

Public Document Pack

Blackpool Council

11 November 2020

To: Councillors Clapham, D Coleman, Critchley, Hugo, Mitchell, Owen, Stansfield and Wing

Ms Sage and Dr Allen, Co-opted Members

The above Members are requested to attend the:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 19 November 2020 at 6.00 pm
Via Zoom

A G E N D A

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2020 (Pages 1 - 6)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee held on 10 September 2020 as a true and correct record.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

To consider any applications from members of the public to speak at the meeting.

4 FORWARD PLAN (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider the content of the Council's Forward Plan, December 2020 to April 2021 within the remit of the Committee.

5 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider the Executive and Cabinet Member Decisions within the remit of the Committee which have been taken since the last meeting.

6 BLACKPOOL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - IN THE COMMUNITY (Pages 17 - 22)

To update the Committee on the progress of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan theme area - In the Community.

7 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (Pages 23 - 30)

To update the Committee in relation to the Children's Social Care improvement plan theme of 'Improving the effectiveness of strategic partnerships to improve outcomes and protect children.'

8 CHILDREN SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE PARTNERSHIP

To receive a verbal update on the Pan-Lancashire partnership arrangements from Mr Stephen Ashley, Independent Scrutineer for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership.

9 SUMMER 2020 EXAMINATION RESULTS AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION (Pages 31 - 34)

To consider the outcomes for children in the 2020 summer examinations at GCSE and A-Level (or equivalent) and to consider the impact upon attainment of the Covid-19 pandemic.

10 SCHOOL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC SCRUTINY REVIEW - FINAL REPORT (Pages 35 - 48)

To consider the final report of the scrutiny review of the school response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

11 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2020-2021 (Pages 49 - 62)

To consider the contents of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2020-2021.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Committee as Thursday 28 January 2021 at 6pm.

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Elaine Ireland, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser, Tel: 01253 477255, e-mail: Elaine.ireland@blackpool.gov.uk

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MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present:

Councillor Hugo (in the Chair)

Councillors

Clapham	Mitchell	Stansfield
Critchley	Owen	Wing

Dr Elaine Allen, Roman Catholic Co-opted Member
Ms Helen Sage, Diocesan Co-opted Member

In Attendance:

Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration
Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council (Children)
Councillor Maxine Callow JP, Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board
Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Ms Moya Foster, Head of Targeted Intervention Services
Ms Kara Haskayne, Head of Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker
Ms Jeanette Richards, Assistant Director of Children's Services
Mrs Elaine Ireland, Senior Democratic Governance Advisor

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Stansfield declared a personal interest in Item 5 'Executive and Cabinet Member Decisions' and Item 6 'Youth Offending Team Improvement', the nature of the interest being that he was employed by a residential children's home.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2020

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 February 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record subject to the following amendment: Councillor Maxine Callow's attendance at the meeting as Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board to be recorded.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Committee noted that there were no applications to speak by members of the public on this occasion.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan, September to December 2020 relating to the portfolio of the Leader of the Council (Children) and the Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration. Members noted that the Forward Plan contained one decision relevant to the Committee: 'To progress the acquisition of the former Job Centre Plus building at 43 Queens Street to accommodate Children's Services in a single location, in

**MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING -
THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

line with the preferred delivery model following the Ofsted review.'

Members questioned how the proposed purchase of the building was progressing and whether an alternative plan had been formulated in the event of the purchase not being successful. Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council (Children) informed the Committee that the property had not reached its reserve price when auctioned for sale and the Council would continue negotiations with the vendor to attempt to secure the property for an appropriate price. Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services confirmed that negotiations were still ongoing and that an alternative venue for Children's Services had not been identified.

5 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

The Committee noted that three Executive decisions had been taken within the remit of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee since the previous meeting.

Members asked a number of questions pertaining to EX12/2020 'Review of Children's Home Provision' and in response Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council (Children) clarified that the permanent closure of the residential provision at 331 Bispham Road was as a result of the previous facility not adequately meeting the needs of the children housed there. The property, Councillor Williams explained, was still empty and being maintained by Property Services until such a time as a suitable alternative use had been identified. In response to further questions regarding the possibility of whether the premises could potentially be used by a privately owned company to house children from outside Blackpool, Councillor Williams stated that there was no intention for this outcome as the building was not suitable for such a use. Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services clarified that six-bedded units were not suitable to meet the needs of children and that more homely, smaller units were required.

