's Services is to improve outcomes and life chances for vulnerable and disadvantaged children so that they develop well in secure family settings, have good educational opportunities and health care and grow to be responsible adults making best use of their abilities.
9. The increase in demand over the last decade at a time of reduced local authority funding has meant a reorientation of funding onto children in care. The language of 'risk' and 'safeguarding' has shaped the agenda rather than a focus on child protection and effective ways for improving outcomes for our most disadvantaged children. In reality 'risk' is often used as a word for professional anxiety and when such anxiety is widespread organisations and professionals will revert to risk averse and more interventionist and punitive approaches. Such approaches increase demand without making the overall children's system safer or able to deliver better outcomes for children.

10. Every child deserves a childhood where they can thrive not just survive. To do so some children and families will need help and support from the state to secure their wellbeing and keep them safe from harm. The challenge for every local authority is to ensure that there is a balanced service offer in the community so that only the right children come into its care.

Worcestershire County Council position on Children in Care numbers

11. Worcestershire has experienced the same degree of upward pressure on demand for services as the national position. In addition, there have been demand pressures as a result of the Ofsted judgement which heightened anxiety across the partnership represented on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and resulted in the need to intervene for those children who had previously not received the right intervention at the right time. The local and the national position have combined to see increasing numbers of children taken into care.

12. There are a number of factors that contributed to the inadequate judgement. These included: lack of experience and stability in management and leadership; high caseloads; poor managerial support, challenge and supervision for social workers and poor decision making for children requiring help and protection. The judgement created high anxiety and low confidence in the workforce. Consequently a risk averse culture of practice among front-line social work teams and managers emerged. This results in a rise in higher levels of intervention as this is seen as the safest option when managing the needs of young people who are presenting a range of challenging and risky behaviours.

13. The current position with our children in care is that our numbers are high compared with both our statistical neighbours and the England position as a whole. At this stage of our improvement plan, it is timely to revisit the previous strategy for children in care and the response to meeting needs in the most aspirational and appropriate way.

14. The Council engaged Essex County Council as its Improvement Partner and this support and challenge for the Improvement Plan has been beneficial. There have been political and managerial discussions with Essex about their approach to supporting children to live in a risk enabled way with their families rather than moving into care.

15. In 2010 Essex was rated inadequate by Ofsted and by 2014 they were rated as good. Part of the Essex approach to improvement was to focus on numbers of children in care and to rebalance their system. Table 1, below, shows that in 2011 the Essex rate per 10,000 children in care was higher than Worcestershire's (WCC), when both authorities were higher than our statistical neighbours (SNs). In the time since 2011, Essex has reversed the national trend whereas Worcestershire has increased at a faster rate than both England and statistical neighbours.

Table 1: Children in Care rate per 10,000, 2011 to 2017, Essex, Worcestershire, Statistical Neighbours and England average.

CiC per 10k	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Essex	54.00	50.00	42.00	38.00	34.00	33.00	33.00
WCC	51.00	52.00	56.00	56.00	60.00	60.00	66.00
SNs	46.10	48.00	49.00	48.20	49.00	50.80	50.60
England	58.00	59.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	62.00

16. Changing this culture in Worcestershire requires experienced stable leadership and management at all levels. It requires staff to feel supported not just challenged in their professional task of managing risk and most importantly it requires a Child-Centred culture of practice where all decisions are made in the best interests of the child with an understanding of immediate and longer term outcomes. All of these have been a part of our service improvement plan and are key features in our proposed development of an Edge of Care service.

Current Service response to Children in Care

17. There have been significant capacity pressures in recent years due to both the growing numbers of children in care and the complexity of their presenting needs. 56% of our current cohort of children in care is aged from 11 to 17 and 44% aged from birth to age 10. It is not unusual for us to take adolescents into care in order to respond to the significant risk of harm resulting from mental health, self-harming, violence and risk taking behaviour demonstrated by these young people. The approach recommended in this report is to revisit the current service offer and develop a different approach that can respond more effectively to these presenting needs.

18. The majority of our children in care are placed with foster carers and broader family arrangements. However, there is a significant number living in residential care. Part of the strategy over recent years has been to invest in an increased number of in-house residential homes in order to mitigate the high cost of external residential homes. This strategy was based on the fact of a lower unit cost of a Worcestershire County Council home (£2,700 per week) than an external bed (£3,900 per week). The approach was supported because the Council's in-house residential homes have consistently been judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted and are run by a dedicated cohort of staff.

19. A fundamental part of our service improvement has been "culture of practice" moving away from a rescue/protect culture to developing a workforce confident in managing risk and a strength based model to our social work practice with families. The strength based model identifies the strengths and brings support and challenge to parents in meeting their parental responsibilities.

20. The previous approach to our children in care and specifically placement services had been to focus on the highest cost placement i.e. residential care. The

approach was based on the need to provide high quality care in a residential home that could replicate a "family home" experience for the child. As a result the service approach was to develop more high quality in-house residential provision at a lower cost than external provision.

21. The revised approach set out in this report takes a wider perspective on how Children's Services can best meet our statutory duties and responsibilities to achieve effective long-term outcomes for children. The edge of care strategy is inter-related with our work on Placement Sufficiency, quality and timeliness of Assessments of Need, quality and timeliness of permanency planning for children in care and ensuring all resources are meeting need at best value.

22. At this stage of our improvement programme, it is timely to review this strategy and critically examine the most appropriate way to meet need, the emerging evidence about the best way to deliver positive outcomes and the financial analysis behind the current plans to increase our own stock of residential homes. This review is designed to meet the needs of children in need of safeguarding in the most appropriate way to support positive long-term outcomes for them as well as reviewing financial viability.

