

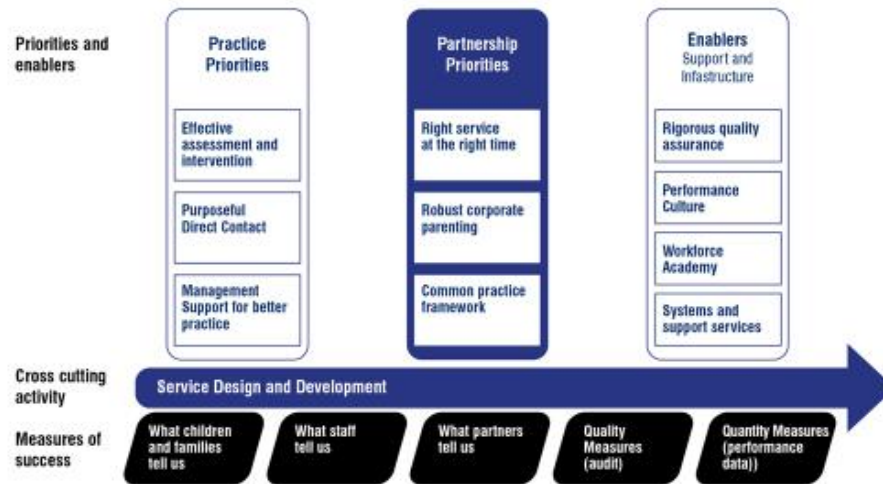
DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
SUBJECT:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND PERFORMANCE
DATE OF DECISION:	21 JULY 2022
REPORT OF:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Executive Director	Title	Children and Learning	
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
Not applicable	
BRIEF SUMMARY	
To brief the Panel on progress against the revised Children and Learning Improvement Plan and the performance of Children's Services and Learning up to the end of June 2022.	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	
(i)	That progress delivering the actions within the improvement plan be noted
(ii)	That there is a further update to the Scrutiny Panel on the quality of practice in November 2022
(iii)	That the Panel consider and challenge the performance of Children's Services and Learning in Southampton.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	To enable effective scrutiny of Children's Services and Learning in Southampton.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	None
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
	Background
3.	The service reviewed the structure of its improvement plan in June 2021 to address the findings of the May 2021 Ofsted Focused Visit. The plan was re-structured to focus on 10 core priority areas which will make the most difference to achieving better outcomes for children:

Our priorities

Underpinning our detailed plan are core priorities and enablers. We believe that with a relentless focus, we will achieve the best outcomes for children in Southampton; laying the foundations for a service that provides consistently good practice.



The plan is high level, underpinned by a series of service improvement and development plans owned by Heads of Service in the Children and Learning Service, and across the Council, and aligned with cross cutting multi-agency plans overseen by senior leaders. The service delivery plans detail clear actions, owners and timescales against which progress is monitored by the Executive Director and the Improvement Board. Underneath these are more granular actions and project plans.

Current Position

4. Reports to the improvement board are bi-monthly. The plan reflects improvements over the past 12 months:

- Review of the service vision; overriding strategy and strategic plans
- Agreement to progress with Child Friendly City accreditation
- Implementation of the Destination 22 service redesign programme
- Stability of senior leadership and management team
- Launch of Practice Framework and Workforce Academy
- Strengthening of corporate parenting function
- Staff are generally more engaged, stable, happier
- Performance and performance culture are improving
- Early signs of fostering recruitment improving

A peer review by the Local Government Association in May 2022 endorsed the service's strategic direction but said that the targets for improved practice and financial stability were too ambitious.

