

COUNCIL
8 NOVEMBER 2018**REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN**

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) Annual Report 2017/18

1. The Independent Chair of the WSCB is responsible for publishing an annual report that provides an assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Worcestershire and also recognises achievements and is realistic about the challenges that remain. The Report has been considered by the Health and Well-Being Board and the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

2. During 2017/18 WSCB had a particular focus on a number of priorities including:

- Children subject to Neglect
- Children affected by Domestic Abuse
- Children vulnerable to or experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation
- Early Help and Thresholds
- Key messages in respect of Voice of the Child, Professional Curiosity and Resolution of Professional Differences (Escalation Policy)
- Critical Friends (Service Improvement Plan).

3. The Board has concluded that at a strategic level there is a strong commitment to safeguarding children in Worcestershire. It has also received assurances that safeguarding arrangements are in place in partner agencies and that safeguarding responsibilities are taken seriously. In addition, the Board's contributory partners have made additional monies available following the Ofsted inspection to support improvement work despite operating within financial constraints. Much of the Board's attention this year has focused on Children's Social Care as lead agency for safeguarding children in light of Ofsted's findings. Progress in this area is being made although it is acknowledged that further work is still required to ensure that children and young people in Worcestershire receive a consistently good standard of service.

4. The Cabinet has received the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18 and noted the progress of the work of the Board. From September 2019 the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board will not exist and new safeguarding partnership arrangements will be in place. The Board will, however, continue to deliver its statutory functions until the new arrangements have been established.

Children at the Edge of Care and Children's Homes

5. The Cabinet has considered the context around children at the edge of and moving into Local Authority care and the current mix of service provision in Worcestershire, and agreed a changed approach to prevent children entering care where it is safe to do so. Nationally there has been significant increased demand

pressure on children's services, including the numbers of children in care, and this has been the experience in Worcestershire. Additionally, there have been demand pressures within the county as a result of the inadequate judgement of Worcestershire Children Services by Ofsted in 2016. It was therefore felt timely to revisit the previous strategy for children in care and the response to meeting needs.

6. After considering the way in which services are currently provided, the experience of other authorities and further evidence, the conclusion was that preventative community-based services that will work with families to stay together and remain within their family setting, rather than move into care, offer significant benefits in relation to emotional, educational and employment outcomes for children and young people. The Cabinet has therefore agreed the development of an Edge of Care Outreach Service to support children to live at home with their families where it is safe to do so. It has also approved, in principle, a revised approach to in-house children's homes which would reduce the capacity of the twelve residential homes in Worcestershire to six. Closing the homes will reduce financial expenditure and provide a net saving subject to consultation.

7. The Cabinet has approved a consultation process with children and young people and families and stakeholders in relation to the revised approach to children's homes proposed, and engagement to inform the new model of the Edge of Care Outreach Service to ensure it is fit for the future. The Director of Children, Families and Communities has been authorised to finalise the consultation documentation and undertake the consultation. The significant service development approach to deliver better outcomes for children and young people would require a different approach to managing risk in the community, underpinned by a skilled and intensive approach to supporting families in crisis. The changes proposed would need to be carefully managed. The Cabinet has delegated 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 the consultation and ensuring that the needs of children can be appropriately met.

Libraries Re-modelling

8. Considerable progress has been made over recent years in modernising Worcestershire's library services and ensuring value for money. Over £3.7m of efficiency savings have been achieved since 2012 and a range of transformational approaches implemented. The Cabinet has now considered the next phase of transformation. To meet the savings target of £1m from 2018/19 and 2020/21 for the Library Service identified in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), an approach is required that will substantially transform library service delivery models whilst balancing need and promoting wider engagement of use of services within an existing library transformation strategy which puts emphasis on engaging with local communities and implementing new technologies and service delivery models.

9. A Libraries Needs Assessment has been produced to provide a locally devised framework to describe the relative need for library provision across the county in terms of demographic need, library location and library use. This will support the identification of a library transformation approach which ensures that reduced resources are prioritised to meet greatest need according to this framework. A number of recommendations based on the findings of the needs assessment have been put forward to shape the County's approach to further library transformation.

10. The Cabinet has acknowledged that it has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service in Worcestershire. It has agreed to continue with the innovation and transformation programme launched in May 2011 with an updated set of key principles and to continue to work with partner agencies and community groups in order to provide a service within the future MTFP envelope. The Cabinet has also agreed an updated set of potential options for library service points to be used as the model to shape the future of all library provision in Worcestershire. The Cabinet has noted the headline findings of the Libraries Needs Assessment and proposed recommendations for the library service delivery offer. Formal public consultation and engagement on the proposed options for libraries service points began on 29 October 2018 and will end on 2 February 2019. The Cabinet will receive a further report following the outcome of the consultation in order to reach decisions about the future of relevant libraries.