Councillor Mrs Callow, in her capacity as Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board stated that residents living in the vicinity of residential children's homes felt abandoned by the Council regarding their concerns and complaints of antisocial behaviour in the properties. A further question was asked by the Committee on whether the Council planned to create its own smaller residential children's homes or if the intention was for private companies to manage them. Councillor Williams explained that the long-term plan was for the future development of more suitable options for Blackpool's children other than placement within residential children's homes, such as fostering and adoption, reminding Members that as Corporate Parents it was everyone's role to help create and support a positive culture around the needs of our Looked After Children and their future aspirations and potential.

The Committee sought further details of EX16/2020 'Implementation of the Lancashire and Blackpool Regional Adoption Agency'. The Committee raised concerns that the relocation of the adoption agency may cause barriers to Blackpool residents who wanted to access its services. Councillor Williams explained that although the central office would be located in Preston, an outreach service to Blackpool had been implemented. Mrs Booth assured Members that the needs of Blackpool would be included in the focus of the agency and that in her position as Chair of the adoption panel she would be ensuring that Blackpool was equally represented.

**MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING -
THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Clarification was requested around EX31/2020 'Updated Children's Services Medium Term Financial Strategy' and Mrs Jeanette Richards, Assistant Director of Children's Services provided further details of the therapeutic children's home project which would be receiving funding of £1.2 million per year for two years. The Committee was informed that the project aimed to reduce the need for residential children's placements via the use of specialist foster placements and formed part of an ambitious five-year strategy to reduce spending in Children's Social Care by 33 per cent.

6 YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM IMPROVEMENT

Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services updated the Committee on the progress of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan theme areas of 'Out of Court' and 'In Court'. She informed Members that a re-inspection of the service had been due in July 2020 but that this had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The inspectorate had since recommenced inspections and Mrs Booth anticipated that Blackpool Youth Offending Team (YOT) would be re-inspected imminently.

Members reviewed the figures provided for youth custody rates, with the fall in rates for Blackpool noted and commended. Clarification was sought on the term 'bounce backs', which Ms Moya Foster, Head of Targeted Intervention Services explained was a term which referred to youths who went straight into the court system without first entering the YOT system and who thereby bypassed the opportunity for suitable interventions. She further explained that the issue of 'bounce backs' had arisen largely as a result of the reduced youth courts because of Covid-19 and it was therefore hoped to be a temporary occurrence.

The Committee noted that incidents of antisocial behaviour by young people were widely reported and whilst the decriminalisation of young people was supported, Members asked what was being done to reassure the victims of such behaviour. Ms Foster informed the Committee that work around tackling antisocial behaviour was underway along with the police and the community safety partnership in a bid to improve community cohesion. Restorative Justice conferences were in place as well as support from the police to help victims and the provision of appropriate support for the young people and their families.

With regards to the Peer Review completed in February 2020, Members questioned which resulting recommendations had been fully implemented. Ms Foster outlined a number of areas where improvements had been applied, particularly around the service's governance arrangements. In addition, visits had been made to YOT services around the country which had been rated as outstanding in order to gather examples of good practice.

The Committee requested if Member representation from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee could be made on the dedicated Blackpool Out of Court Disposal Panel which was in the process of being formulated, in order that updates could be provided to the rest of the Committee. Mrs Booth responded that she would need to seek advice on the governance arrangements of the panel and would notify the Committee of the outcome.

**MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING -
THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

The pleasing progress and hard work of the Youth Offending Team was recognised by the Committee and Members expressed thanks to all those involved in the improvement journey.

The Committee agreed: That the full Peer Review report be requested for circulation to Committee Members.

7 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE - RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Committee considered an update of Children's Social Care Improvement in relation to the recruitment and retention of Children's Social Care staff. Ms Kara Haskayne, Head of Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker provided a summary of the measures in place aimed at improving workforce capacity within Children's Social Care as well as outlining the permanent vacancies which had been successfully filled.

