

Time 5.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Executive
Venue Committee Room 3, Third Floor - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Membership

Chair Cllr Ian Brookfield (Lab)
Vice-Chair Cllr Peter Bilson (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE

Quorum for this meeting is five Councillors.

Information for the Public

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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
- 2 **Declaration of interests**
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 5 - 10)
[For approval]
- 4 **Matters arising**
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting]

DECISION ITEMS (AMBER - DELEGATED TO THE CABINET)

- 5 **Tackling Homelessness Together - a proactive service approach in line with prevention strategy** (Pages 11 - 24)
[To approve the update on the impact of the 2018 HRA and the transfer of operational homeless services to Wolverhampton Homes.]
- 6 **Implementation of The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations in the Private Rented Sector** (Pages 25 - 34)
[To approve the implementation of The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations in the private rented sector.]
- 7 **Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2018-2019** (Pages 35 - 50)
[To receive the Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2018-2019.]
- 8 **Exclusion of press and public**
[To pass the following resolution:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information on the grounds shown below.]

PART 2 - EXEMPT ITEMS, CLOSED TO PRESS AND PUBLIC

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|-----|
| 9 | WV Living Business Plan Update (Pages 51 - 72)
[To approve the update to the WV Living Business Plan to add Former Northicote School Northwood Park Road.] | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) | (3) |
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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Meeting of the Cabinet Minutes - 10 April 2019
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Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Roger Lawrence (Chair)
Cllr Peter Bilson (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Val Gibson
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr Hazel Malcolm
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE

Employees

Mark Taylor	Deputy Managing Director
Emma Bennett	Director of Children's Services
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Meredith Teasdale	Director of Education
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Ross Cook	Director of City Environment
Leonie Woodward	Lead Lawyer/Solicitor - Litigation
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Philippa Salmon	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paul Sweet. |
| 2 | Declaration of interests
There were no declarations of interest submitted. |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 March 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. |
| 4 | Matters arising
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. |

Councillor Roger Lawrence informed the meeting that, as the embargo on announcements had now been lifted from the grants discussed in item 12 – Education Grants, the item would now be considered in the open part of the meeting and the exclusion of press and public would not be moved.

5

Wolverhampton for Everyone Partnership and Ward Funds

Councillor Roger Lawrence presented the Wolverhampton for Everyone Partnership and Ward Funds for approval and referred to the amended version of the map provided in the supplement pack.

The Wolverhampton for Everyone Partnership would support local people to unlock potential within their communities and create positive change within the City. The Ward Funds would allocate £10,000 for each Ward in the City, for Councillors to use to prioritise and target local issues, enabling the development of long-term resilience and capacity in communities. The Ward Funds programme would be subject to a 12-month pilot period and would be evaluated to determine whether it would continue after the pilot year.

Resolved:

1. That the establishment of a Ward Fund of £10,000 for each of the 20 wards, totalling £200,000 be approved as a pilot for a period of one municipal year, running from May 2019 to May 2020.
2. That a contribution of £50,000 to be made to the Wolverhampton for Everyone Partnership be approved to accelerate their programme and agenda.
3. That start-up costs to manage and administer the ward funds process be approved at a cost of £25,000.
4. That it be approved that the total cost of £275,000 be funded from Public Health grant income.
5. That the proposed Governance structure for the ward funds, and that the Constitution be amended accordingly, be approved.
6. That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, to make any changes to the Ward Funds governance.
7. That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Deputy Managing Director, to make any changes to the Ward Funds processes and procedures.
8. That it be noted that Wolverhampton for Everyone is an existing partnership between the City of Wolverhampton Council, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council and other key partners.
9. That it be noted that the core values of Wolverhampton for Everyone have been included within the Council Plan 2019-2024 and the ward funds initiative will directly contribute towards the partnership by co-producing and co-designing local solutions to foster cultural change and future resilience within communities.
10. That it be noted that a full evaluation of the impact of the ward funds initiative will be undertaken in order to establish the outcomes delivered for the community, this will help to inform whether the ward funds will be available in future years, the outcome of this evaluation will be reported to Cabinet.

6 Westside Link Public Realm Proposals - Outcome of Consultation for Phases 1 and 2 and Potential Delivery Programme for Phase 1

Councillor John Reynolds presented the Westside Link Public Realm Proposals - Outcome of Consultation for Phases 1 and 2 and Potential Delivery Programme for Phase 1 for approval. The report outlined the outcome of the public and stakeholder consultation process carried out on phases 1 and 2 of the Westside Link proposal, which took place in

November and December 2018. It also set out the recommended delivery phasing of the Programme going forward. It was noted that the Programme would need to be renamed as it would revitalise the City Centre, encompassing much more than just the Westside Link phase.

Councillor Steve Evans stated that the Programme would create a high-quality pedestrian environment in the City Centre. This would include improved pedestrian and cycling connectivity and the creation of new public spaces capable of hosting large scale events and activities in support of the Council's 'Events City' concept.

Resolved:

1. That the development phase funding as outlined in section 6 of the report be approved for all phases of the Westside Link Project, to construction design stage and Early Contractor Involvement.
2. That the submission of a Full Business Case for Phase 1 to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, West Midlands Combined Authority and/or Central Government for potential funding opportunities be approved.
3. That the outcome of the public and stakeholder consultation and responses provided to address the issues raised be noted.

7 Tackling Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Including Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2019-2022

Councillor Hazel Malcolm presented the Tackling Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Including Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2019-2022 for endorsement. The existing Strategy had been refreshed and updated to encompass domestic violence, honour-based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual violence and the recently added issue of stalking and harassment. The Strategy would build on partnership working, focussing on three strands of delivery: prevention, provision, protection and justice and performance.

Resolved:

That the Tackling Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Including Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2019-2022 be endorsed.

8 City of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Statement

Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE presented the City of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Statement for approval. The Safeguarding Statement set out the Council's commitment and ownership of safeguarding and how it was demonstrated across the organisation as a whole. The Statement would promote the welfare of the children, young people and adults using or receiving services provided or commissioned by the Council, and support the organisation to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. The

Statement would also provide a consistent understanding of the standards that the Council would continue to demonstrate.

Resolved:

That the Safeguarding Statement for the City of Wolverhampton Council be approved.

9 **Children and Young People's Participation and Co-Production Strategy 2019-2021**

In Councillor Paul Sweet's absence, Councillor Peter Bilson presented the Children and Young People's Participation and Co-Production Strategy 2019-2021 for approval. The Strategy set out the Council's commitment to the importance of effective participation of children and young people and co-production of the services that affect them. The Participation Strategy had been developed in partnership with members of the Children in Care Council and the Youth Council during 2018-2019. The young people consulted had shared that they wanted to be engaged in service development and decision making. Thanks were extended to the Council's Participation Officers for their work on the Strategy and throughout the year.

Resolved:

1. That the Children and Young People's Participation and Co-Production Strategy 2019- 2021 be approved.
2. That the Council's commitment to ensuring that children and young people have influence over decisions and actions on services that affect them be endorsed.

10 **City of Wolverhampton Youth Council Annual Report 2018**

In Councillor Paul Sweet's absence, Councillor Val Gibson presented the City of Wolverhampton Youth Council Annual Report 2018 for endorsement. It was noted that the Youth Council had gone from strength to strength, thanks to the work of the Council's Participation Officers and the children and young people involved.

Representatives from the Youth Council attended the meeting to present their Annual Report, which detailed the activities of the City's Youth Council throughout 2018 and their key aims for 2019. Key events to note illustrated greater involvement of the Youth Council in City of Wolverhampton Council's processes. This included involvement of the Youth Council in the formation of the new Council Plan, strengthened links with the scrutiny process and opportunities to be involved in the budget consultation.

