

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

15 October 2019

Report title	Transforming Children's Services Programme		
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds Children & Young People		
Wards affected	All		
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services		
Originating service	Children's		
Accountable employee(s)	Andrew Wolverson	Head of Service, People	
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Report to be/has been considered by			

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Consider the questions set out in paragraph seven of this report.

Recommendations for noting:

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to note:

1. The success of the Transforming Children's Services programme to date.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the projects within the Transforming Children's Service programme and their impact to date on achieving the overall aim of keeping children and young people safely at home.

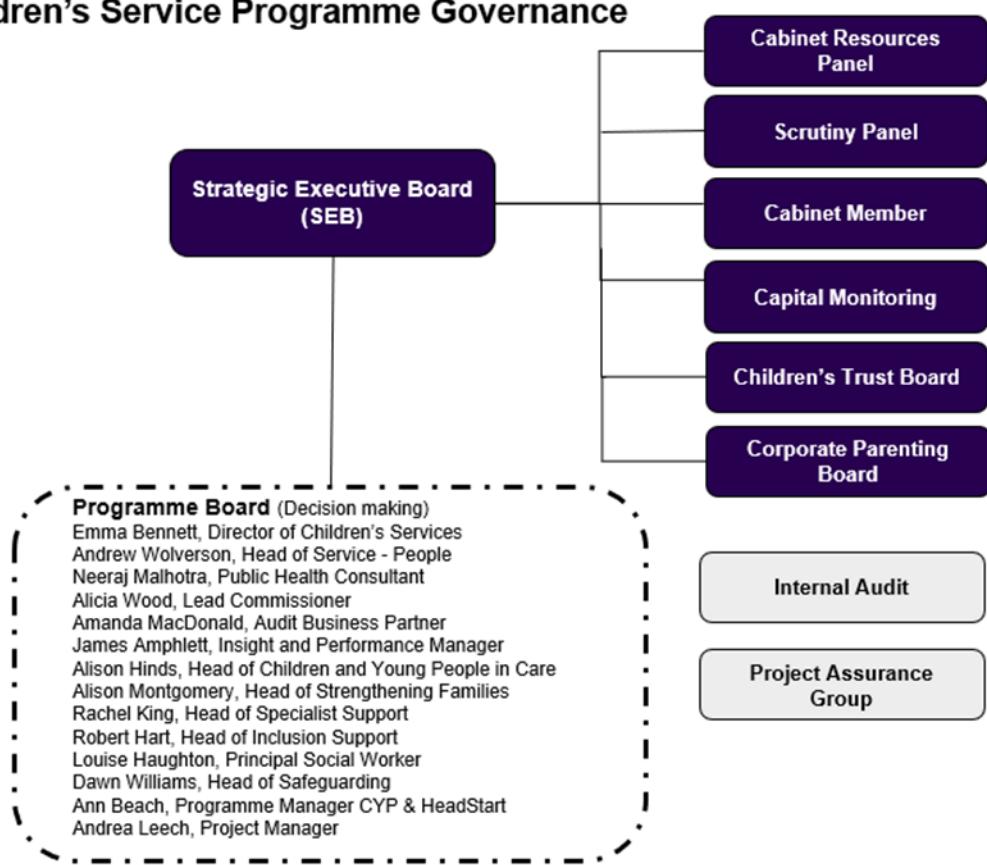
2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Transforming Children's Services programme commenced in 2015 in response to the need to reduce the high number of children and young people in care.
- 2.2 A number of projects and programmes have taken place and currently exist all with the aim of transforming how Children's Services deliver services to ensure maximum impact and improved outcomes for children and families. This is being achieved through key elements of delivery including:
- Re-design of services
 - Improving quality and practice
 - Innovation in service delivery

3.0 Governance

- 3.1 The programme board meets six times per year and has responsibility for the governance of all projects and programmes within Children's Services. Specifically, the board is responsible for:
- Delivery of the programme and the outcomes
 - Defining acceptable risk profiles and thresholds for the programme
 - Ensuring the programme delivers within agreed parameters (e.g. cost, time, quality, organisational impact, expected/actual benefits etc.)
 - Resolving strategic and directional issues between programmes which may impact the progress
 - Ensuring integrity of the benefits and their realisation
 - Providing assurance for operational stability and effectiveness through the programme delivery cycle
 - Signing off all programme products, documents and reports
- 3.2 Chaired by the Director of Children's Services and supported by the Head of People as Programme Executive, the board reports into several external groups and have internal scrutiny provided by internal audit and project assurance group as set out in the diagram below.