23. At the end of August 2018, 12% of our children in care were living in residential homes (95 of 819 at that point in time). 27 of these young people were living in Worcestershire County Council homes with the remainder in a mix of private and voluntary, in and out of county homes. Two young people have been living in welfare secure provision due to the complexity of their need.

24. The unit cost analysis for in-house homes was based on 100% occupancy. However this is rarely the case in reality. Occupancy levels at the end of August 2018 were 84% (27 of 32 beds filled). This is a reasonable occupancy level given the need for very careful matching of new referrals to residential homes and a factor that Ofsted will consider during their inspections due to the need to balance the needs of existing residents. This factor narrows the financial benefit of in-house provision compared with independent sector where we only pay for the children and young people placed there.

25. A further consideration is the level of complexity and need our homes meet. Many of the young people we accommodate cannot safely be supported in our homes. This is not the fault of the service, rather it is a function of the type of demand we most frequently struggle to meet and the risk posed to existing children who have been settled long-term in our homes. So in our current model of provision there will be vacancies in homes whilst we place externally because there is a mismatch between the presenting needs of the child and the service on offer and needs of current children in specific homes. The proposed new approach will mean the Council continues to place children in external residential care on a case by case basis. This will be in response to specific needs to meet the care plan for the child involved. This is set out in the Council's Sufficiency Plan which highlights that foster care, wider family care and special guardianship arrangements are at the heart of the approach to provide care for children who cannot remain with their families.

26. Analysis of children coming into care identifies extremely complex behaviours including self harm, targeted and indiscriminate violence, child sexual exploitation,

county lines (drug trafficking) and the ongoing damaging effects of parental mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse.

27. It is also helpful to review the effectiveness of our approach to residential care. There will always be a need to accommodate some children in residential homes in order to respond to their needs and manage risk in the most appropriate way. However, we do have a higher than expected percentage of children in residential care rather than family-type arrangements.

28. Ofsted have feedback to us that they have seen drift and delay and lack of aspirational care planning for some of our children in care. Because our homes are good quality, there was an inevitable focus at the start of our improvement work to respond to the immediate demand at the front door rather than moving quickly enough to achieve more permanent family arrangements for children in our homes. It is now the right time to review this position and ensure that we are aspirational and ambitious for all our young people in care. Our proposed new approach will be founded in evidence of effectiveness and will ensure that we meet our statutory duties to meet the needs of children.

Learning from Essex approach to In-house Residential Care

29. Essex has shared their experience from their approach to residential care to inform our thinking. In 2011 they ran a secure unit and ten children's homes. Currently they run two short break homes for children with disabilities. Yet their overall numbers of children in care reduced significantly even though they closed their homes.

30. The Essex homes were consistently rated good by Ofsted, but once placed, children stayed in the homes. Some of the reasons for this were that everyone was positive about the standard of care, social workers prioritised children at 'greater risk', it was already 'paid for' and no alternatives were explored.

31. Essex reviewed their sufficiency strategy, contracted with independent homes and reinvested the savings from closing the homes into prevention services. This was a key part of their strategy to support children to remain with their families.

32. Part of the change of approach was cultural and they found that their overall numbers of children in care reduced, including those placed with external homes.

33. A key factor of the Essex investment in prevention focused on using an evidenced-based approach to family work known as '*Brief Intervention*' with the aim of providing a major boost to reducing the numbers of teenagers in care. This activity was targeted at Level 4, Specialist and Intensive Support Services (referred to as 'late early intervention' by Essex lead member for Children's Services).

34. The service combines solution focussed methodology and a commitment to a strength-based engagement with families. The approach notices the impact of culture, beliefs and the 'scripts' that organise people in different contexts. The aim is to '*get alongside*' young people and families where there are complex problems to identify 'workable' solutions and help improve the relationships they share with each other. The principle is that of enabling Social Workers to develop skills in evidenced based work with teenagers and their families.

35. The revised approach resulted in a 7% decrease in the number of children entering care (mostly in the age 10-15 range), a 6% increase in the number of children leaving care with a further 3% of those leaving care because of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO).

Revised approach to Edge of Care in Worcestershire in order to improve outcomes

36. Children in need of support and protection require the intervention of services to enable them to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health, care and development. When that reasonable standard of care and development cannot be achieved through the provision of care by their parent or person with parental responsibility then it is the duty of the local authority to receive the child into its care.

37. A child on the "edge of care" is deemed to be a child who is at imminent risk of becoming a child in the care of the Local Authority due to escalating child protection concerns.

38. Professor Eileen Munro in her report "A Child Centred System" (May 2011) highlights the importance of support services and the crucial role they play in the child protection system in offering help to children and families either before problems develop or when there are low level problems, thereby reducing the risk of escalation. The report argues that these support services can do more to prevent abuse and neglect or reduce its severity than services provided only when abuse and/or neglect has become severe.

39. There are significant outcome benefits in relation to emotional, educational and employment outcomes for children and young people if they are able to remain within their family setting. Reviewing the range of service availability for a number of good and outstanding Authorities demonstrate that community-based services are important to work with families to achieve positive change, delivering a restorative approach to social work practice.

40. In addition to Essex brief intervention service, the evaluation of the No Wrong Door project in North Yorkshire has demonstrated benefits for children and young people aged 12 to 25 who are on the edge of care or recently moved to independent living.

41. This service is delivered through multi-disciplinary teams working to develop strong relationships with children and young people referred to the service.