An updated version of the City of Wolverhampton Youth Council Annual Report 2018 would be published following the meeting.

Resolved:

1. That the Youth Council's future aims for 2019 be endorsed.
2. That the work of the City's Youth Council throughout 2018 be acknowledged as outlined in their annual report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

12

Education Grants

Councillor Lynne Moran presented the Education Grants report for approval. As the embargo on announcements relating to the funds had been lifted, it was agreed that the noting recommendation should be removed from the report, as it was no longer relevant.

City of Wolverhampton Council had been successful in a bid for the Early Outcomes Fund, on behalf of the four Black Country local authorities and in partnership with local health professionals. The Fund would assist the organisations to start a transformational journey to improve the collective operation of local services in securing good early language outcomes for children. The Council had also been successful in a bid to the Early Years Professional Development Fund, which had been designed to improve children's early language, literacy and numeracy through high quality, evidence-based professional training for the pre-reception early years workforce, raise quality in settings, and would be targeted to benefit disadvantaged children. The combination of the funding from both successful bids would contribute positively to improved early learning outcomes for children in the City.

Resolved:

1. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Director of Education and the Director of Finance, to accept the grant of £516,000 as outlined in the report and to spend against the grant monies received
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Director of Education and the Director of Finance, to accept the grant of £272,000 as outlined in the report, awarded from the Early Years Professional Development Fund, and to spend against the grant monies received.
3. That the establishment of budgets to allow expenditure, as set out in the report, and the grants to be spent be approved.

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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 5 June 2019
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Report title	Tackling homelessness together – a proactive service approach in line with prevention strategy	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Peter Bilson City Assets and Housing	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Kate Martin, Director of City Housing	
Originating service	Housing Strategy & Policy	
Accountable employee	Anthony Walker	Homelessness Strategy and External Relationships Manager
	Tel	01902 551631
	Email	anthony.walker@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Housing Leadership Team	5 March 2019

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve a review of the 2019-2020 Housing Options Service and Temporary Accommodation provision.
2. Approve the setting up of a supplementary expenditure budget of £718,000 in 2019-2020 as a result of receipt of Homelessness grant funding and to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing and the Director of City Housing to allocate the grant.
3. Approve the use of an additional ten Council housing properties for temporary accommodation use.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The transition in 2017 transferring operational homelessness and support services from the City Council to Wolverhampton Homes, the City's management agent.
2. The initial findings in relation to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on service delivery.
3. The City's partnership working that has arisen as a direct response to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update following the transfer of Council homeless and prevention services to Wolverhampton Homes (WH).
- 1.2 To outline the new service proposals and agree the way in which the service will be structured and funded, in order to meet the needs of current legislation and contribute to meeting the aims of the City's Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 – 2022 priorities.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A review of housing related services was requested by the Council in 2017.
- 2.2 The main principal established through this review was that it would be more logical and consistent for the homelessness and the related services of temporary accommodation and housing support to be managed by WH as the in-house service provider, giving better value for money.
- 2.3 The final transfer of services took place on 1 December 2017 and sought to achieve a saving in terms of delivery costs (a total of £400,000 spread of over 2017-2018 and 2018-2019).
- 2.4 At the time of transfer the current legislation under which homelessness was delivered changed via the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRAAct) 2017.
- 2.5 The HRAAct, as was reported to Cabinet in April 2018, is one of the biggest changes in homelessness legislation in England for 15 years. It effectively puts two new duties to the original statutory rehousing duty to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- 2.6 The HRAAct also placed a requirement on local authorities to assist those threatened with homelessness within 56 days (compared to 28 days before the Act), placed a new statutory duty to take 'reasonable steps' to help resolve homelessness for all (unless they are ineligible based on their immigration status), and became 'blind' to priority need, local connection and intentionality.
- 2.7 Other significant HRAAct duties include:
 - A new obligation to provide those who approach with a Personal Housing Plan (PHP).
 - A new duty to 'relieve' the homelessness of eligible persons. In such cases, there may be a requirement to provide accommodation for 56 days even if the applicant is found not to be defined as vulnerable under the previous legislation.
 - A duty for statutory organisations to refer customers who it believes are homeless or at risk of homelessness into the local authority homeless provision, i.e. Wolverhampton Homes.
- 2.8 The HRAAct has therefore led to the need for WH to remodel the services that were transferred in 2017 based on the ability to respond to the Act and ensure a continued reduction in homelessness and meeting the statutory duties.

3.0 Post HRA Findings and Implementation of new Service Model.

- 3.1 The Act has extended legal obligations to broader set of circumstances, for longer and for a wider range of people. This means anyone with a potential housing problem which potentially creates the risk of them losing their home within 56 days can seek assistance within the new statutory framework.
- 3.2 Single person households or couples of working ages who have previously qualified just for advice, will now have to be supported more extensively, including in some cases to the point of providing short-term accommodation. The challenges we are now having to respond to include:
- Increased demand for support and assistance;
 - Increase in need to place in temporary accommodation;
 - Need for greater levels of suitable (including affordable) permanent accommodation.
- 3.3 The requirement to take applications at an earlier point (within 56 rather than 28 days) has led to an increase in initial approaches.
- 3.4 **Table 1** - Number of initial contacts vs applications made

2016 - 2017			2017 - 2018		2018 - 2019	
	Contacts	Applications	Contacts	Applications	Contacts	Applications
Q1	650	404	655	398	947	353
Q2	702	495	730	449	1007	386
Oct	231	138	248	147	349	121
Nov	202	129	139	116	262	122

- 3.5 This information is available nationally between April 2018-June 2018 with 64,960 homelessness assessments made under the new duties, and 58,660 households were assessed as being owed a statutory homelessness duty in the UK.
- 3.6 In stark contrast in the same period in 2017 Local Housing Authorities made 27,470 homeless assessments of which 14,400 were owed a statutory homelessness duty.
- 3.7 The number of households in temporary accommodation nationally was 82,310, up 5% from 78,540 on 30th June 2017, and up 71% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010.
- 3.8 Wolverhampton has seen an increase of 22% from 89 in 2017 to 109 in the same period in 2018.
- 3.9 These and other implications of the Act are now better understood, however there is a need to urgently monitor other ways of working to ensure that an effective service that provides value is continued to be delivered given the significant demand.

3.10 Along with greater emphasis on partnership working between the Council, Wolverhampton Homes and other organisations, the following systems changes have been put in place:

- All cases are subject to a triage service, either face-to-face in one-stop-shops or using call operatives in Homes Direct specially trained to assist those presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- Other than roofless households, all other cases are prioritised ensuring the most urgent cases are seen most quickly, whilst managing the flow through of non-urgent cases more effectively;
- Service delivery from (mainly two) WH locations plus in the field;
- Recruitment to several key posts within the team using a Transitional Fund was completed in 2018-2019. These posts, in the form of Homeless Prevention Assistants and Visiting Officers, focus on more effective triage and prevention approaches;
- Introduction of new case management processes, including more robust temporary accommodation placement and move-on arrangements;
- A refreshed private sector landlord offer using Transitional Funding (see more below);
- A Prevention Fund available for Officers to use at their discretion (within a framework) to make payments where it will prevent/relieve homelessness;
- Tenancy sustainment support with assistance to maximise income, welfare advice and budgeting advice;
- More robust management of temporary accommodation;
- Supporting the Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy via working as part of the multi-agency team accommodating and supporting rough sleepers;
- Work on the development of increased single homeless persons provision;
- Assistance in the development of specialist primary health service for homeless people;
- Pilot of a Housing First model for rough sleepers, whereby individuals are offered a secure tenancy with wrap around support;
- Sharing good practice at a regional level;
- New Service Level Agreements for the delivery of homelessness services with clear agreed objectives;
- Homelessness Partnerships.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 At the point of transfer of services, a commitment was given not to alter employees' terms and conditions for at least a year, however with an understanding of the HRAct and the potential for the increase in demand there is a need to review and realign the service.