Transforming Children's Service Programme Governance



4.0 Impact of the Transformation Programme

- 4.1 The programme, has to date, secured a number of significant achievements and impact. 2016 saw the complete re-design of early intervention services and the creation of eight Strengthening Families hubs. The Specialist Support service was also created which brought together a number of teams to provide intensive support to families on the edge of care. Together the two services have demonstrated impact on the keeping children safely at home.
- 4.2 Another successful project that is now business as usual is the Frontline social work recruitment scheme. This has enabled recruitment of individuals with a degree from a range of backgrounds and retention as social worker. This has opened up a market for recruitment that did not previously exist and allowed people who may not have chosen social work as their first career to enter the profession. This has supported the improved recruitment and retention position that Wolverhampton now finds itself in.
- 4.3 Restorative Practice, again now business as usual, was another project that has supported a culture change across Children's Services that not only challenged how we worked with families but also with each other. The success of this project has been recognised and is now being rolled out across the council and its partners.
- 4.4 The cumulative success of the transformation programme was recognised in 2016 when OfSTED rated Children's Services in Wolverhampton as GOOD. This was a significant

achievement and one that no other authority in the West Midlands, other than Staffordshire, had managed to achieve. This was underpinned by the reducing numbers of children and young people in care, the strong and effective leadership of the senior management team and a stronger early intervention offer.

- 4.5 This strong performance continues to see success with Wolverhampton one of only two authorities in the West Midlands that continue to report a reduction in both child protection and children looked after numbers. This is underpinned by reductions in referrals and Section 47 enquiries and child in need numbers which now see Wolverhampton in line with regional and national average.

5.0 Projects overview

Title	Type	Programme/Project End Date	Efficiency Expectation
Family Values	Project	March 2020	If children are placed locally there will be reduced travelling time and costs for social workers.
Objectives			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To monitor the number of additional foster carers recruited and transfers from high cost placements to internal fostering placements. It also focusses on new children entering the care system to ensure that they are placed within the internal fostering service instead of a high cost placement. Realisation of the cashable benefit will be evidenced by an increase in the number of children placed with internal foster carers and a reduction of external higher cost placements. To enable children looked after to live locally in their communities, with links to family connections, friendship groups, and opportunities to remain in cultural community.
Impacts to date			From April 2018 to 31 March 2019, marketing activity generated 345 initial leads via events, website, Facebook, phone and word of mouth. The net gain at the end of Year Two (March 2019) of the project is 47 (24 mainstream Carers, 24 connected Carers minus one de-registration). This has <u>exceeded</u> the target set of 26 foster Carers (mainstream and connected). There were 24 foster carer enquiries during March 2019 alone and the number of unique visitors to our website per week averaged 500. A recent event generated 15 web leads, two phone enquiries, four Facebook leads and 12 face-to-face enquiries.

Title	Type	Programme/Project End Date	Efficiency Expectation
Troubled Families	Programme	March 2020	That Wolverhampton will achieve the MHCLG targets for identification and acceptance and payment by results claims for its work with 2,890 Families by March 2020.
Objective			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To drive the identification and acceptance onto the programme of 2,890 families and provide the necessary evidence to support claims (of government funding) of £1,000 per family (i.e. max £2,890,000 for our project). • To drive the ‘turn around’ of 2,890 families and provide evidence to government offices to support the subsequent payment by results (PBR) claims of £800 per family (max £2,312,000). • To drive the adoption of a ‘whole family’ approach to casework in line with the overarching Transforming Children’s Services approach • To facilitate a reduction in worklessness in vulnerable families to enhance economic and social well being 			
Impacts to date			
<p>The total number of families identified and engaged on the TF programme is 3,367 families. As of June 2019, we have claimed for 1,829 families with a conversion rate of 63%.</p> <p>Performance data released by MHCLG at the end of quarter 1, year 5 (2019/2020) shows that Wolverhampton were 52nd out of 140 local authorities, in relation to the total number of successful PBR claims submitted against the overall 5-year target. This is a marked improvement in comparison to 9 months previously where we were placed at 83rd. Regionally MHCLG ratings place Wolverhampton 4th out of 13 local authorities in the Midlands. An intensive work programme is in place to ensure we claim for the remaining 665 families.</p> <p>Nationally, the programme is providing a net benefit to the taxpayer by reducing demand on high cost acute services. The analysis to date shows that for every £1 spent, the programme delivers £2.28 of benefits. The National Impact Study/Family Progress Data Findings has compared families who have received the Troubled Families whole family approach with similar families who have not been given programme support but have similar histories and similar characteristics. Results based on data from 149 local areas showed: -</p>			

- | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proportion of children going into care reduced by a third. 2. More people on the programme were supported back into work with 11% fewer people claiming job seekers allowance. |
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Information collected and submitted as part of the Wolverhampton Troubled Families programme has contributed to these findings in assessing the impact of the programme on the lives of participating families.

It further measures the fiscal, social and economic benefit resulting from the programme and how the whole family intervention approach achieved positive change for families.

Title	Type	Programme/Project End Date	Efficiency Expectation
Reducing Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC)	Project	March 2020	Reducing CYPiC spending via monitoring of looked after children leaving care and numbers of new starts.

Objectives

The project involves active monitoring of children in care, children leaving care and new children coming into care numbers. Other benefits are linked to the improved outcomes of children remaining in their families or returning home from care as early as possible. Reducing the number of CYPiC will also enable services to manage demand.

Impacts to date

Due to the successful outcomes of the initiatives put in place Children and Young People in care numbers now stand at 589 children in care with the project exceeding the best-case target for 2018-19 (see detail below).

Children in care targets for 2018-2019	
Best Case	621
Medium Case	655
Worst Case	714

Title	Type	Programme/Project End Date	Efficiency Expectation
Section 17 and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)	Projects (x2)	March 2020	Reductions in overall expenditure of both S17 and NRPF budgets through benefit checks,

			signposting to charities, food banks and other available support
Objectives			
The project involves the active implementation of the newly developed S17 and NRPF policies across all CYP services. Monitoring of all spend activity is now in place with the overall aim of: -			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting S17 clients to access benefits and other available support as quickly as possible, thereby reducing the need to maintain S17 payments. • Assisting NRPF clients to access other available support as quickly as possible, thereby reducing demands on the NRPF budget. 			
Impacts to Date			
Amendments to include triggers for Manager/Service Manager/Panel Level Approvals and appropriate Agresso compliant codes were made to the CareFirst S17/ NRPF forms. Implemented on the 1st of April 2019 and supported by clear policies and procedures, this has enabled improved monitoring and analysis of expenditure across all CYP service areas.			
Information to support the development of dashboards has been gathered. Once implemented this will provide a detailed overview that will drive practice improvements when supporting families via Section 17 Children Act 1989 payments to address identified needs to safeguard and promote a child's welfare where there is no other legitimate source of financial assistance.			
Title	Type	Programme/Project End Date	Efficiency Expectation
Platform for Care – Eclipse Children's	Programme	March 2020	Cost avoidance for provision of future on premise infrastructure
			Reduction in revenue costs related to rationalisation of case management solutions
Objectives			
Platform for care is a suite of cloud hosted products that include the Eclipse case management solutions for children's and adults social care.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial phase is the implementation of Eclipse Children's by Autumn 2019. By providing CYP with a single case management platform across social care, specialist support and early intervention, other current solutions e.g. Tribal EIS etc can be decommissioned. • This will be followed by the implementation of the Eclipse Adult and Eclipse Finance solution post November 2019. Once all the case management and social care finance activity is moved to Eclipse, 			