42. The evaluation of this innovation project has demonstrated a positive impact on children in care numbers. Comparison between two cohorts of children shows that the No Wrong Door project children have been more likely to leave care and the majority (86%) of children referred to the NWD service have continued to remain out of the care service.

43. Young people will almost always have better life chances if they are enabled to remain within their families, rather than entering the care system. This evidence supports the development of an Edge of Care Support Service that will work with families to stay together rather than to move into care.

44. For many children and young people there are additional emotional challenges associated with being received/placed into care. The loss and rejection from the family and separation from community/friends and the pressures associated with having to adapt and adopt to any new care arrangement can cause additional emotional trauma. The care planning process in itself can become a focus of the intervention and take time and energy away from valuable direct work addressing from the real cause of the problems. We believe that time and emotion spent on the new issues being faced by the child and family is time better spent on working through the family breakdown.

45. For some children and young people entering care can lead to an increase in the types of behaviours that led to the need for a placement in the first place. A lack of structured support can result in families feeling that they can no longer support their 16 and 17 year olds in their homes resulting in homelessness and the need to find alternative accommodation for these children at a cost to the authority.

46. Preventing children and young people coming into the care system where it is in their interests is dependent on families being supported early in the onset of emerging family pressure with intensive support at their time of crisis. Evidence suggests that effective family preservation strategies which place a heavy emphasis on conflict resolution can reduce risks associated with school disengagement, youth homelessness and other issues likely to affect the futures of Worcestershire children and young people.

47. This evidence is helpful to understand the balance of the Council's Children Service. A consequence of high and growing numbers of children in care has been to shift financial investment into meeting care costs at the expense of preventative community-based services that will work in a positive way to support children and their families to remain together. The benefits of this are evident in better long-term outcomes for children and more cost effective use of resources. Intervening at the right stage in the least intensive way is positive for most families, although there will always be children who absolutely do need to come into and will benefit from Local Authority care. The important factor is to ensure that only these children come into, and remain in, care rather than others who come in by default due to the absence of an alternative and effective service response.

Proposed changes

48. Although our strategy for improvement is sound and has delivered positive results, we are committed to continuing to develop the way we deliver services to achieve the continued improvement that others have seen. This includes investing in early help and support services, whilst reducing the level of residential care

49. The development of an Edge of Care Service is recommended as a key part of the revised strategic approach to supporting families to stay together. The design for this service would be based on the principles and evidence of similar services, including North Yorkshire and Essex. The service requirements for Worcestershire would be for three teams of multi-disciplinary staff, including social workers and family support workers as part of the service. Just as important as professional expertise will be the ability to develop positive relationships with children and families and work in a solution-focused way.

50. Detailed work on roles and structures for the Outreach Service would be developed subject to Cabinet approval.

51. There is also the need to ensure that there is access to a sexually harmful behaviours service to support those young people who continue to expose themselves to risk of harm through behaviours that are often the consequence of CSE and other damaging experiences. If approved by Cabinet this service will be developed and scoped with input from the Director of Public Health to determine the most appropriate way to ensure this support is available

52. The Edge of Care Service is anticipated to cost approximately £1.9m per annum. These services can be funded from savings from home closures. This would still deliver a net saving to the Council of between £0.5m and £1.2m, whilst providing a child centred service offer to allow effective support in the community.

53. Worcestershire currently has 12 residential homes.

54. It is proposed to reduce this capacity by six, leaving six in operation.

55. Four of the homes provide long-term and short breaks for children with disabilities and it is proposed that these will continue to be an important component of the sufficiency strategy for these children and their families. These homes are:

- (a) Vale Lodge, Evesham
- (b) Moule Close, Kidderminster
- (c) Providence Road, Bromsgrove
- (d) Greenhill Lodge, Worcester.

56. Separate work has been undertaken in relation to support for children with disabilities and is ongoing as part of the SEND improvement programme. Residential places for children with disabilities are considered through that programme of work given that the service meets a different set of needs than the other eight homes.

57. Two of the homes (Downsell Road in Redditch and Hill View in Malvern) currently provide short stay places for children in challenging circumstances and it is proposed to stop providing short stay facilities and meet needs through the Edge of Care Outreach Service. The rationale for closing this type of provision is that they can encourage children, young people and their families to see residential care as an attractive option particularly at times of challenge in the family setting. The homes are high quality, with good facilities and supportive staff which can, perversely, mean that young people have more of an incentive to move into care than work through their challenges and their parents can feel relief that their children are receiving great care. Our new approach would provide an outreach service into the family setting to support the family to stay together, which the evidence supports as leading to better long-term outcomes for the children.

58. There are six homes designed to provide care for children with complex social and emotional difficulties. These are:

- (a) Old Hollow, Malvern,

- (b) Tenbury,
- (c) Rivendell, Bromsgrove,
- (d) Oak House, Worcester,
- (e) The Riddings, Bricklehampton
- (f) Orchardene in Pershore.

59. The landlord of Old Hollow has advised the Council of their intention to sell the home so this home is already scheduled to close in the coming months. There is no proposal to replace this home. The Tenbury Home is not currently open and there is no proposal to open it.

60. It is proposed to close a further two homes as they would not be required as part of our sufficiency strategy, provided that appropriate outreach and support services are in place and working effectively. Residential care places, where required, will continue to be purchased from the independent sector.

61. Two homes would be retained to enable sufficient capacity for those young people currently in our residential care for whom residential care continues to be in their best interests. This position would be reviewed a year after implementation of the changes to the overall service mix to evaluate effectiveness in delivering good outcomes for children and young people.