- 4.2 Therefore, the first recommendation is for Cabinet to approve a review of the structure of all teams within the homelessness and housing options service area and temporary accommodation as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.3 The new model will be more flexible and responsive to the needs of the increasingly diverse client group. It will look to capitalise on the strengths of not only Housing Options but other teams within WH.
- 4.4 The proposed structure, attached at Appendix 1, relies on three very distinct, but interrelated teams that are focused on:
- People and compliance with statutory requirements – Homelessness Services Team.
 - People and the provision of accommodation (both temporary and settled across all tenures) – Housing Solutions Team.
 - People and support and safeguarding – Support and Sustainment Team.
- 4.5 To implement the proposed structure, there will be a need for additional funding from the Council via Homelessness Grant Funding. Therefore, the recommendation is to establish a budget in 2019-2020 for the use of available Homelessness Grant Funding of £718,000. Authority to allocate the funding to enable the remodel of the service is delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing and the Director of City Housing.
- 4.6 Alongside the proposed new service model, some of the grant will be utilised by the City Housing department for strengthened monitoring of the delivery of the service, via a monitoring post, as required statutorily.
- 4.7 WH will also utilise a projected underspend of the base budgets of Housing Outreach and Housing Prevention and Assistance. The underspend will be around £280,000 and has occurred due largely to vacant posts not being filled because of the uncertainty around the impact of the new legislation in 2018, and the need to understand the impact before looking to realign services. It is proposed that the costs of any initial additional staffing costs which result from the restructure are met from this underspend.
- 4.8 Whilst continuing to deliver existing initiatives that prevent and relieve homelessness effectively, Wolverhampton Homes are proposing that some of the additional funding be used to commission a full 'value for money' and efficiency review of the service. This review would consider:
- The time and costs associated with the provision of advice, support and assistance to help households dealing with housing and housing related issues particularly in terms of helping them prevent homelessness.
 - Review the contribution of other services (specifically health and social care) within the City in preventing homelessness and alternative service demand.
 - Any additional service contribution Wolverhampton Homes can make in terms of the aims of other services – for example, the acquisition/management of temporary accommodation for children's social care, the management of temporary accommodation used for No Recourse to Public Fund families, hospital discharge, and other health and social care initiatives.

- Issues relating to the provision, acquisition and demand for temporary accommodation generally and consider the recommendations following the options appraisal of all current existing temporary accommodation across the City.

- 4.9 The acquisition and demand for temporary accommodation mentioned above has been heightened with the increase in placements mentioned in paragraph 3.8.
- 4.10 Therefore, the final recommendation is for the approval of use of 10 additional Council properties to be made available for usage as temporary accommodation for homeless households who are statutorily homeless.
- 4.11 These 10 properties will be dispersed across the City and will offer both greater stability to vulnerable homeless families.
- 4.12 Each of the 10 properties used will mean that households will not have to access bed and breakfast which currently costs the council a minimum of £50 a night where utilising of Council stock costs an average of £15.00 a night which is supported by through Housing Benefit.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 5.1 The alternative options available are for the service to be transferred back under the control of the Council, however with the impending review and potential savings available any whole scale transfer would have a negative impact on both Council and WH.
- 5.2 A total operating model review of the Landlord Services has been agreed by Cabinet in January for 2019-2020.

6.0 Reasons for decision

- 6.1 Approval will allow the implementation of a needed restructure to enable the service to meet the requirements of current legislation and the increasing demands for temporary accommodation.

7.0 Financial implications

- 7.1 In May 2018 WH received £365,000 from the Council funded from Homelessness Grant funding to aid the transition from the former homelessness duties to those required by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The additional money has been used to fund several posts to supplement the transferred team and to enhance the offer made to private sector landlords. WH forecast that £200,000 of this funding will have been spent up to 31 March 2018. The balance of the funding will be carried forward by WH to continue to fund these posts.
- 7.2 The Council has been awarded final, third year grant allocations in 2019-2020 of £383,000 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and £143,000 New Burdens Funding. It is forecast that £192,000 will be carried forward from 2018-2019. Therefore, a total budget of £718,000 for 2019-2020 will be established with delegated authority to allocate the grant to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing and the Director of City Housing.
- 7.3 This grant funding can be allocated to Wolverhampton Homes to support the service review when the additional costs have been confirmed and funding carried forward from budget under spends in 2018-2019 have been utilised. Funding after 2019-2020 will be

dependent on future Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government grant allocations.

- 7.4 Some of the additional activities noted in Section 11 are scalable meaning there are existing resources in place to handle an amount of additional work or potential to be realigned to accommodate growth, but there is likely to be further financial impact on service delivery as the effect of Act becomes more apparent. With the Act extending the duty to accommodate more households, the cost of temporary accommodation is likely to rise, particularly in relation to difficult to place complex cases. There is also the potential for additional spending to encourage private sector landlords to work with WH to prevent and relieve homelessness by way of financial incentives.

[JM/19032018/H]

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 The detail of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 are set out elsewhere in this report.
- 8.2 The implementation of the proposals may necessitate changes to the allocation policy. Legal advice and further approvals will be sought as and when necessary.

[DC/22102018/T]

9.0 Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 changes are all led by Central Government and the impact of the changes are national. However, it is suggested that an equalities analysis be carried out in due course when enough data is available.

10.0 Environmental implications

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

11.0 Human resources implications

- 11.1 Wolverhampton Homes will continue to monitor the impact the legislation has on our capacity to deliver services and review staffing as necessary.
- 11.2 The recruitment done so far has been met from the additional funding provided by the Council.
- 11.3 The recruitment of further additional staff and/or the realignment of existing staff will be managed in accordance with WH's normal policies and procedures.

12.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 12.1 The Whitehouse hostel is subject to review by the Council. The decision to retain the property and to continue to use it as temporary accommodation will have impact on the outcome of any proposed service model.

13.0 Health and wellbeing implications

- 13.1 Improved health and wellbeing through a range of services available to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

14.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Service Model Diagram

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Service Model Diagram

The following diagrams outline the three distinct but inter-related teams with specific functions and outcomes.

Diagram 1 – Homelessness Services Team Functions



Intended Outcomes

- Reduction in number of applications due to effective triage
- Reduction in the number of applications at relief/full duty due to effective prevention
- Increase in effective negotiation with key groups eg families and friends/private sector landlords to prevent
- Increase in use of private rented sector to prevent/relieve homelessness
- Improved engagement and outcomes for rough sleepers including access to settled accommodation

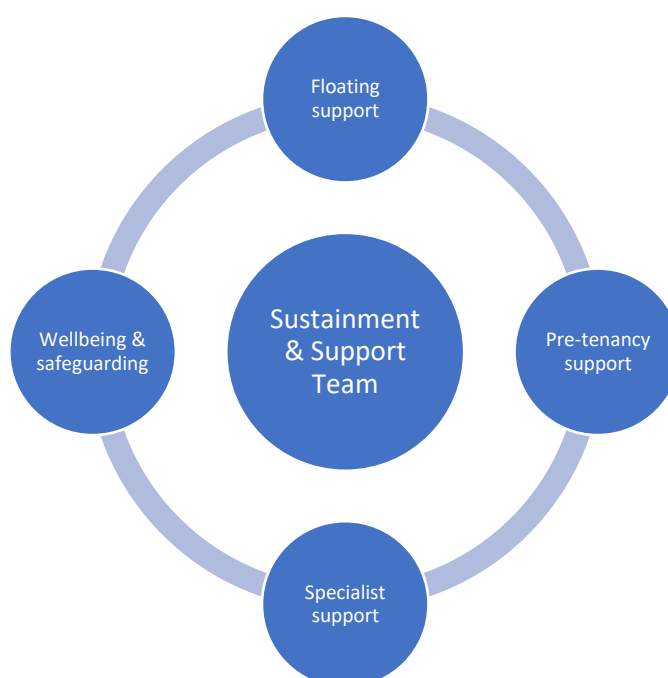
Diagram 2 – Housing Solutions Team



Intended outcomes

- Meeting void turnaround targets and minimise rent loss focus on working increasingly in notice periods
- Increased identification and use of private rented sector property for use as temporary accommodation and settled accommodation (specifically in relation to discharge of duty) by way of dedicated posts working closely with landlords and lettings agents
- Better and more effective placement into temporary accommodation and move-on, with focus on best use of whatever TA is available, value for money in terms of what is used and emphasis on reducing the length of stay in whatever accommodation used
- Efficient and effective use of spend to save initiatives that promote best use of stock
- Better able to track trends in housing demand/market to inform Allocation Policy