The Committee noted the relatively high number of leavers from the service and questioned whether reasons for leaving had been ascertained via the use of exit interviews. Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services reported that retention of social work staff, particularly in relation to Children's Social Care, was a regional and national problem and that Blackpool had been performing favourably in comparison to other areas. With regards to specific reasons for leaving the service, Ms Haskayne informed the Committee that some leavers were due to personal reasons such as relocation to another part of the country, whilst others were as a result of the desire to take the experience they had gained at Blackpool to another authority.

A question was raised regarding the recruitment costs to the service, with Mrs Booth confirming that the recruitment drive was within the agreed allocated staffing budget.

Ms Haskayne reiterated that the recruitment of suitable Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) candidates was integral to the long term improvement journey of the service and outlined the programme in place to guide and support the ASYE employees through their journey of progression, with a support package in place to encourage them to remain at the Authority once fully qualified.

The teaching partnership programme being undertaken in collaboration with universities was explained to the Committee, with Ms Haskayne reporting that the programme aimed to ensure that students were being adequately prepared for the reality of the job, as well as her involvement on the Curriculum Panel to steer the direction of curriculum changes to ensure a high quality of training. In addition, Ms Haskayne informed the Committee that an accredited course was being developed in conjunction with the University of Central Lancashire, aimed at supporting more experienced social workers to become accredited Practice Educators. She explained that this would improve the Council's ability to provide student placements and increase recruitment possibilities. Ms Haskayne informed Members that the post-qualifying development of the workforce would also support experienced social worker retention and the Council's future leadership sufficiency.

**MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING -
THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

8 INCLUSION IN EDUCATION SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT

Councillor Stansfield, as Lead Member of the Scrutiny review of Inclusion in Education expressed thanks to the members of the working group for their valuable input, as well as to the Council Officers and Headteachers for their time and contributions.

Further review of the recommendations was agreed between Councillor Benson as Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration, Councillor Stansfield and Mr Paul Turner, Head of Schools Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion, with the report then to be considered by the Executive.

The Committee agreed: To approve the Inclusion in Education Scrutiny report for submission to the Executive.

9 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2020-2021

The Committee reviewed the contents of the Workplan for 2020/2021 as well as considering the proposed scoping document for the Schools' Responses to Covid-19 scrutiny review.

Within the Implementation of Recommendations/Actions table, Members noted that the provision of key performance data in relation to A Better Start appeared to be overdue and requested that the data be provided as soon as possible. Mrs Diane Booth, Head of Children's Services advised that she would request the information from Ms Merle Davies, Director of the Blackpool Centre for Early Child Development. Members also requested that the proposed scrutiny review of A Better Start be prioritised within the Workplan.

The Committee agreed:

1. To approve the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workplan for 2020/2021;
2. To approve the Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Review Scoping Document.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 19 November 2020, commencing at 6pm.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.10pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Elaine Ireland, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser
Tel: 01253 477255, E-mail: Elaine.ireland@blackpool.gov.uk

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Date of Meeting:	19 November 2020

FORWARD PLAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the content of the Council's Forward Plan, September to December 2020, within the remit of the Committee.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the Leader of the Council and/or the relevant Cabinet Member in relation to items contained within the Forward Plan within the portfolios of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration.

2.2 Members will have the opportunity to consider whether any of the items should be subjected to pre-decision scrutiny. In so doing, account should be taken of any requests or observations made by the relevant Cabinet Member.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To enable the opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the Forward Plan items.

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? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Forward Plan is prepared by the Leader of the Council to cover a period of four months and has effect from the first working day of any month. It is updated on a monthly basis and subsequent plans cover a period beginning with the first working day of the second month

covered in the preceding plan.

5.2 The Forward Plan contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be subject of a key decision to be taken either by the Executive, a Committee of the Executive, individual Cabinet Members or Officers.

5.3 Attached at Appendix 4(a) is a list of items contained in the current Forward Plan. Further details appertaining to each item is contained in the Forward Plan, which has been forwarded to all Members separately.

5.4 Witnesses/representatives

5.4.1 The following Cabinet Member is responsible for the Forward Plan item in this report and has been invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council (Children)

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 4(a) Summary of items contained within Forward Plan December 2020 to April 2021.