62. Of the homes provided by the Council, the decision on which two to retain will be based on the needs of the children currently living in the homes in order to minimise impact on their care plans. The timing of any closures would also be considered in the light of children's needs and ensuring their views are considered following the review of their needs and support from advocates.

63. The details of each home and funding costs are listed in the Appendix to this report. This is a confidential Appendix due to the commercial sensitivity of the information included.

Financial analysis

64. Closing homes will reduce financial expenditure as long as the numbers of external placements do not increase as a result. This can only be avoided by a change in culture of practice, a revised approach to managing risk in a child centred way and the development of new services to support children and their families to respond to the challenges that have resulted in them being on the edge of care.

65. The financial information relating to the proposals are set out in the report and in the Appendix. Overall the proposals identify a net saving subject to consultation. It is not possible to quantify exactly the level of saving until the consultation is complete. However, a range is set out in the table below to provide assurance that a saving is feasible and whilst not the key driver it is important to note that the approach suggested could also provide qualitative and contract benefits, as well as avoidance of costs.

Table 2 – Analysis of financial impact of the range of options for edge of care

	£m	£m
Potential Direct Cost from additional edge of care support service investment	1.9	1.5
Potential Direct Saving from re-provision of residential care homes	(3.1)	(2.0)
Net saving	(1.2)	(0.5)

Consultation

66. Changes to the current services would require a change management approach with a comprehensive approach to consultation. The homes recommended for closure will have an impact currently on 19 children and it will be important to consult with them and their families individually, using advocates and independent reviewing officers to ensure that their wishes are understood and had regard to. Their needs will be reassessed to ensure that any proposed changes will meet these needs. This will take one month to complete.

67. It is also proposed to engage with children, young people and other stakeholders to shape the revised service offer to ensure this is fit for the future.

68. There would be detailed staff consultation for those staff in the homes affected, after any decision to close. These staff are valued members of the children's service and every effort would be made to minimise compulsory redundancies through redeployment opportunities into other residential units and the new Edge of Care Support Service.

69. Staff consultation will be undertaken following Council procedures.

Conclusion

70. This report reviews the current position with high numbers of children in care and recommends a significant service development approach to delivering better outcomes for children and young people. This requires a different approach to managing risk in the community, underpinned by a skilled and intensive approach to supporting families when in crisis.

71. The changes proposed would need to be carefully managed with the development of the new service offer and appropriate consultation with staff, children, families and partners to ensure that there is an agreed vision and shared understanding of risk approach.

72. Decisions on final proposals for closure would be taken by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families as part of the programme of change in the light of consultation and ensuring that the needs of children can be appropriately met.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

73. Key legislation which outlines the duties and statutory responsibilities of Local Authority Children's Services to Children in Need is the Children Act 1989.

74. Section 17 of the Act sets out the general duty of every Local Authority to:

- (a) Safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need, and
- (b) So far as to be consistent with that duty, promote the upbringing of such children by their families.

A Child In Need is defined as ' a child who is':

- a) Unlikely to achieve or maintain or have the opportunity to maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a Local Authority
- b) Their health or development is to be significantly impaired or further impaired without the provision of such services
- c) They are a disabled child.

75. The Act sets out the duty on Children's Services to undertake a Social Work Assessment where any child is presented as a potential Child In Need within the above definition.

76. The Social Work Assessment will identify need into three primary categories Children in Need of; Support, Protection or Care.

- **Child in Need of Support:** Where Children or Young People who have been identified as in need of support (commonly referred to in practice as a 'Section 17') it is the duty of the Local Authority to promote the upbringing of children by their families. Work with families whose children are deemed to be "Children in Need" requires the voluntary consent of the parent and young person of sufficient age and understanding if over 16yrs.
- **Child is in Need of Protection:** Children or Young People who have been assessed as in need of protection are those where assessment has identified them suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm (commonly referred to in practice as Child Protection 'Section 47'). Where a child is identified as suffering significant harm or there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is likely to suffer significant harm detailed statutory duties and responsibilities of Local Authorities and their partner agencies are set out in the Children Act and within 'Working Together 2018'.
- **A Child In Need of Local Authority Care:** Children Act 89 outlines the duty of every Local Authority to provide accommodation for any child in need in their area which appears to them to require accommodation as a result of:
 - No person who has Parental Responsibility (PR) for them
 - Has been lost or having been abandoned
 - The person who has been caring for them being prevented whether or not permanently or whatever reason from providing them suitable accommodation or care

- any child in need in their area who has reached the age of 16 and who's welfare the authority consider to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide them with accommodation.

77. Statutory guidance for how the local authority should undertake its duties and responsibilities to Children Looked After are set out in a variety of Care Regulations. Where a social work assessment identifies a Child in need of Local Authority Care there are two primary care arrangements (commonly referred to in practice as S20 or S31). Section 20 refers to a child in care on a voluntary basis at the request of the parent or young person themselves and Section 31 refers to children in care subject to a legal order, predominantly put in place by the Court. For all children and young people in "care" it is the duty of the authority to assuming a corporate parenting role.

Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments

78. An Information Risk & Privacy Impact Screening has been carried out in respect of this proposal. It identified that further assessment will be required to ensure the information involved in this proposal is adequately protected. Furthermore, a more detailed Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) will be required to identify how the proposal affects individuals and their personal data, and what needs to be considered and implemented to ensure the proposal is acceptable and compliant with the Data Protection and Human Rights Acts.