Diagram 3 – Sustainment & Support Team



Intended outcomes

- Improved support across all forms of temporary accommodation with aim of being ‘tenancy ready’
- Provision of support in settled accommodation for those most at risk of homelessness
- Creating less dependency/more resilience in households that are dependent on services
- Improvement in tenancy sustainment levels, particularly among key groups (eg young/care leavers, those experiencing domestic abuse, repeat homelessness cases)
- Improvement in relationship with private landlords due to offer of targeted support where homelessness duty discharged into PRS
- Compliance and focus on safeguarding/partnership working to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups
- Consideration to be given to the integration of the Home Improvement Agency – significant links with health agenda including hospital discharge, Better Care Fund, co-location

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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 5 June 2019
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Report title	Implementation of The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations in the Private Rented Sector	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Peter Bilson City Assets and Housing	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Kate Martin, Director of City Housing	
Originating service	Private Sector Housing	
Accountable employee	Ravi Phull Tel Email	Service Manager Private Sector Housing 01902 552812 ravi.phull@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Housing Leadership Team	2 April 2019

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Adopt penalty charges for breaches of the regulations.
2. Approve the penalty charge levels as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.
3. Delegate the authority to enforce the requirements of the Energy Act 2013 section 150 and any Regulations or Orders made thereunder (and specifically the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations) to the Director of City Housing.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note that the Council has a duty to respond to the discovery or suspicion of significant residential hazards under the Housing Act 2004. These regulations introduce a new requirement to serve a remedial notice where smoke or carbon monoxide alarms are absent or defective.

2. Note that the Local Housing Authority must prepare and publish a statement of principles which it proposes to follow in determining the amount of a penalty charge (attached at Appendix 2 to the report).

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To request agreement for the implementation of penalty charges and set a penalty charge level under the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The widespread introduction of smoke alarms from the late 1980s onwards has coincided with a dramatic reduction in deaths and injuries from domestic fires. However, there still remains 10% of homes across all tenures that do not have smoke detection.
- 2.2 In the Private Rented Sector that proportion is almost double at 18% (English Housing Survey 2011). It is not uncommon to find that rented property has no or substandard fire detection when surveyed.
- 2.3 Death from fire is four times more likely in an unprotected home than one fitted with smoke alarms. In addition, there is a substantial cost to society where fires are not detected quickly.
- 2.4 Since the introduction of the Housing Act in 2004 there has been a requirement that dwellings are safe from fire (amongst other hazards) and should have smoke alarms fitted.
- 2.5 Carbon monoxide (CO) is sometimes referred to as the "silent killer". Every year in the UK, over 200 people go to hospital with suspected carbon monoxide poisoning, which leads to around 40 deaths. CO is colourless and has no smell and the symptoms of poisoning are similar to many other illnesses. It is considered to be significantly under reported. It can be produced from incomplete combustion of fossil fuels. More risk is associated with burning of solid fuels.
- 2.6 The Private Rented Sector has doubled in size both nationally and locally in the last ten years. Private renting has now overtaken social renting as the second largest tenure type (behind owner occupation). Demand for all accommodation is strong. Given the restricted number of social rented properties and the cost of home ownership, demand for private rentals has been steadfastly robust.
- 2.7 This is also reflected at the worst end of the market. Whilst there are many good private rented homes in use, the latest English House Condition Survey reports that one third of private rentals fail the decent home standard and one fifth contain a category 1 hazard (significant risk to safety or health).
- 2.8 Some landlords are ignorant of their responsibilities and some choose to ignore them.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations made under the Energy Act 2013 introduce an enforcement regime aimed at reducing the risks from fires and of carbon monoxide poisoning in privately rented properties.

- 3.2 The regulations require a smoke alarm on every habitable floor of a property and a carbon monoxide detector is required in any room that contains a solid fuel appliance eg wood burner or coal fire/stove. They are not required for gas/oil installations.
- 3.3 Landlords (or their agent) are also required to test alarms at the commencement of any new tenancy.
- 3.4 There are some exemptions for certain types of accommodation and certain landlords e.g. Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation, lodgings, student halls, care homes, hostels and social landlords. Normally other specific safety law exists.
- 3.5 Where alarms are missing or defective the housing authority are required to serve a remedial notice which instructs the landlord to install alarms within twenty eight days. If this is not done the Council must get the alarms installed and may issue a penalty charge notice. The maximum permitted charge is £5000.
- 3.6 The Council are required to produce a statement of principles which determines the amount of penalty charge, attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.7 It is proposed that where it is considered that there has been unreasonable non-compliance the first penalty charge should be £2500. If – within 14 days of service of the notice, a first offender makes representations; or notifies the Council that they agree to work with the Council and register themselves and all properties within their portfolio, onto the Rent with Confidence star rating scheme; or pays the penalty charge can be reduced to £1000. Any subsequent failures by the same landlord would be fined at £5000.
- 3.8 The Regulations require that the Council offer an opportunity for review by a named officer. If that review confirms the penalty charge, then there is a further appeal available to the First Tier Tribunal.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 Current legislation for lack of smoke and carbon monoxide detection under the Housing Act 2004 carries fines of up to £30,000 per offence by way of civil penalty or criminal prosecution. These are used by the service and will continue to be used.
- 4.2 The adoption of these regulations will underpin existing powers as the service moves towards a more robust, proactive and targeted approach to criminal landlords in the City.

5.0 Reason for decisions

- 5.1 The adoption of the regulations will complete the full suite available to local authorities for dealing with non-compliant landlords.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no significant financial implications arising, as the cost of enforcing these regulations will be absorbed into the existing service.

6.2 It is not anticipated that this course of action will generate any substantial income to the Council as there is a 28 day compliance period. It is anticipated that the threat of a penalty charge will motivate most to comply at first opportunity.

6.3 Any income generated will be returned to the PSH budget to support the enforcement effort.

[JM/07022019/H]

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 The Regulations require the Council publish a statement of principles including the penalty charge fee and to serve a remedial notice where smoke or CO alarms are not present or defective.

7.2 The Regulations are made under Section 150 of Energy Act 2013 and delegated authority will be required based on the Council's constitution.

7.3 Regulation 5, titled "Duty of local housing authority to serve a remedial notice" makes it clear the Council has no discretion in this process and that the threshold is very low, a remedial notice must be served if alarms are not present and initial checks have not been done:

"Reg 5(1) Where a local housing authority has reasonable grounds to believe that, in relation to premises situated within its area, a relevant landlord is in breach of one or more of the duties under regulation 4(1) [ie the premises must have a smoke alarm on all storeys used for residential purposes and a carbon monoxide alarm is present in all rooms with a solid fuel burning combustion appliance and they must be checked on the start of any new tenancy], the authority must serve a remedial notice on the landlord."