6.0 Financial considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Risk Management considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Equalities considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

11.1 None.

12.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

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EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN - SUMMARY OF KEY DECISIONS**(DECEMBER 2020 TO APRIL 2021)**

Anticipated Date of Decision	Matter for Decision	Decision Reference	Decision Taker	Relevant Cabinet Member
December 2020	To progress the acquisition of the former Job Centre Plus building at 43 Queens Street to accommodate Children's Services in a single location, in line with the preferred delivery model following the Ofsted review.	23/2020	Executive	Cllr L Williams

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Date of Meeting:	19 November 2020

EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the portfolios of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the Leader of the Council or the relevant Cabinet Member in relation to the decisions taken.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure that the opportunity is given for all Executive and Cabinet Member decisions to be scrutinised and held to account.

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? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Attached at Appendix 5(a) is a summary of the decisions taken, which have been circulated to Members previously.

5.2 This report is presented to ensure Members are provided with a timely update on the decisions taken by the Executive and Cabinet Members. It provides a process where the Committee can raise questions and a response be provided.

5.3 Members are encouraged to seek updates on decisions and will have the opportunity to raise any issues.

5.4 Witnesses/representatives

5.4.1 The following Cabinet Member is responsible for the decisions taken in this report and has been invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 5(a) Summary of Executive and Cabinet Member decisions taken.

6.0 Financial considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Risk management considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Equalities considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

11.1 None.

12.0 Background papers:

12.1 None.

APPENDIX 5(a)

DECISION / OUTCOME	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	DATE	CABINET MEMBER
<p>INCLUSION IN EDUCATION SCRUTINY FINAL REPORT</p> <p>The Executive agreed the recommendations as outlined below namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To accept the final report and recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review of Inclusion in Education and endorse the comments made by the Cabinet Member in the review at Appendix 2a, to the Executive report. 	<p>To consider the final report and recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review of Inclusion in Education.</p>	<p>EX43/2020</p>	<p>02/11/2020</p>	<p>Councillor Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration.</p>
<p>2020-30 EDUCATION VISION</p> <p>The Executive agreed the recommendations as outlined below namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That the 2020-30 Education Vision and the general direction of travel is accepted and adopted for a period until 30 September 2030 with an initial review after a period of two years, where the vision will be reviewed and re-presented. 	<p>Further to the meeting on the 5 October 2020 (decision EX40/2020 refers) to present the updated 2020-30 Education Vision for Blackpool, a school lead strategy for improvement.</p> <p>By accepting and supporting this vision, the Executive will be seeking to ensure improved outcomes for the children and young people of Blackpool and to ensure that the education system in Blackpool grows and adapts to be responsive to the changing needs of the children and communities that it serves.</p> <p>The delivery of the vision will be through the existing Council services, reporting to existing boards such as the Children and Families Strategic Partnership Board and the Blackpool Education Improvement Board (previously Blackpool School Improvement Board).</p>	<p>EX44/2020</p>	<p>02/11/20</p>	<p>Councillor Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration.</p>

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Childrens Services
Date of Meeting:	19 November 2020

BLACKPOOL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE - IN THE COMMUNITY

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Committee on the progress of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan theme area - In the Community.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of progress made and provide challenge and support.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Committee role in scrutiny to seek assurance.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

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

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Youth Justice Board and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Prison and Probation undertook an unannounced inspection of Blackpool Youth Justice Service in October 2018.

5.2 The findings of the inspection resulted in Blackpool Youth Justice Service receiving an inadequate rating. Prior to the inspection it had been recognised that there were improvements needed to be made both in the strategic partnership and the operational team and a comprehensive improvement plan was put in place. The outcome of the inspection reinforced the need for pace and focused resource to support the change that was needed to improve the service and ensure that children are well supported across the

partnership and achieve good outcomes.