79. A Public Health Impact Screening has been carried out in respect of this proposal to identify and predict the health implications on those impacted by the proposals set out in this report. The screening indicated that further Public Health Impact Analysis will be required, specifically in respect of mental health and wellbeing and social/economic factors. Health implications will be considered through the development of the Edge of Care Service. Individual plans to meet the identified needs of children will be developed in conjunction with the appropriate health and wellbeing and/or mental health services.

Equality and Diversity Implications

80. An Equality Relevance Screening has been carried out in respect of these recommendations. It identified that further equality impact analysis will be required in respect of due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Supporting Information

- Appendix - Worcestershire County Council Children Home Details (salmon pages) – Exempt report for Cabinet members only. (This Appendix is NOT FOR PUBLICATION as supporting information as it discloses information in relation to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the local authority holding that information) and the public interest is better met by its non-

disclosure as it contains commercially confidential information relating to the financial aspects of this proposal.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Email: cdriscoll2@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 25 OCTOBER 2018

FUTURE USE OF THE GRANGE, KIDDERMINSTER

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility (CMR) for Adult Social Care and the Director of Adult Services have been invited to the meeting to update the Board on the 18 October 2018 Cabinet decision in respect of the Future Use of the Grange, Kidderminster.

Background

2. As the Future Use of the Grange, Kidderminster was a new entry on the Cabinet Forward Plan for the October Cabinet meeting, the October Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) Meeting was the most timely for the issue to be discussed.

3. The Cabinet Report is attached at Appendix 1.

Purpose of the Meeting

4. The OSPB is invited to
- consider the CMR and Directors update in the context of the Cabinet Report: and
 - agree if it wishes to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1- Cabinet: 18 October 2018 - the Future Use of the Grange, Kidderminster.

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Alyson Grice and Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, 01905 844962/844963, scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

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CABINET
18 OCTOBER 2018**AGENDA ITEM 5****FUTURE USE OF THE GRANGE, KIDDERMINSTER**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr A I Hardman

Relevant Officer

Director of Adult Services

Local Member

Ms T Onslow

Recommendation

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Services recommends that Cabinet:**
 - (a) **notes that a detailed property analysis has indicated that the Grange is not fit for its previously intended purposes;**
 - (b) **agrees that 'The Grange' is not re-purposed as a long-term dementia unit and will cease to provide short-term recovery and rehabilitation beds and other short-term provision known as replacement or emergency care beds by 31 March 2019; and**
 - (c) **agrees that upon the consequent closure the asset is declared as surplus to requirements by the Adult Services Directorate.**

Background

2. On 8 February 2018, Cabinet agreed that there was no longer a need for retention of 'The Grange', Kidderminster as a short-term recovery and rehabilitation unit, given that the delivery of rehabilitation services will be primarily community-based. An opportunity was perceived, however, to re-purpose the Grange rather than dispose of the site. Cabinet decided, based on information within the report, to support the proposal that the Grange should be retained as a strategic asset in the form of a long-term residential unit for people living with dementia; with five beds commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) for short-term recovery and rehabilitation for people in Wyre Forest.

3. The previous report estimated that this proposal would lead to an immediate budget pressure of £257k - but in the medium term there would be a minor net revenue saving of £63k over 5 years through pursuing this option and based on the use of 29 beds for long-term care and 5 beds for the CCG as recovery beds – totalling 34 beds. The financial case was therefore quite evenly balanced between the 2 options of full

closure and repurposing. At the time of the decision, the Council was aware that there would be costs in preparing the Grange for continued use. For timing reasons this had not been fully appraised but it was anticipated that the cost of works would be met from within the Capital Programme with no revenue implications.

4. However, following the February decision, the information and details supporting this decision have changed and the business case for this decision has weakened significantly.

High Level Options Appraisal – The Jacobs Report

5. Since April 2018, 'The Grange' has provided 10 short-term beds: 5 beds for time limited rehabilitation and recovery care and 5 beds for short-term replacement care. Following the February decision the Council commissioned through Place Partnership Limited (PPL) a 'high level options appraisal' from 'Jacobs' (see 'Supporting Information') of the suitability of the estate for the provision of long-term care as anticipated in that Cabinet report. This 'options appraisal' identified that the estimated cost of remodelling, refurbishment and repair of the Grange estate would cost the Council between £2.2m and £3.3m.

6. The February Cabinet report anticipated that 29 beds requiring care for dementia (plus 5 short-term rehabilitation beds) would be available (total: 34). However, the options appraisal states:

"Despite investing in the refurbishment and re-modelling work in Option 1 and 2 there will inevitably be some limitations due to the nature of the existing building."

7. These limitations are important as the report recognises:

"The building is generally dated in décor and has outdated fixtures and fittings which are not suitable for people with dementia and create an institutional feel. The layout is confusing and has long, narrow dead-end corridors with low ceilings. The bedrooms are small and only 2 have ensuite facilities."

8. The 'Options' report and associated drawings identify the following options for refurbishment and remodelling:

Option 1 Refurbishment: proposed plans show the reorganisation of the building to accommodate the 5 bed recovery unit and provide 33 dementia beds including some remodelling of the ground floor space to give 4 new good sized ensuite bedrooms. A total of 38 beds which departed from the 'brief' of 34 beds.

Option 2 Remodelling: as Option 1 but with more extensive remodelling to make better use of space and give some rooms of more appropriate size for their function. Small existing bedrooms are combined to form an improved bedroom size with new wet room ensuites giving 6 further ensuite bedrooms and 25 dementia beds. Some of the smallest rooms would have a large replacement window to bring more natural light and increase the useable floor area. Remodelling of the entrance area is also proposed to make a clear and welcoming environment. With the additional 5 beds for the CCG this is a total of 30 beds.