7.4 In the same way, the landlord has a duty to comply to the said notice within 28 days of service, under regulation 6.

7.5 Again, the Local Housing Authority has a duty to arrange for remedial action under regulation 7, if the landlord has not complied with the remedial notice within 28 days of service, with consent of the occupiers; works have to have been completed within 28 days of the LHA being satisfied that the landlord is in breach of the notice;

7.6 In addition to remedial works, the Local Housing Authority can however also impose a penalty charge under regulation 8 ; this penalty charge can be up to £5,000 and the Local Housing Authority needs to set its level;

7.7 If the Local Housing Authority decides to go down the route of a Penalty Charge, it must serve a Penalty Charge Notice on the landlord within 6 weeks of being satisfied the landlord is in breach of the remedial notice;

7.8 Adopting this process will therefore require sleek processes in order not to miss deadlines, which would leave the Council open to challenge;

- 7.9 Regulation 9(2) provides for a possible reduction in the amount of the penalty charge if payment is made within 14 days of service or if written notice is provided by the recipient of the notice to the Local Housing Authority that they want the matter to be reviewed, notice again to be provided within 14 days;
- 7.10 An appeal of the review decision, to the First Tier Tribunal, is provided under regulation 11, preserving the independence of the final decision;
- 7.11 Recovery of unpaid penalty charges is dealt with under regulation 12, and is treated as a civil debt rather than a prosecution;
- 7.12 Once the legislation has been adopted, if penalty charges are also adopted, the Local Housing Authority must prepare and publish a statement of principles which it will follow to determine the amount of a penalty charge, which is attached at appendix 2;
- 7.13 Cabinet is therefore required to adopt the legislation, decide whether to adopt the use of penalty notices, if so set the level of the penalty charge, decide whether and when a discount is to be provided and set the amount of this discount.
- 7.14 Cabinet is also required to agree (then publish) a statement of principle, a draft of which is attached at appendix 2.

[LW/270219/N]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

9.0 Environmental implications

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

10.0 Human resources implications

- 10.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report as the enforcement of these Regulations will be incorporated within the resources used to enforce breaches of the Housing Act 2004.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 11.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

- 12.1 The provision of decent homes, which are free from hazards such as carbon monoxide poisoning and fire; are directly linked with the health and well being of occupants. The successful implementation of these regulations will improve people's living conditions in the private sector; where people are sometimes exposed to some of the most unhealthy and dangerous conditions. This will in turn improve mental health and well-being.

13.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - [The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm \(England\) Regulations](#)

Appendix 2 - City of Wolverhampton Council Statement of Principles February 2019

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The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 City of Wolverhampton Council Statement of Principles April 2019

Introduction

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 introduced the following requirements for all landlords from 1 October 2015 when the premises are occupied:

- (i) A working smoke alarm on each storey of the premises on which there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation.
- (ii) A carbon monoxide detector in any room of the premises which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance.
- (iii) Checks are made by or on behalf of the landlord to ensure that each prescribed alarm is in proper working order on the day the tenancy begins.

Enforcement

Where the Local Housing Authority has reasonable ground to believe that:

1. There are no or insufficient number of working smoke alarms or carbon monoxide detectors in the property as required by the regulations or
2. The smoke alarms or carbon monoxide detectors were not present or working at the start of the tenancy or licence.

Then the local housing authority shall serve on the landlord a remedial notice detailing the actions the landlord must take to comply.

If after 28 days the landlord has not complied with the remedial notice a penalty charge notice may be issued.

Penalty Charges

The regulations allow for a charge of up to £5000. This is a considerable sum. Most rented properties are owned by landlords who have one or two properties and incurring full charge might threaten the sustainability of the rental offer. However, this must be balanced against the potentially tragic consequences of lack of detection. The regulations have been enacted to bring the last stubborn tranche of rented properties up to modern safety standards and a persuasive upper penalty allowed. The remedial costs of compliance are tiny compared to the personal and economic costs of death or injury.

Given the above where it is considered that a landlord has unreasonably failed to comply with the requirements of a remedial notice then the Council will arrange for the alarms to be fitted and a penalty charge notice issued.

The charge will be £2500 for a first time failure discounted to £1000 if the landlord co-operates, registers with the Rent with Confidence scheme and provides details of all properties owned within the Wolverhampton City Council area and assists in

arranging for inspection by our officers. The charge will be £5000 for any subsequent failure by the same landlord or business organisation at any premises. Once the penalty charge notice has been issued there will be a review available by a named officer for 28 days. There is a further review available to the First-tier Tribunal.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 5 June 2019
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Report title	Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2018-2019		
Decision designation	AMBER		
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds, Children and Young People Councillor Linda Leach, Adults		
Key decision	No		
In forward plan	Yes		
Wards affected	All Wards		
Accountable Director	David Watts, Director of Adult Services Emma Bennet, Director of Children's Services		
Originating service	Adult Social Care/Children and Young People		
Accountable employee	Louise Haughton	Principal Social Worker	
	Tel	01902 555534	
	Email	louise.haughton@wolverhampton.gov.uk	
Report to be/has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team	16 May 2019	
	Strategic Executive Board	21 May 2019	

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

Approve the main priorities for the Principal Social Worker identified for 2019-2020.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a progress report on the work of the Principal Social Worker to promote and improve the quality of social work practice and outline priority areas of work to be undertaken in 2019-2020.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Designated Principal Social Workers (PSW) were first proposed by Professor Eileen Munro in her review of child protection in 2011, which identified the importance of better communication and understanding between social workers and senior management. Munro stated that Principal Social Workers should:
- Create a clear line of communication between frontline staff and senior management
 - Champion best practice
 - Encourage a “reflective approach” to social work
 - Help to reduce bureaucracy and the amount of time spent on process-driven activities
 - Support social workers to use their core skills and interventions which make a real difference to people.
- 2.2 Following this, the College of Social Work championed the extension of the role to include adult social work. As with the Children’s PSW, the role of the PSW for adults also takes a professional lead across the organisation.
- 2.3 The Care and Support Statutory Guidance update May 2016 provided further clarification around the role of the PSW for Adults. The Guidance states that the PSW should be visible across the organisation, from elected members and senior management, through to frontline social workers, people who use services and carers. PSW’s should also have a broad knowledge base on safeguarding and Making Safeguarding Personal. It also states that Local Authorities should make arrangements to have a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead in place to:
- Lead and oversee excellent social work practice
 - Support and develop arrangements for excellent practice
 - Lead the development of excellent social workers
 - Support effective social work supervision and decision making
 - Oversee quality assurance and improvement of social work practice
 - Advise the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and/or wider Council in complex or controversial cases and on cases or other law relating to social work practice
 - Function at the strategic level of the “Professional Capabilities Framework”
- 2.4 The PSW for both Adults and Children and Young People was appointed in March 2016.

