

Report to:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Relevant Officer:	Delyth Curtis, Director of People (Statutory Director of Children's Services)
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Ivan Taylor, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Date of Meeting	3 December 2014

CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 This report is to:

- Provide an overview of the new Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care following the Ofsted inspection in July and subsequent 'Requires Improvement' judgement;
- Provide an overview of the proposed governance arrangements for the plan and Improvement Board;
- Provide an overview of the timeline for developing the plan;

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the report.

2.2 To agree that the actions identified in the plan are the right ones to deliver the improvements required by Ofsted

2.3 To support the proposals for future arrangements, including the recommendation that the Children's Partnership takes responsibility for monitoring the overall progress of the plan and reporting back to the Health and Wellbeing Board as appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The Children's Improvement Plan contributes towards the delivery of two of the current Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- Early help and family support
- Safeguarding and domestic abuse

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council?

No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priorities are:

- Tackle child poverty, raise aspirations and improve educational achievement
- Safeguard and protect the most vulnerable
- Improve health and well-being especially for the most disadvantaged
- Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Children's Improvement Board was established in July 2012 as a requirement of the Ofsted Notice to Improve and subsequent intervention from the Department of Education, following the Ofsted inspection of children's safeguarding services, which were judged to be inadequate. Its purpose was to support effective and sustainable improvement of services, through the delivery of an action plan that was developed in response to the Improvement Notice.

5.2 The Improvement Board has effectively overseen the implementation of the first Improvement Plan through monitoring, challenging and supporting the actions in the plan, which have been delivered by the Council and its partners. When all of the actions were signed off by the Board in November 2013, a Transition Plan was developed which ensured that these actions were embedded into existing scrutiny and monitoring arrangements.

5.3 In July 2014 the Council and Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board were re-inspected and judged to 'require improvement'. The inspection report was published in September 2014 and it was subsequently agreed with the Department for Education that the Improvement Board will remain in place for a minimum of six months; until the Department for Education is assured that a robust plan for sustained improvement is being delivered, which will lead to improved outcomes for children and young people in Blackpool.

5.4 **Improvement Plan**

The inspection report sets out a number of priority and immediate actions and areas for improvement. These sub-headings have been carried across to the new action plan, and have been mapped against actions from the current plan to ensure that there is a smooth transition to the new plan and no outstanding actions are lost.

- 5.5 The new plan has been developed according to the six themes of the previous plan to ensure consistency. Priority and immediate actions and areas for improvement have been allocated to a theme depending on the content of the action. The plan is attached at appendix a.

- 5.6 The six themes are:

1. Performance Management
2. Quality Assurance
3. Improving Front Line
4. Partnership Working
5. Scrutiny
6. Communications

- 5.7 The new plan has an additional column, identifying which partner agencies/organisations are responsible for delivery, monitoring and scrutiny of the action plan. We are engaging with partners in the development of their actions and the plan was approved at the Children's Improvement Board on 14 November. A copy of the plan is attached at Appendix 7a.

Timeline

- 5.8 The new plan must be submitted for approval to Ofsted on 15 December 2014.

5.9 **Monitoring the plan**

The plan is monitored by the Children's Improvement Board and actions are agreed as complete and 'signed off' at the meetings. Progress on actions is also reported and scrutinised at the Board meetings.

5.10 **Governance arrangements**

The final column in the plan is 'scrutiny'; this column identifies the Board/Panel/Partnership that has responsibility for scrutinising the actions and ensuring that they are delivered and monitored appropriately. To ensure that there is a sufficient level of cross-scrutiny of activity, an additional column will be added to set out a second layer of scrutiny, the Board/panel in this column will be responsible for scrutinising those in the previous column.

- 5.11 Early consideration is also being given to the potential development of a Board that will act as a replacement for the Improvement Plan, but will meet less frequently, once there is no longer a requirement for Department for Education intervention.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.12 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 8a: Children's Improvement Plan

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 None

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 In developing the plan, extensive involvement of key partners and stakeholders has taken place. This includes consultation with staff through the Shadow Improvement Board and a Staff Conference that was held at the Winter Gardens on 5 November 2014, which attracted over 200 attendees from Children's Services to give their feedback on the plan.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None