Future Use of The Grange, Kidderminster

11. Further to the report to Council in February 2018, a high level options appraisal had been commissioned of the suitability of the Grange estate for the provision of long-term care as anticipated by the Cabinet. The appraisal identified that the estimated cost of remodelling, refurbishment and repair was between £2.2m and £3.3m. Two options for refurbishment and remodelling were evaluated using an assessment tool containing a list of design elements known to support, encourage and enable people with dementia in care settings. The outcome of the appraisal is that due to the age, design, fabric and structure of the existing building, it is not possible to refurbish or remodel the Grange in order that it delivers a service in line with recognised "good practice".

12. The Cabinet's decision in February 2018 to repurpose the Grange and retain it as a strategic asset in the form of a long-term residential unit for people living with dementia has, therefore, been reconsidered in light of this new information. 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 not sustainable. The Council has a general duty to ensure it delivers best value and this has added imperative given the Council's current budget position. Even with capital investment the Grange is unable to deliver value for money as it would not be competitive with the external market.

13. The Cabinet has therefore agreed that the Grange is not re-purposed as a long-term dementia unit and that it 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. Upon the consequent closure, the asset will be declared as surplus to requirements by the Adult Services Directorate.

Meeting the Requirements of the Code of Practice for Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure

14. The Cabinet has considered the implications of the necessary adoption of the Code of Practice 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure' and recommendations in relation to its adoption. The Department for Transport (DfT) provided national guidance in relation to the management of the highway network in England through a series of Codes of Practice called; Well-maintained Highways, Well-lit Highways, and Management of Highway Structures. These were superseded in October 2018 by a

combined new Code of Practice called 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure'. The new Code contains 36 key recommendations covering, for example; asset management, network planning, structures, severe weather and resilience. For this reason, the Council has followed a methodology of reviewing each of the recommendations against current practices to identify if there are any further appropriate actions required.

15. The Cabinet has agreed to adopt the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice including its 36 recommendations. Adopting the new Code of Practice will ensure the Council, as the Highway Authority for Worcestershire, is well placed to continue to manage the Worcestershire highway network effectively through a risk-based approach and that it complies with the DfT's guidance and recommendations.

Balanced Scorecard Performance and Corporate Risk Update

16. The Cabinet has received the latest update of the Corporate Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Four 2017/18. Currently there are 78 indicators reported in the Scorecard - 21 of these are rated 'green' representing good performance or progress and 8 are rated as 'red'. 4 of those indicators rated 'red' have had a performance update in Quarter Four 2017/18 and actions are being taken to improve their performance. The Cabinet has also authorised the Director of Commercial and Commissioning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning, to review and rationalise the Balanced Scorecard to address those indicators rated grey, where the Council is unable to directly influence them as there is no basis for rating them. Overall 18 indicators are being considered for removal or to be combined in 2018/19.

17. The Corporate Risk register provides a mechanism for collating and reporting risks that could affect the delivery of corporate objectives. The Cabinet has considered an overview of risks identified at the end of Quarter Four 2017/18 including more detail about the highest risks. It has noted the latest refresh of the Corporate Risk Register including actions to mitigate the 4 risk areas that are rated 'red'.

Resources Report

18. The Cabinet considered a detailed Resources Report at its meeting in September 2018. The main highlights included the following areas.

19. The conclusions of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance concerning revenue budget monitoring up to 31 July 2018 have been endorsed by the Cabinet. The outturn forecast for the Council's £324m net revenue budget as at Month 4 and progress to date on the savings and reforms programme was reported. The Council continues to deliver statutory services and against its Corporate Plan, however, a forecast overspend of £14.234m has been identified if no management action is taken. Management have been working to address this and as such a number of additional proposals have been brought forward to address the potential position, reducing the forecast overspend to £5.215m. The majority of management actions are tightening of controls and good housekeeping. The Cabinet has noted the current progress regarding savings plans approved by Council in February 2018 and the additional management savings measures to address the forecast position.

20. The projected overspend on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant is currently projected at £6.8m. The Cabinet has noted that the Schools Forum is

considering actions to recover this overspend position and will consider their responses in December, noting the financial position of the Council to Schools Forum.

21. Cabinet has approved budget virement amendments to the Capital Programme for land purchase and infrastructure works at Malvern Hills Science Park. It is planned, alongside Malvern Hills District Council and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP), to develop serviced land to enable the commercial opportunity for HQ, Research and Development facilities and the opportunity to expand. The Capital Programme approved in December 2017 had a value of £1.2m allocated which accounted for the WLEP contribution, however, the total scheme cost is estimated to be £4.2m. A £0.9m contribution has been received from Malvern Hills District Council and a £2.1m reallocation is required from the previously approved capital contingency provision for new starts which was included in the 2018/19 approved Capital Programme.

22. The Cabinet has also received details of the 2017/18 treasury management activity, an update on a second bid for a Business Rates Retention pilot with Districts which was submitted in September 2018 and the borrowing and lending transactions during 2017/18.

Mr S E Geraghty
Chairman

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Nichola Garner, Committee and Appellate Officer

Tel: 01905 846626

Email: ngarner2@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:

Agenda and background papers for the meetings of the Cabinet held on 27 September 2018 and 18 October 2018.