<p>CareFirst will be de-commissioned as an active system. This will realise the cost avoidance cash benefit (figures yet to be identified).</p>			
<p>Impacts to date</p> <p>A clear project plan and governance structure is in place and the project has just moved through the Verto delivery gateway (PAG 16 April 2019). The implementation of Eclipse Children's case management system (replacement for Carefirst) is currently on track for roll out by October 2019. Benefits from the decommissioning of Tribal EIS should be realisable from April 2020.</p>			
Title	Type	Programme/Project End Date	Efficiency Expectation
Young Persons Team	Project	March 2021	<p>Reduction in adolescents becoming looked after</p> <p>Reduction in number of residential placements for adolescents (now averaging £190,000 per annum)</p> <p>Rise in number of adolescents who maintain their foster care placements</p>
<p>Objectives</p> <p>This project involves working with young people at risk to help them to remain with their family and prevent them from becoming looked after.</p>			
<p>Impact to date</p> <p>This is a new project. Appointments to the core team members have now been undertaken and tendering of posts from the voluntary sector has taken place. The team are operational and have started to identify cases that they will co-work.</p>			
Title	Type	Programme/Project End Date	Efficiency Expectation
National Assessment & Accreditation System (NAAS)	Project	March 2020	Access to an 'up front grant from DfE of £75,000 plus £400 per social worker for involvement in NAAS during 2019-2020.
<p>Objectives</p> <p>The NAAS initiative will raise the professional status of child and family social workers, providing a clear career path as well as ensuring they have the</p>			

knowledge and skills they need to practice effectively. The system forms a key part of the government's reforms to children's social work to ensure every child receives expert support and protection.

This project involves Wolverhampton working alongside all Councils in the region participating in the Phase Two roll out of the NAAS Programme to meet the key DfE requirements of: -

- Supporting the wider aims of NAAS and enabling whole workforce familiarity with the KSS.
- Senior leaders from within the council actively supporting this initiative.
- Participation in independent research to track how well NAAS is working.
- Endorsement of 20-30% of social workers in post to be assessed within a year, with hopefully a greater number to follow.

Achievement of these criteria will be monitored by the DfE grant manager who will gather evidence from Mott MacDonald and the Council.

Impacts to date

This is a new project. To demonstrate the commitment of strategic and senior managers, the initial NAAS cohort for accreditation will include the Director of Children's Services and all Heads of Services. These arrangements will then be cascaded to include other managers and employees.

6.0 Ongoing and future projects

- 6.1 As part of the ongoing journey towards delivering outstanding services to children and families in the City the transformation programme continues to identify new projects that will support the overall aims of the service. New projects include innovative work like The House project, which will support care leavers to renovate a property which will become their long-term home. A number of projects including Troubled Families, Headstart and Family Values continue but aim to become business as usual going forward.

7.0 Questions for Scrutiny to consider

- 7.1 Do scrutiny feel there are any additional projects that could further the improvement journey of Children's Services?
- 7.2 Is there a way of involving scrutiny differently in the oversight of the transformation programme going forward that brings it alive for them?
- 7.3 How does the Council ensure that any changes to eligibility criteria are lawful, based on need, and properly communicated?
- 7.4 How does the Council manage organisations acting on its behalf and embedding clear lines of accountability for dealing with complaints and concerns about a service?

8.0 Financial implications

- 8.1 The 2019-2020 budget for the Children's Services is £51.6 million.
- 8.2 The 2019-2020 budget takes account of budget reduction and income generation efficiency targets totalling £822,000. The projects and programmes outlined within this report contribute to the required savings.
- 8.3 As a result of the Children's transformation savings in the region of £6.0 million have been delivered since 2016-2017 to date.
[NM/07102019/M]

9.0 Legal implications

- 9.1 There are no specific legal implications for this report.
- 9.2 Any future project should however follow procurement rules if required and the legislation relating to children in care and safeguarding of children in general.
[LW/11102019/L]

10.0 Equalities implications

- 10.1 The children and families that Children's Services work with are some of the most vulnerable within the city and most at risk of poor outcomes. It is therefore important that services continue to improve and deliver in different ways in order to secure the best outcomes for those who we work with whilst delivering models that are affordable and sustainable.

11.0 Environmental implications

- 11.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report.

12.0 Human resources implications

- 12.1 There are no human resources implications.

13.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 13.1 There are no Corporate landlord implications.