5. Despite foundations now being in place, there is a significant amount of attention still required on the quality of practice. For example, in the Ofsted Focused Visit (May 2021), inspectors identified two areas of priority action (effective and rigorous senior management oversight of children in care who are placed in unregistered settings, are at home with their parents or are with connected carers in emergency circumstances *and* effective management oversight of services to care leavers) and two areas for improvement (the quality of supervision and management

	oversight of children on child protection <i>and</i> child-in-need plans and visits to vulnerable children who are electively home educated (EHE).
6.	The service has used a Partners in Practice Peer Review to retain the focus on the experiences of looked after children and care leavers. There has also been robust attention to management recruitment and development and a relaunch of our supervision guidance and tools. A business case has been submitted for additional staff to have more contact with electively home educated children.
	Governance and Scrutiny
7.	<p>The service Improvement Board reconvened in November 2020 with revised membership and terms of reference. Membership now includes senior leaders from safeguarding partner agencies; improvement leads from the Department for Education and Local Government Association and the chairs of the staff reference group. An independent chair assumed her responsibilities in January 2021. The board receives bi-monthly performance updates, alongside thematic reports.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Governance Structure</div> <p>Our improvement plan is reviewed by a bi-monthly Improvement Board, chaired by the Executive Director for Finance. The Board receives and considers performance data; progress (exception) reports and presentations from service managers. Membership has been extended to include key partners and will also include practitioners, with an interface with our practitioners reference group.</p> <p>Further oversight is provided through the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 60%;"> <p>Children and Families Improvement Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director – Finance and Commercialisation (Chair) • Chief Executive (annually) • Deputy Chief Executive • Cabinet Member, Children and Learning • Cabinet Member, Finance and Resources • Shadow Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Learning • Executive Director, Children and Learning • Executive Director Resources • Service Director of HR • Head of Children's Social Care Services • Head of Integrated and Specialist Services • Head of Education and Learning Services • Southampton CCG Managing Director • Chief Superintendent Southampton Police • Safeguarding Children Partnership Chair • LGA representative • DFE representative • 2 x representatives from Staff Reference Group • Partners in Practice representative • Secondary and Primary Head teacher • Special School Head teacher </div> </div>
8.	The functions and effectiveness of the improvement board have also been subject to a peer review, with a report to board scheduled for July 2022. It is likely that the improvement board will have a much more defined focus moving forward; after the new Children's Strategic Partnership Board launches in September 2022.
9.	The scrutiny panel work programme has been designed with the Scrutiny Manager and the Chair to ensure ongoing focus on service improvement.
10.	To provide context to the information within this report a link to the previous Children's and Learning Service improvement plan report to the Panel from November 2021 is provided in background documents.
	Performance
11.	To enable an informed discussion on the improvement plan, attached as Appendix 1 is the July report to the Improvement Board. The report contains the key

	performance dataset for Children’s Services up to 30 June 2022. An explanation of the significant variations in performance has been included.
12.	The Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, and representatives from the Children’s Services and Learning Senior Management Team, have been invited to attend the meeting to provide the performance overview and to outline progress relating to the improvement plan.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
13.	None at this stage
<u>Property/Other</u>	
14.	None at this stage
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
15.	S.111 Local Government Act 1972
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
16.	None
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
17.	The overall improvement plan is risk assessed.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
18.	<p>The service quality assurance framework contributes to achieving the outcomes desired for children in Southampton.</p> <p>The 2021-2025 Corporate Plan sets out the following regarding wellbeing in the city: “We want a city in which people can start well, live well, age well, and live happy and fulfilling lives. We will be a city that prevents and intervenes early, promotes wellbeing, and allows people to live independently for longer, enjoying their lives and all our great city has to offer.”</p> <p>Aligned to this, priorities in the Corporate Plan include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of children looked after • Achieve our ambition to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City by 2024/25.

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Children and Learning Improvement Report – July 2022
2.	Glossary of terms
Documents in Members’ Rooms	
1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?		No
Data Protection Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?		No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)	
1.	Children and Learning Service Improvement Plan – 4 November 2021 Agenda for Children and Families Scrutiny Panel on Thursday, 4th November, 2021, 5.30 pm Southampton City Council (item 26)	