5.3 The improvement plan focuses on five themes (in line with the Youth Justice Board's National Standards for Youth Justice) and each of the themes has a lead person from the partnership:

- Out of Court (lead - Head of Criminal Justice, Lancashire Constabulary);
- In Court (lead - Legal Team Manager, Blackpool Magistrates Court);
- In the Community (lead - Service Manager Targeted Intervention Service, Blackpool Council);
- Transitions (lead - Education Inclusion lead and YOT Service Manager, Blackpool Council);
- In Custody (lead - Business Development Manager, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children Safeguarding Assurance Partnership).

5.4 The improvement plan has been drawn up by the partnership and is monitored through the governance of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Executive Board.

5.5 In addition, the service underwent a peer review in February 2020 conducted by National Criminal Justice leads from across the sector. The resulting recommendations are being implemented.

6.0 In the Community National Standard Theme

6.1 The national standard 'In the Community' theme focuses on the Youth Justice Service's responsibility to effectively manage court disposals to support children and young people to live safe and crime-free lives.

6.2 This standard focuses on the quality of assessment, planning and intervention to children, young people and their families and audit activity seeks to find local practice that prioritises children's best interests, constructively promotes their potential and desistance, encourages their active engagement and minimises the potential damage that contact with the system can bring.

6.3 An audit of children's records was completed using the national standards audit tool, which identified key areas of focus for improved practice.

6.4 Assessment

6.4.1 The audits completed found that assessment work undertaken with children, young people and their families was of variable quality. The use of the Youth Justice Board's approved assessment tool is well embedded but further work needs to be done with staff, to ensure these assessments provide a dynamic picture of a child's life and to ensure that assessments will inform plans that support positive change. As a result of the audits, work has begun to identify good examples of assessments and to share these with the team as good practice.

6.4.2 Learning circles are planned to support practitioners' development of assessment skills,

developing these opportunities for learning has been challenging in light of COVID-19, but virtual learning sessions are now planned for later in the year.

6.5 Management Oversight

6.5.1 The completed audits found that management oversight of casework was of variable quality. Good management oversight will support practitioners to have a balanced view of strengths and worries. Good quality management oversight will celebrate good practice and challenge and drive improvement. The management team have now implemented the Children's Services supervision policy based on 'Blackpool Families Rock' and further audit activity is planned to ensure that supervision is consistent and is promoting positive outcomes for children and driving improvement.

6.6 Case Recording

6.6.1 The audits completed identified some good practice in case recording, particularly in capturing how practitioners work with young people to help them understand the outcomes from court. There is further improvement to be made to link assessments to plans and plans to interventions. The recording of intervention around education and victim work is good. Recording guidance is in place, in line with 'Blackpool Families Rock' and ongoing audit work is planned to ensure this is consistent.

6.7 Covid Impact

6.7.1 Throughout the period since March 2020, the YOT officers have been developing creative ways to engage young people both face-to-face and virtually and this has improved engagement and compliance with their interventions.

6.8 Embedding Blackpool Families Rock

6.8.1 All staff have engaged well in Blackpool Families Rock training and are embedding a collaborative way of working with children, young people and their families. The language of Blackpool Families Rock is more evident in records. Audits undertaken identified that the quality of young people's self-assessments was variable and this will continue to be monitored and addressed through ongoing audit activity. Practitioners have developed a Young People's Participation Group and this has been very successful in gaining the views of young people receiving support from the service.

6.9 Additional Improvement Work

6.9.1 Diversion including community resolutions:

6.9.2 Linked to the 'Out of Court' national standards theme, the service has developed a new pathway for young people who come to the attention of the police and would benefit from a positive intervention to divert them from the criminal justice system by way of a community resolution. A simple referral system is in place to support front line police officers in identifying young people who have been involved in low-level incidents; early help specialists in our request for support hub screen this information and support children, young people

and their families to access the right service. All of these young people receive intervention to address their behaviours and this is often complimented by parenting support.

- 6.9.3 Further work is planned to develop a similar pathway for prevention, seeking to identify young people who might be at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system.
- 6.9.4 Significant work has been undertaken recently with a group of young people involved in anti-social behaviour, this has been an excellent example of multi-agency working with police, Families in Need, Children’s Social Care, Community Safety Team and Youth Justice service staff coming together to deliver victim focused restorative work with young people and offer challenge and support to parents.