9. Both 'options' were evaluated using the Kings Fund document "Is your care home dementia friendly?" This is an assessment tool that contains a list of design elements known to support, encourage and enable people with dementia in care settings (see 'Background Papers'). Options 1 and 2 results in a total bed number of 38 and 30 beds respectively. The cost of Option 1 is estimated at a range of between £2.2 million and £3 million; whilst Option 2 is estimated at a range of between £2.4 million and £3.3 million. The operational view of Option 1 applying the Kings Fund assessment tool is that it would barely meet standards of care required for people with dementia. The operational judgement of Option 2 was that it would meet standards but that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as the regulator would have ongoing concerns and the Council would have commissioned a service that would not be perceived as 'best' or even 'good' practice.

10. The outcome of the high level options appraisal is that due to the age, design, fabric and structure of the existing building it is not possible to re-furbish or remodel the building in order that it delivers a service in line with recognised 'good practice'. In addition to the proposed estate changes in the Jacobs report, there are existing building limitations which remain key risks and will imminently require attention including:

- Works to mitigate the risk of fire spread (currently mitigated by increased staffing)
- Large flat roof in need of constant patching
- Central heating and boilers, the latter of which requires replacement
- Replacement of the lift.

11. The standards and norm acceptable in 1975 when The Grange was first built have changed dramatically and the building as it approaches its 44th birthday has inherent problems that are difficult to address (as proposed in the PPL report) including: room sizes; few bedrooms with en-suites or private toilet facilities; previous adaptations that are functional; space that is redundant and not used; very narrow corridors meaning that, for example, some large wheel chairs would have difficulty negotiating the space and people who needed to be accompanied could only use the corridor if there was no one else also attempting to move through that part of the building.

12. A 30-bedded unit with these design and structural issues would not provide the economies of scale associated with a larger unit and would therefore be very costly compared to the market and as PPL stated would always have 'limitations'. All of these issues, which have recently emerged, have a significant detrimental impact on what was an evenly balanced financial case for the proposed re-purposing and re-design. The decision is made more difficult by the knowledge that the need for long-term residential dementia provision will not diminish, after all, the demographics for Worcestershire have not changed:

- Higher than average number of older people aged 65 or over (21.2% vs 17.3% England)
- 65+ projected to grow by 34% between 2015 and 2030
- 4859 people in the county on the Dementia Register predicted to increase by two thirds by 2030.

Financial Impact

13. The financial impact of repayment of borrowing the capital for improvements and staffing of the Grange under 'Option 2' would mean that the unit cost per night of each bed would exceed the average market price for dementia care in the Wyre Forest area (£1,068 per week compared to £787 per week). It is important to note that these figures are based on a 95% occupancy rate. The potential weekly bed night cost of the Grange would therefore not represent best value to the Council and its tax-payers and so the February decision needs to be reconsidered in the light of the new information. It should be noted that the short-term care at the Grange can be purchased from the external provider market.

14. The option based on making a capital investment in the Grange also has to be understood and considered in the context of the Council's current financial position. If the Council proceeded with the investment, it would incur a capital cost of up to £3.3m with an associated cost of borrowing; it would be paying 35% above the market price for care; and it would also set a 'benchmark' price at which the Council is prepared to pay for care in Wyre Forest, which would likely have an inflationary effect on the market.

15. The current Adult Services Budget includes provision of £1.311m for the annual cost of the Grange made up as follows:

	£m
Staffing	1.032
Premises Costs	0.094
Other running costs	0.104
Net Operating Budget	<u>1.230</u>
Central Overheads/Recharges	0.081
Total Net Budget	<u>1.311</u>

Provision of Care

16. The Grange is currently providing care for a maximum of 10 people. All of the people are receiving short-term care whether they be people discharged from the Acute (5 beds funded separately through the Better Care Fund (BCF)); or people requiring short-term replacement or emergency care. No service users live at the Grange. The Unit is operating with a number of vacancies but is funded against a staffing structure for the 34 bedded model. These staff are required, despite the low numbers receiving care, because of identified staff needed should the unit have a reason to evacuate speedily.

17. Current forecast running costs are slightly below budget due to savings in certain demand-driven budget lines such as catering.

18. If the Council were to fully cease care at the Grange the impact on current bed provision would be:

- Long-term care – this is not applicable as long-term care is not provided at the Grange
- Short-term 'Rehabilitation and Recovery' beds - in discussions with the CCG, it has been agreed that 5 'Rehabilitation and Recovery' beds would be commissioned from the independent care sector, ensuring that even with the proposed closure of the Grange, the residents of Wyre Forest continue to

receive the same rehabilitation 'offer' within the Wyre Forest area following discharge from hospital and this will continue to be funded via BCF

- The short-term replacement care or emergency care (5 beds) can be found from other providers and purchased from the market place.

Summary

19. Due to the ongoing capital investment issues the Council is paying for a fully staffed unit with low occupancy, and purchasing care from the market for those who would otherwise be in the Grange. This has been mitigated by utilising capacity to provide short-term care but this duplication is unsustainable.

20. Option 1, above, is not viable. The investment of £2.2 - £3.3 million, for Option 2, would still not provide an efficient, effective or modern care service due to the reduced capacity to 30 beds and the remaining structural design issues of the building. Option 2 would also be approximately 35% more expensive than the purchase of alternative care in the market.