- 2.5 The decision to appoint one PSW for Adult's and Children's Services was informed by a commitment to promote and embed a whole family approach in Wolverhampton. A key function of the PSW role is to promote a "think whole family approach" that will enable better working together across services, inspire greater aspirations for children, families and adult's with additional needs as well as ensuring the concept of wellbeing features in all work undertaken by Social Care.
- 2.6 The PSW reports directly to a Director as per best practice guidance. The work of the PSW is overseen and prioritised by the Social Work Development Board supported by a wider Workforce Development Board for Children and Young People and for Adults that also informs the work of the PSW.
- 2.7 A degree of independence is required of the role in order to provide challenge within the organisation. Effectiveness is then supported by having a direct line of access to the Director of Adult Services and the Director of Children's Services.
- 2.8 The regional and national networks of PSWs also provide information to the Chief Social Workers for adults and children and regular consultations are held in respect of issues such as social worker health checks, knowledge and skill statements, accreditation, legislation, practice and learning developments.
- 2.9 In accordance with best practice an annual report is prepared and formally presented within the Council's governance arrangements.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The PSW for Adults and Children in Wolverhampton has a key responsibility for Policies and Procedures and the Quality Assurance and Improvement team. The function of this unit is to implement and further develop the Quality Assurance Frameworks for Adult Social Care and Children and Young People, to support inspections and peer review work and support the sector led improvement programmes.
- 3.2 Highlights of the work undertaken by the PSW since April 2018 is outlined below:

Generic Work

- 3.3 This year issues around how children and adults with additional needs who might be at risk of gang related exploitation, trafficking, female genital mutilation and forced marriage are safeguarded have risen on the national agenda. These are all issues that often cut across generations and affect both children and adults. The fourth Annual Children and Adult's Social Work Conference took place in March 2019 with a theme of Human Rights and Exploitation. Adults and Children's social workers came together to increase their knowledge and improve their practice in relation to working with people affected by gang related activity, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation and people affected by drug and substance misuse.

- 3.4 Social workers heard a powerful keynote speech by Jasvinder Sanghera CBE, a survivor of forced marriage and the founder of Karma Nirvana, the award-winning charity that supports both men and women affected by honour-based abuse and forced marriage.
- 3.5 Chris Fox from West Midlands Police then spoke about County Lines and the crime of cuckooing, where drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to use it as a base for drug dealing, before a series of workshops focused on child sexual exploitation, gangs and youth violence, substance misuse and modern slavery.
- 3.6 There was also the opportunity for social workers to share individual success stories about the work of the council's Children and Young People's (CYP) and Adult Social Care (ASC) services.
- 3.7 Many social workers stated in feedback that this was the best conference they had attended, they felt their knowledge around these issues had risen significantly, they found it helpful to hear more detail about the work undertaken by partner agencies in the City and felt inspired to continue their work in what can be a challenging profession.
- 3.8 The PSW arranges quarterly children's social work briefings and bi-annual adult's social work briefings that provide critical space for social workers to share their views with senior leaders and ensure important information is shared face to face with frontline social workers. The sessions also have a learning and development focus often chosen by social workers themselves. These have proved to be highly successful with social workers reporting that they are able to apply their learning to practice and generally state in feedback that everything presented is of use to their practice.
- 3.9 Nationally, children's social work is facing workforce challenges due to a range of pressures. Child and family social work is challenged by high turnover and vacancy rates and a heavy reliance on agency staff. The demand for permanent, experienced workers significantly outstrips supply (children's social work is on the national occupational shortage list).
- 3.10 A key function of the PSW role is to support the training of new social workers. There are now many routes into social work and it is important that the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) takes a mixed economy approach to supporting the training of social workers in order to not only meet its own sufficiency needs but also contribute to the needs of the region. Developments that have taken place this year will mean that over the next two years the CWC will support the training of approximately 36 social workers per year. This is above the Council's usual annual turnover and therefore will make a contribution to the regional shortage of qualified social workers.
- 3.11 There are now five main workstreams that contributed to this; the West Midlands Teaching Partnership, Step up to Social Work, Frontline and Degree social work Apprenticeships.

- 3.12 The West Midlands Teaching Partnership is in its first year of delivery following a strong recommendation from the Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health and Social Care (DoH) that the region should have just one Teaching Partnership. The partnership is the largest in the country and is made up of 16 local authorities and trusts (this includes Cheshire East who were part of a previous teaching partnership in the north of the region) and nine Higher Education Institutes.
- 3.13 Social Work Teaching Partnerships (SWTPs) are a government funded initiative designed to: enhance partnership arrangements between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and employers; attract more able students; embed the knowledge and skills (post qualifying standards) into academic curricula and continuing professional development (CPD) for existing workers; and overall raise the quality of social work practice. CWC offers approximately 18 placements each year to students completing traditional undergraduate and post graduate degrees.
- 3.14 The Principal Social Worker sits on the strategic board for the partnership and ensures the Council is represented in all three workstreams.
- 3.15 Step up to Social Work and Frontline are post graduate fast track social work programmes for people interested in the profession who have a 2.1 Honours Degree or above. Step up to Social Work is co-ordinated regionally and is delivered in partnership with the University of Birmingham. It is a 14-month condensed course. This year CWC has joined the partnership and will provide placements for four students.
- 3.16 Frontline is a fast-track training scheme for social workers in child protection, which aims to attract outstanding graduates who may not previously have considered a career in social work. Participants complete most of their theoretical training whilst in social work placements, this allows them to transfer their learning into practice immediately. Participants are supported by a dedicated consultant social worker and a tutor who delivers theoretical training within the work place. The PSW has worked collaboratively with Frontline to establish two Frontline units each having four participants, one consultant social worker and one deputy consultant social worker. As a result, CWC will have supported the training of eight social workers through this programme.
- 3.17 The new level six Degree Apprenticeship Social Work Standards were agreed in December 2018. This new award provides an exciting opportunity for existing social care employees to undertake a social work degree whilst remaining in full time employment. Two universities within the region made plans to deliver the programme, The University of Warwick was the first to go live and it is expected the University of Wolverhampton will begin delivery of the programme in September 2019. CWC agreed to offer six placements to social care workers from both Adult's and Children's Social Care. Three places on the Warwick programme which began March 2019 and three on the Wolverhampton programme due to start September 2019.

- 3.18 The Social Work Health Check completed in June 2018 identified a number of key themes:
- The survey had a response rate of 48% in CYP services and 67% in Adult Social Care (ASC).
 - In the Adults Health Check workforce development was rated highly and most people felt that there were good opportunities for continuous professional development within the City.
 - Social work is a notoriously demanding profession and this also came through in both the Adult's and Children's survey with a high proportion of staff reporting some level of stress although the number of people feeling stressed had decreased in adult social care.
 - Social workers generally felt well supported by their line manager.
 - The number of people who felt proud to work for CWC had increased on previous years.
 - The Children and Young People's Service had experienced unusually high employee turnover at the time of the report and therefore saw a decrease in satisfaction across a few areas including workforce development and workload management.
- 3.19 Action plans were developed for both CYP and ASC with most actions now being completed. Senior Managers have increased their visibility and provided more opportunities for social workers to share their views about services. Turnover in the CYP Service has returned to normal levels and is now in line with national averages.
- 3.20 The Principal Social Workers team now lead on the publication of monthly Adults Social Care and Children and Young People Updates. These are short articles that celebrate good practice and stories of success, provide information about up-coming training and share a message from the respective Directors of Children's and Adult's Services. Employees have reported that they enjoy receiving the update and find the information useful.
- 3.21 The regional and national networks of Principal Child and Family Social Workers also provide information to the Chief Social Workers for children and adults. There are regular consultations with the network in respect of issues such as social worker health checks, workload, employer standards, practice and learning developments and policy developments.