6.9.5 Whole Family Support

- 6.9.5.1 All children, young people and families receiving support from the Youth Justice Service are considered for whole family support from our Families in Need service. This has resulted in some successful joint working, including support to deliver a parenting order as an alternative to custody for a young person. This is in line with the national expectation from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to integrate service responses as part of service transformation and the Troubled Families Agenda.

7.0 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

8.0 List of appendices:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The YOT financial structure is made up of multi-agency contributions as below:

Agency	Financial contribution 20/21
Youth Justice Board	£327,141
Local Authority	£129,051
Police	1 FTE Police Officer £41,941 additional contribution
Probation	1 FTE Probation Officer £5,000 additional contribution
Health	1 FTE Health practitioner £15,444 additional contribution

There are no current budget pressures.

10.0 Legal considerations:

10.1 There are no legal implications to consider.

11.0 Risk management considerations:

11.1 There are no issues of concern, appropriate governance arrangements are in place.

12.0 Ethical considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

13.1 None.

14.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

14.1 As mentioned within the report, the YOT had a peer review undertaken in February 2020 by colleagues from other YOTs. Recommendations from the peer review have been considered by the YOT Executive Board and will be implemented into practice.

14.2 The service is strengthening its consultation and co-production approach with our young people and victims to support improved service delivery and there is currently a young people's board as part of the Governance arrangements to fulfil this role.

15.0 Background papers:

15.1 None

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Jeanette Richards, Assistant Director of Children's Services
Date of Meeting:	19 November 2020

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Committee in relation to the Children's Social Care improvement plan theme of 'Improving the effectiveness of strategic partnerships to improve outcomes and protect children.'

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That the Committee notes progress made to date and provides appropriate challenge and support to facilitate further improvement.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To fulfil the Committee's scrutiny role in seeking assurance.

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

3.3b Other alternative options considered:

None

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Following the Council's Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection in November 2018 an Improvement Board was formed to oversee the Improvement Plan. Following review in July 2019 this became the Getting to Good Board, a strategic partnership board that includes key partners, Members and also the Council's

Department for Education (DfE) Adviser and representatives from Ofsted. The Board is independently chaired by the regional lead for the North West's Sector Led Improvement. All partnership improvement activity in the Social Work Improvement Plan (SWIP) is governed under the remit of the Getting to Good Board, which meets bi-monthly.

- 5.2 Board members are established and meetings are well attended with the Board continuing to meet (virtually) throughout COVID.
- 5.3 Many of the issues evident within Children's Social Care services reflect wider problems stemming from the long-term ineffectiveness of local services in meeting the needs and improving the outcomes of local children and families. Therefore, it was agreed that key children's services providers should come together to address town-wide issues that affect the wider outcomes of children and young people in Blackpool. The Children's Partnership Board was established and held its first meeting in January 2020, chaired by Blackpool Council's Chief Executive, with chairing of the group subsequently moving to the Council's Lead Member for Children's Services.
- 5.4 Agreed priority areas are: inclusion, literacy and improving the life chances of Blackpool children and young people.
- 5.5 Partnership arrangements are also being strengthened through the new Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Arrangements (Child Safeguarding Assurance Partnership – CSAP). The CSAP has agreed three priority areas with the Council leading on neglect, Health on contextual safeguarding and the Police on domestic abuse. Plans are in place for neglect and contextual safeguarding, but a plan has not yet been shared around our response to domestic abuse.
- 5.6 As part of the new CSAP arrangements, Blackpool Council led on the 'Working Well Together with Children and Families' document across all of Lancashire and has been the first to launch with partners (launched in July 2020). This document is critical in redefining the expectations of local agencies around their work with children and families, both in terms of the ethos and approach, but also in terms of the involvement of Children's Social Care.
- 5.7 Neglect: The Neglect Strategy was launched in February 2020. There was good multi-agency attendance at the launch events and there have been training events running throughout COVID. However, our audits tell us that we are still not recognising all forms of neglect and use of the graded care profile 2 (GCP2) is not yet well embedded within the partnership (and there is still an expectation for the Social Worker to lead on this). Whilst it is clear that there has been improvement in the identification of neglect by Social Workers and other professionals, there is still work to be done to ensure a more consistent response to identifying and working with families and understanding the progress that they make in being able to address what often are long-standing issues.
- 5.8 The Partnership Implementation Group for Blackpool Families Rock is being extended to strategically oversee the partnership's implementation of the neglect strategy, along with Blackpool Families Rock and Working Well with Children and Families. In addition, consideration is being given to how best to embed a keener understanding and identification of neglect in the frontline workers of other key services, especially primary schools - probably the single most important group of professionals, as most primary school age children will be

seen daily for sustained periods by the same professionals (class teacher and teaching assistants).