21. The Council has a general duty to ensure it delivers best value and this has added imperative given the Council's current budget position. The Grange, even with capital investment, is unable to deliver value for money as it would not be competitive with the external market. The future provision of people with dementia needs will be addressed in a future Cabinet report. In the meantime, the Council will continue to purchase appropriate and safe care from the independent sector as currently.

22. It is therefore recommended that the Grange is not re-purposed as a dementia unit, and that it ceases to provide short-term beds and thus closes by 31 March 2019.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

23. The Council will continue to meet the needs of service users and ensure that their assessed eligible needs will be met at alternative provision to the Grange. If Cabinet approves the recommendations, Adult Services will not be placing at the Grange from 31 January 2019 in order to limit the impact of any potential disruption and moves.

24. The current net operating cost of The Grange is £1.230m excluding central overheads. The current short-term use of 5 beds at the Grange is funded through BCF and this has not been assumed as an ongoing income line to unit. BCF will be used to purchase these beds in future from the market. There is therefore, no requirement to purchase additional market placements to replace the remainder of the current unused beds within the Grange.

25. The closure of the Grange would therefore generate an ongoing cost reduction against current forecasts of £1.230m from 2019-20 recurrently which would mitigate some of Adult Services' financial pressures. This is based on an anticipated closure date of 31 March 2019. If the actual closure date is later than this the savings in 2019/20 will be reduced by approximately £0.100m for each month the unit remains open.

26. Against this ongoing saving there will be short-term redundancy and actuarial pension costs for which corporate funding is being sought.

27. Upon closure of this service the property would be declared as 'surplus to requirements' and transfer from Adult Services to be held corporately pending disposal or alternative use.

28. Upon the recommendations being accepted and endorsed the following actions would be put in place:

- All people who are receiving care at The Grange are short-term placements and will move on in line with care plans
- Appropriate consultation with recognised Trade Unions and staff would take place in accordance with Worcestershire County Council Employment Policies and Procedures.

Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments

29. A Privacy and Impact Assessment has been completed and the outcome was that this was low risk. This has been discussed with the Information and Governance Manager and been approved.

30. Upon acceptance of the recommendations appropriate policies and procedures will be enacted and taken for the transferring and archiving of all residents/services users' personal data and information.

31. A Public Health Impact Screening Assessment has been completed. The result of the 'impact assessment' was 'neutral' or 'unknown'. This is mainly because the small number of people in receipt of short-term care would be allowed to finish their rehabilitation. The outcome, of which, for the individual, would be either to return home or seek alternative care provision in line with the recommendations of their support programme.

32 The February Cabinet report noted that there is an increasing need for residential placements for people with high needs dementia and this has been reported before through Cabinet. This provision is, in the majority, met through spot purchasing and the external market. The Adult Services Market Position Statement is being drafted and it is anticipated that this will highlight the need for new commissioning approaches to meet this demand.

Equality and Diversity Implications

33. Cabinet will be well aware of the need to demonstrate that the Council has met its Public Sector Equalities Duties.

34. An Equality Relevance Screening has been completed in respect of these recommendations. The screening did not identify any potential equality considerations requiring further consideration during implementation. As a result, the loss of provision for people with protected characteristics is balanced and met by other services.

Supporting Information

- Jacobs Report: 'High Level Options Paper' May 2018 – available electronically

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Adult Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Cabinet Report: 'Future Use of the Grange, Kidderminster' – 8 February 2018

'Is your care home dementia friendly?' an assessment tool produced by the Kings Fund (2014)

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 25 OCTOBER 2018

WEST MIDLANDS SCRUTINY NETWORK

Summary

1. The Vice-Chairman of the Board attended the West Midlands Scrutiny Network event on 3 October and has provided the Board with an update attached at Appendix 1.

Purpose of the Meeting

2. The OSPB is invited to discuss the feedback and agree any issues it wishes to take forward.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1- Update on the West Midlands Scrutiny Network event – 3 October 2018

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Alyson Grice and Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, 01905 844962/844963, scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

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Meeting of the West Midlands Scrutiny Network 3rd October 2018

1. New Government Scrutiny Guidance- summary for members OSPB

The instigation for this is the Government's Select Committee review. The new Guidance is in the drafting stage.

Ministers have committed to refresh guidance by end of the year.

Ministry keen to see evidence and input re the Guidance

Thoughts in the room

- Scrutiny to report to full Council not Executive – favoured by Ministers, what would this mean, might it slow scrutiny down?
- Not enough Officer support to Scrutiny. Minister will say it is up to each LA.
- Access to information. The issue here seems to be it is as good as the question asked by Scrutiny.
- Scrutiny of External Bodies. This needs to be improved. Anything to strengthen would help.
- Chairing: opposition or leading party? Most favoured elected by committee itself.
- Items not yet in the public domain - on pink paper - commercial sensitivity. The private report test should always be applied. What harm will come from sharing. Harm is the only valid reasons so should be the starting point making everything in public domain if possible.

What should be in the new Scrutiny Guidance?

- Importance of performance exception reporting.
- Pre-decision scrutiny much more effective - earlier the better
- Budget - quarterly reporting
- Q and A for each item coming to Executive which has to be answered by Executive before Executive meeting.
- Greater powers to call in Contractors/LEP/Schools/Academies/ Areas of Health/Arm's length Trusts/Children's Trust Companies - anyone funded by public
 - Write into contracts that the contractor has to be willing to come before scrutiny - but caveats allowed re marketing strategy, pricing etc.
- Scrutiny - work - more members should do the work guided by a specialist officer
- Identify which member of the SLT is supporting scrutiny?