Adults

- 3.22 A key piece of work undertaken by the PSW with the support of the workforce development team was the procurement of coaching in a strength based model (Three Conversations) that will help to transform culture and enable frontline practitioners to undertake good quality social care practice and support people to achieve good outcomes.
- 3.23 The Three Conversations approach is a new way of working that replaces the default 'contact, divert, triage, reablement, assessment for services' process with a dynamic strength-based approach to listening to people, aimed at supporting independent lives, and reducing the need for dependence on formal services. It supports frontline employees to have three distinct and specific conversations. These conversations focus on helping people live what they feel is a good life, by utilising their own resource, resources within their local community and receiving formal support when required.
- 3.24 Three Conversations was rolled out in the City of Wolverhampton Council in May 2018 with the creation of three innovations sites in ASC, two in the East locality and one in the Mental Health team. A further site was created in July 2018 to specifically work with people on waiting lists in the West and North localities.
- 3.25 The evaluation of this first phase concluded that the new way of working had resulted in improved outcomes for people and families and had a positive impact on employee job satisfaction whilst also increasing their productiveness. The views of some people who had accessed support under three conversations were sought as part of the evaluation. Overwhelmingly people reported that they received a timely response, felt informed and found the approach of the employee to be supportive and helpful.
- 3.26 One of the greatest success of the model was the reduction of waiting lists within Three Conversation sites. This has led to a timelier response to needs and as a result it appears that more families are able to avoid crisis situations which may, for example have resulted in the premature admittance of loved ones into residential care homes.
- 3.27 A second phase of innovation began in November which embedded the learning from phase one as well as exploring opportunities that could increase collaborative working between internal services. The phase two evaluation has confirmed that by placing a range of services in the same building, CWC can ensure people receive the right level of support at the right time and support employees to work together in a much more creative way. For example, the integration of community workers within teams has supported employees to connect more people with additional needs to clubs and groups within their communities. It is known that building friendships within communities can reduce social isolation and increase fulfilment and overall wellbeing.
- 3.28 It is anticipated that all locality teams will be operating in this way by the end of summer 2019.

- 3.29 An audit process for adult social care has been embedded as part of the People Quality Assurance Framework. The quality assurance framework also includes observation of practice and brings together the critical reflections of frontline practitioners to help promote a learning culture. 129 file audits carried out in 2018-2019 and a further 51 files were dip sampled as part of Three Conversations work. This means that 5% of files for people who receive a service from adult social care in Wolverhampton have had some form of qualitative audit in 2018-2019.
- 3.30 Many pieces of development work have taken place as a direct result of information gathered through audits. These include: undertaking good reviews, Mental Capacity Act assessment forms have been re-designed to support more proportionate and focused assessments, recording with care training has been provided and employees have increased their awareness of local services and community resources.
- 3.31 This information is reported to the Transformation of Adult Social Care Board quarterly ensuring senior managers have oversight of the quality of frontline practice and are able to use this information to inform improvement actions. CWC has implemented a robust quality assurance framework that is not common place in adult social care.
- 3.32 As part of the development of Three Conversations model the relationship between performance and quality assurance has been strengthened. Performance information is more visible and accessible for frontline managers and practitioners. This enables managers to identify areas of poorer performance quickly, undertake quality assurance activity to better understand any issues and then implement development actions with team members to improve performance. Improvements can then be monitored weekly using the live performance information that is available.

Children and Young People

- 3.33 Restorative Practice was selected as the overarching practice framework for the Children and Young People's Service and implementation began in November 2016. It is a strengths-based approach that is fundamentally about building, maintaining and repairing relationships. It supports a strong relational way to delivering services, working with children and families, identifying strengths but also having the sound relationship for challenge; enabling a 'high support/high challenge' approach to work with children and families to affect necessary change. Whilst this approach is not new to most qualified social workers it is powerful to have a unified way of working and a developing shared language amongst colleagues.
- 3.34 Two independent reviews have confirmed that the approach is well understood by employees and most areas are beginning to embed the approach. Areas that have experienced higher staff turnover have however, struggled to show consistent evidence of embedding the approach. This is to be expected and as teams continue to stabilise it is anticipated that the restorative approach will be further established within teams. Restorative approaches are well integrated within the CYP induction programme and frequently discussed at social work briefings and service wide management meetings.

- 3.35 The PSW has convened a multi-agency restorative steering group. The wider partnership has now committed to training all frontline practitioners within the City in the restorative approach. This is an exciting development as it will allow practitioners from a range of disciplines to develop a shared language and approach to the way in which CWC works with Children and Families across the City. Over 250 practitioners participated in a multi-agency launch event in October 2018. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and all agencies have nominated staff to become train the trainers in the approach.
- 3.36 Ofsted highlighted five areas of practice that required further improvement during their Focused Visit in September 2018. These related to the quality of assessment and planning, supervision, reducing caseloads and compliance in relation to quality assurance/audit. The Principal Social Worker has led a variety of work designed to improve these areas of practice;
- A new supervision tool has been designed which incorporates Restorative Practice into supervision.
 - New assessment, analysis and planning training has been procured and learning will be embedded through reflective practice sessions in teams.
 - The audit process has been overhauled with the introduction of Practice Weeks (see below).
- 3.37 Practice Weeks are an innovative approach to audit and quality assurance that can ensure senior managers know what practice looks like and have regular contact with frontline practitioners. They were introduced in CWC in November 2018 following a smaller scale pilot in September 2018. During Practice Weeks the Director of Children's services along with all Heads of Service, The PSW and Service Managers spend four days undertaking audits alongside practitioners, observing practice and sitting in teams. The advantages of this approach include being able to see practice rather than just read about it, being able to see and feel how teams are functioning and being able to offer social workers immediate feedback on their practice. Practice Weeks have been received well and employees report enjoying the immediate feedback and opportunity to talk about their work with senior managers.
- 3.38 Practice Weeks have enabled the senior management team to be assured around thresholds and management of risk whilst highlighting areas for improved practice like consistent use of direct work tools and activities with children and young people, and better engagement with fathers where issues of domestic violence are present. Action plans are developed following each practice week and improvements are monitored in subsequent audits.
- 3.39 The PSW has continued to provide leadership, mentoring and coaching to six full time equivalent advanced practitioners appointed in the CYP Service. Meetings have taken place fortnightly to monitor progression of action plans, share learning and good practice

and develop a shared understanding of what good social work practice looks like. Advanced practitioners are then able to model a consistent approach within teams.

- 3.40 Advanced practitioners have provided practical support to newly qualified social workers by attending complex meetings with them, modelling good practice and helping them write good assessment and plans. Advanced practitioners also run fortnightly drops in's, where support on a range of topics is available including pre-birth assessments, managing risk, sibling assessments and planning for permanence. Advanced practitioners have also delivered training on key themes linked to our improvement plan and strategic aims like understanding private and regulated family and friend's placements and annual workshops designed to build practitioner confidence at facilitating family meetings. This a key tool to help us embed restorative practice and help practitioners engage and work with families.
- 3.41 Ofsted noted that where assessments had been recently updated with the support of advanced practitioners, they were of good quality, there were clear insights into the lived experience of children, strengths and areas of concern were identified, they involved parents and used the local authority's restorative practice approach. These assessments were also informed by powerful use of direct work and very strong evidence from children about relationships and their emotional status.
- 3.42 FutureSocial is a regional DfE funded programme that has been created to develop an alternative delivery approach that transforms recruitment, retention, workforce development, quality and cost to create an autonomous, flexible, skilled and supported children's social care workforce within the region. The post holder has represented the regional Principal Social Work Network on the project group and contributed to all work undertaken by the team, most significantly the development of the detailed delivery plan.
- 3.43 Locally the recruitment and retention of social workers has been another key priority. The postholder leads a recruitment and retention group that incorporates Organisational Development, Human Resources and Communications. The group delivers a local recruitment and retention plan that is overseen by the Social Work Development Board.
- 3.44 The recruitment process has been strengthened and now includes a pre-interview assessment of candidate's abilities to work with children and young people, and the candidate's assessment and report writing skills. This helps to ensure that candidates employed by the CWC have sufficient skills and potential to become excellent social work practitioners.
- 3.45 The PSW has worked closely with the Director of Children's Services and Heads of Service to deliver a range of actions designed to support the retention of social workers. This has included creating opportunities for greater visibility of senior managers, improved comms around what is working well in the service and a restructure that has strengthened the role of the team manager and created more opportunities for progression. Turnover has halved in the period between November- March 2019 when compared with June - October 2018.