- 5.9 Early Help: Our new Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire document has launched, with Blackpool being the first of the three authorities to do so. This document reflects the Blackpool Families Rock approach, intervening at the lowest level possible and exploring different ways of working with Blackpool's families.
- 5.10 It was recognised that changes in the social care system required corresponding changes within Early Help. The Council began to restructure Early Help last year, moving early help staff out of Social Care Teams and into one unified management structure. This was partly to give clarity to the role of early help workers, but mainly to emphasise the importance of trusted relationships between Social Workers and families in enabling change.
- 5.11 During this year Early Help staff have been trained in 'Working Well with Families', the Blackpool Families Rock approach and Neglect. Taken together these provide the scaffolding to support focused early help work. A unified assessment and plan for children and families is being developed, irrespective of whether they are working with Early Help services or Children's Social Care, which will aid smoother transition and step down and will launch during the coming winter.
- 5.12 The aspiration during 2021 is to develop a place-based approach to Early Help and planning for this approach is in the early stages, with Early Help workers based in a number of Blackpool's secondary schools as a pilot. The focus will be on providing proactive support, delivering interventions and supporting schools in modelling early help support.
- 5.13 **COVID Response**
- 5.13.1 In terms of how the Council sought to continue children's social care support for children and families throughout COVID, there have been three distinct phases:
- 5.13.2 **1. 23 March to 9 April 2020**
- 5.13.3 When it became evident that the country was likely to move to similar levels of social restriction as those already in place in other parts of Europe, planning began for continuing to deliver children's social care services in Blackpool. Detailed planning began in the week beginning 9 March and the Council launched a revised model of service delivery from 23 March 2020. Children's Services were the first department in the Council to do so and staff were able to move to the new model just before national lockdown began.
- 5.13.4 To provide both some degree of resilience to the service in its discharge of its core safeguarding functions, while also respecting the social distancing approach, Children's Social Care, Early Help and the Youth Justice Service were split into two separate business units. Team A and Team B, each with their own group of Team Managers, Service Managers and Heads of Service (workers remained with their normal team managers). The teams each had between 150 and 170 workers (80 to 90 Social Workers) and in any one week, one of the teams was office based, whilst the other worked from home.

- 5.13.5 Within each of these units, Social Workers were divided between those focused on incoming work and those focused on ongoing work. Early Help services were divided equally between Teams A and B and played a vital role in supporting families experiencing difficulties, especially around food poverty.
- 5.13.6 Communication was supported through a daily virtual conference of all Heads of Service across Children's Services, including education colleagues, chaired by the Assistant Director, with important issues being fed up to the Director of Children's Services for discussion at the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, which was also meeting daily during this period.
- 5.13.7 In addition, there were wider meetings of all Heads of Service and Service Managers on Monday, Wednesday and Friday (the weekly handover meeting). Senior Managers in both Teams A and B participated in every conference, if available. This meeting was critical in addressing issues affecting staff, such as guidance on visits and the availability of personal protective equipment, but also in working with partners as they changed their patterns/methods of service delivery, so as to safeguard vulnerable children and families (c.f. Horizon and drug treatment programmes). Finally, there was also a weekly meeting (on Wednesday) with senior representatives from all key local safeguarding partners to discuss emerging issues across the partnership.
- 5.13.8 Children's Services set up a partnership mailbox for agencies to provide information about contact with children to Social Workers and other partnership agencies working with the family. It has been well used by partners, including schools and GPs and continues as a conduit for all partners. In the light of quite low presenting demand in the early phases of lockdown, the department also proactively sought to publicise that Children's Social Care was open for business through the Council's Facebook page and Twitter feed, in addition to local radio and newspapers.
- 5.13.9 To focus ongoing activity, Team Managers were asked to evaluate all children, young people and families open to their teams and to identify those of most concern, which required the greatest level of oversight and other cases where oversight clearly needed to be maintained if possible.
- 5.13.10 Activity was monitored daily across the service, together with the changing capacity of the service and the number of children and families self-isolating. Senior Managers were provided with a daily updated list of all children open to the service, when they were last seen, the manager's rating of concern, whether the child/family was self-isolating and whether children in care were living with carers who were particularly vulnerable to the virus.
- 5.13.11 **2. 9 April to 4 July 2020**
- 5.13.12 From 9 April and in the light of tightening government guidance and lockdown, especially around the absolute need for physically distancing and reduced levels of personal contact within society, the Council refined its approach. There was a move to an even greater focus on the children the team had the greatest concerns about – only these children were visited face to face by Social Workers. Other children open to the service were 'virtually' visited, using technology with which the family was familiar, or kept in phone contact with, where