2. Discussion topics

1. How to publicise work done

2. **How to get /encourage public feeding in** : proactive invites as appropriate, variety of people is an indicator doing right - not just one group
3. **Need to webcast all panels**. Scrutiny should be in public domain. Public has a right to know what is behind decision making. Not right that Scrutiny cannot get information which can be obtained under Freedom of Information (FOI).
4. **Link to other authorities** Sharing work plans or actual Scrutiny topics being done. Check what is happening in West Midland Scrutiny. Health - we certainly should be looking wider seeing what is going across the Region.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 25 OCTOBER 2018

MEMBER UPDATE AND CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Summary

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) is asked to:
 - (a) Receive an update on emerging issues and developments within the particular remit of each Member of the OSPB, including an update on each Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Task Group;
 - (b) Consider the Council's latest Forward Plan in order to identify:
 - any items it would wish to consider further at a future meeting; and
 - any items it would wish to refer to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further consideration
 - (c) To note that the Chairman of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel will attend 22 November meeting of the Board to provide an update on the strategic decision by West Mercia Police to withdraw from the strategic alliance with Warwickshire Police.

Member Updates

2. In order to ensure that Members of the OSPB are fully informed about issues relating to scrutiny in Worcestershire, communication between Members is essential. To assist in this, it has been agreed that an item will be placed periodically on the OSPB agenda to enable each member to feed back on emerging issues and developments within their remit. This will also provide an opportunity to highlight possible future agenda items. Regard for the Council's statutory requirements in relation to access to information will be critical.

3. Board Members' areas of responsibility are as follows:

- Adult Care and Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Juliet Brunner
- Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Fran Oborski
- Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Alistair Adams
- Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Kit Taylor
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Paul Tuthill
- Crime and Disorder – Paul Middlebrough
- Quality Assurance – Liz Eyre

4. As part of their role, it was agreed by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) that scrutiny lead members should receive regular briefings from the Directorates they are shadowing. These briefings, alongside the Forward Plan (see below), can be used to help identify any emerging issues that may be appropriate for future scrutiny. Recognising that work across the County Council is of interest and value to all OSPB members, the notes from these briefings (where produced) are available to all members electronically.

5. Members may also be leading scrutiny task groups. It will be important for Members of OSPB to be aware of how each scrutiny is developing so that they can fully consider the final report.

6. Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen are asked to feedback on:

- progress on the work of their Panels and any scrutiny task groups they are leading;
- key issues from the Directorate that may be appropriate for future scrutiny;
- performance information they have queries or concerns about;
- items in the Forward Plan which they consider may be possible issues to scrutinise; and
- any other issue which they feel is relevant/of interest to the OSPB.

Cabinet Forward Plan

7. The Board will wish to take into account any issues arising from the Council's Forward Plan which is attached at Appendix 1.

8. The latest version of the Plan (available at the time of Agenda despatch) is routinely considered at each meeting of OSPB.

9. The Board is asked to consider the Council's latest Forward Plan in order to identify:

- Any items that it would wish to consider further at a future meeting;
- Any items that it would wish to refer to the relevant overview and scrutiny panel for further consideration.

10. The OSPB agreed to use a set of criteria (listed below) to help determine its scrutiny programme. A topic does not need to meet all of these criteria in order to be scrutinised, but they are intended as a guide for prioritisation.

- Is the issue a priority area for the Council?
- Is it a key issue for local people?
- Will it be practicable to implement the outcomes of the scrutiny?
- Are improvements for local people likely?
- Does it examine a poor performing service?
- Will it result in improvements to the way the Council operates?
- Is it related to new Government guidance or legislation?

West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police Strategic Alliance

11. The Board will be aware that on the 9 October 2018, the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner and the West Mercia Chief Constable made a strategic decision to withdraw from the strategic alliance with Warwickshire Police on 8 October 2019. The Chairman of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel has been invited to the OSPB's November meeting to update the Board in respect of this.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Forward Plan (as at 17 October 2018)

Specific Contact Point for the Report

Alyson Grice/Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Officers
Tel: 01905 844962/844963
Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

FORWARD PLAN

FORMAL NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BY, AND PRIVATE MEETINGS OF, CABINET (OR OTHER EXECUTIVE DECISION-MAKING BODY OR PERSON)

Forward Plan	Expected Date of Decision	Page No.
Worcestershire Local Area Written Statement of Action in response to amendments required by Ofsted and Care Quality Commission New Entry – CMR Decision	6 October 2018	4-5
Acquisition of Land for the Pershore Infrastructure Scheme CMR Decision	17 October 2018	6-7
Council-Provided Children Social Care – Edge of Care Key Decision	18 October 2018	8
Libraries Re-modelling Potentially Key Decision	18 October 2018	9
The Grange Key Decision	18 October 2018	10
Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18	18 October 2018	11
Consultation on Expansion of Fairfield First School CMR Decision	22 October 2018	12-13
Adoption of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Key Decision	15 November 2018	14
Development of Worcestershire Children First including Financial/VAT Update Potentially Key Decision	15 November 2018	15
Midlands Connect: Sub-National Transport Body Key Decision	15 November 2018	16
Resources Report New Entry – Potentially Key Decision	15 November 2018	17
Balanced Scorecard and Corporate Risk Update – Quarter 2 2018/19 Performance Report	13 December 2018	18
Commissioning a 0-19 Prevention and Early Intervention Service Key Decision	13 December 2018	19
'Called In' Decisions or Scrutiny Reports Potentially Key Decision	Within the plan period	20
Notices of Motion Potentially Key Decision	Within the plan period	21
Withdrawn Items	-	22

All entries will be for decision by Cabinet unless otherwise indicated