4.0 Priorities for work plan 2019-2020

Workforce Development

- 4.1 A particular role that will be undertaken by the PSW is to continue to ensure that the Children and Adult's Social Work Development plan incorporates a good development offer for social workers. It is imperative that social workers are highly skilled as it is known that good social work intervention can reduce the risk of children needing to be received into care and can enable adults with additional needs to remain or become as independent as possible. These are outcomes that are desirable for the children, families and adults who are in receipt of social care services. They also ensure that Council resources are being used appropriately and effectively.
- 4.2 The post holder will be responsible for the local delivery of the National Assessment and Accreditation Process (NAAS). The Children and Social Work Act 2017 gave the Education Secretary powers to set and assess practitioners against improvement standards. The NAAS is the primary programme linked to this section of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It involves the assessment of social workers against a set of standards set out in the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Children and Family Practitioners and The Knowledge and Skills Statement for Practice Supervisors and Practice Leaders (these are now known as the post qualifying standards). The assessments will take place at a local assessment centre and the test include three elements;
- Employee endorsement – the employer's assessment of the social worker or practice supervisor's skills.
 - A digital assessment based on the [child and family practitioner knowledge and skills statement](#) produced by the Chief Social Worker for Children.
 - A simulated practice observation using role play scenarios with actors. This will include a written assessment component.
- 4.3 The DfE met with the Directors of Children's Services within the region in November 2018 and asked directors to give consideration partnering with them to deliver the NAAS within the West Midlands region. There is a consensus amongst directors within the region that the NAAS could help to deliver improvements to the frontline practice of social workers. It is felt that taking a regional approach to the preparation of social workers will deliver an opportunity to increase consistency of practice across all Councils. The delivery of NAAS also aligns with the ambitions of FutureSocial
- 4.4 Implementing the Three Conversations model across ASC continues to be a significant priority for the service area. It must deliver the cultural change around strength based and relational practice resulting in improved customer experience. The post holder is the senior reporting officer for the project and will work closely with the project team and frontline practitioners to ensure the outcomes of the project are achieved.

- 4.5 The post holder will continue to play a key role in the embedding of restorative approaches within the CYP Service and across the children's partnership. All practitioners in ASC will also receive training in restorative approaches in order to further equip employees with strength-based skills that will compliment the Three Conversations model.
- 4.6 Working with regional partners to deliver the FutureSocial agenda will also continue to be a significant priority for the PSW. There are 14 councils within the region and most of them are in close proximity to one another. The workforce therefore naturally moves between councils for career progression opportunities or to experience different ways of working. It is therefore crucial that the region grasp this opportunity to take a regional approach to workforce planning for the future.
- 4.7 The PSW will continue to provide leadership, mentoring and coaching to the six (FTE) advanced social work practitioners to be appointed in the CYP Service. The focus of this work will be to support the ongoing transformation of children's services through the ongoing improvement of frontline social work practice. Advanced practitioners will assist with the establishment of consistently "Good" and "Outstanding" practice across CYP services.
- 4.8 The new Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) is now awaiting royal assent and will replace the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Legislation (DOLS). Implementation of the LPS's will require a whole workforce approach that will include a training update for those currently qualified to undertake DOLS work and a plan to ensure more social workers receive training in order to be able to undertake LPS assessments.

Recruitment and Retention

- 4.9 The post holder will continue to take a lead responsibility along with Human Resources and Workforce Development for the implementation of the recruitment and retention plan. This will include setting up a social work education steering group. The steering group will provide strategic governance for the five workstreams, provide strategic challenge and support to ensure social work education within the Council is of a good quality and ensure all work is effectively co-ordinated and aligned. As a result of this more highly skilled and knowledgeable social workers will be trained in order to help meet the local and regional demand for good quality social workers.

Social Work Voice at Strategic Level

- 4.10 Undertaking and analysing the annual Social Work Health Check is key to improving social work recruitment and retention. The Quality and Improvement team will continue to support a greater level of engagement with social workers about the findings and associated actions in order to ensure social workers know their feedback is welcomed and taken seriously by senior managers.

- 4.11 The post holder will continue to support a range of engagement activities between the Directors of Adult and Children's Services and the workforce by hosting social work briefings, facilitating face to face inductions, facilitating the Adults Social Care and Children and Young Peoples Update and arranging employee engagement sessions as and when required.
- 4.12 Attendance will continue by the PSW at the Children and Young People's and the Adults management team meetings on at least a monthly basis ensures operational engagement and oversight.

Local, Regional and National leadership

- 4.13 The PSW attends quarterly national principal social work network days facilitated by the Association of Directors of Children's Services. These meetings are learning and development opportunities. It provides opportunity for the national Chief Social Workers for adults and children to share the direction of travel, answer questions and receive feedback from PSW's. These events also provide opportunity for the sharing of good practice. Notes are shared with the appropriate leadership team following attendance at these events.
- 4.14 The PSW also attends regional network meetings on a bi-monthly basis. This allows regional work to take place as directed by the regional West Midlands Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Association of Directors of Adults Services.
- 4.15 The post holder also sits on the strategic board for the Regional Teaching Partnership and the project team for FutureSocial.
- 4.16 The PSW was successful in gaining a place on the Practice Leaders Development Programme. The programme is funded by the DfE and is a unique opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge needed within a practice leader role within children's social care. It focusses on the challenging nature of this role and offers support and assistance through a network of development coaches and colleagues within children's social care. As such the PSW is now invited to contribute to discussions about national policy with the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families and participate in ongoing development opportunities provided through the Programme.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 5.1 This is an annual report produced in line with good practice as agreed by Cabinet at the time the role was created. As such no other options have been considered.

6.0 Reasons for decision

- 6.1 The role of the PSW contributes to a number of key priorities across CYP and ASC Services. The post holder is the senior reporting officer leading the culture change programmes in ASC and CYP Services. Restorative Practice in CYP and Three Conversations in ASC are approaches and models that enable social workers to build professional relationships with people who need services that help and promote a

strength based approach to their practice. These approaches will enable the workforce to strengthen families where children are at risk, promote the independence of older people and people with disabilities as well safeguarding people in vulnerable situations.

- 6.2 The PSW provides dedicated resource to the recruitment and retention strategy which in turn helps the Council reduce expenditure on agency staff. The role is also responsible for raising the profile of social work in the City which also contributes to making the City of Wolverhampton a social work employer of choice.
- 6.3 The role also provides the professional knowledge required to drive local and regional workforce development plan that will help develop good and outstanding

7.0 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report. Any costs arising from the actions in the workplan and priorities set by the PSW will be met from existing budgets.
- 7.2 Good social work reduces demand and costs. Relationship based social work is anticipated to reduce demand and whilst difficult to quantify could lead to potential efficiencies. The work currently being undertaken in the three ASC innovation sites may provide evidence of indicative financial efficiencies if the new ways of working was rolled out across the whole of the service.

[AJ/14052019/M]

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

[TC/17052019/P]

9.0 Equalities implications

- 9.1 The role of the Principal Social Work is a key one in our leadership arrangements to continually improve the quality of our social work practice. Social workers provide support to the whole community including the full range of diverse groups. Excellent quality social work practice will be more attuned to the equality issues experienced by individuals, families and communities. High quality social work will more competently deploy required skill in the practice situation. This annual report shows some of the ways being used to strengthen this aspect of social work practice e.g. updating and widening the influence of the social work Quality Assurance Framework.

10.0 Environmental implications

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

11.0 Human resources implications

- 11.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report. However, it is noted that close collaborative working has taken place over the last year on the implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy and action plan. This includes back office support and attendance at Social Worker interviews and recruitment campaigns.

12.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 12.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

13.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

- 13.1 Good social work practice will support the health and wellbeing of children, young people and adults who access services.

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