virtual visits were not possible. All workers were based at home, with the exception of a reduced skeleton duty staff in the Assessment Teams and in the Support Hub.

5.13.13 During this period, all children open to Children’s Social Care and Early Help services were assessed with regard to their ongoing needs and the impact of COVID and lockdown on their lives. As part of this process, some families agreed that they no longer needed support and they closed to the service.

5.13.14 The relationship with schools was critical during lockdown. Enhanced communication between Children’s Social Care and schools through the Pupil Welfare Service enabled local services to keep in contact with vulnerable children on an at least weekly, sometimes daily basis.

5.14.1 **3. July 2020 Onwards**

5.14.2 Children’s Social Care returned to office work and direct work with all families open to service, mixed with working from home. The Council felt it was important given the wishes of the workforce to return to something closer to normality and the need for regular face-to-face contact with children and families to address need and support change. Everyone could not be accommodated in the office at the same time, with the additional space requirements to limit transmission, so the service being split in two was recommenced – with one part of the service in the office one week, while the other part worked from home and then vice versa. To date this approach has been successful, with relatively low levels of staff sickness from COVID and improved frequency of face-to-face work with children and families.

5.14.3 This approach will continue through the current period of lockdown from 5 November 2020 as it strikes the best balance between working effectively with children and families and supporting and protecting Council staff.

5.15 **Learning from the past eight months**

5.15.1 Early on in the lockdown there was a substantial reduction in incoming requests for service as other services retrenched and residents hunkered down. Demand steadily grew through lockdown, with a spike in both new child protection plans and children with missing from home episodes when lockdown finally ceased, both of which have subsequently settled.

5.15.2 During much of lockdown our biggest source of concern was the emotional health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable care leavers. It was recognised that care leavers were especially vulnerable during COVID and lockdown. At a time when people were in danger of becoming more isolated and dependent on the care and support of others, those possibly without family or wider network of support were uniquely vulnerable. Regular contact was maintained with every care leaver, especially the most vulnerable young people. The Council was particularly zealous in securing the necessary support from health colleagues for those young people who were really struggling. Feedback from the young people themselves indicated that this support was highly valued and it is believed that we were successful in mitigating the detrimental impact of the first wave of the COVID pandemic. It is evident that other local authorities have not been as successful.

- 5.15.3 As services have returned to normal, especially when schools returned in September, there has been a rise in demand for children’s social care services. This was expected and the department would have been concerned if it had not taken place. There were indications in October 2020 that this was also now settling.
- 5.15.4 The withdrawal from ongoing, in person, visiting of families during the first lockdown did have an impact on the effectiveness of the department’s work. While the Council and partner agencies, especially schools, did their utmost to maintain contact and offer help where needed, it is not the same as being in school or visiting homes and working directly with children. There has been some learning, particularly in working with older teenagers in care, that using technology can help build stronger relationships and may sometimes be the preferred mode of interaction, but generally it is much better to see children and families face to face.
- 5.15.5 Finally, however, it is notable that issues that have been major problems elsewhere, such as missed identification of very vulnerable babies and young infants and subsequent non-accidental injuries, have not been an issue in Blackpool. Thankfully, to date, local services have held up under the strain and still provided a strong safety net for local children and families. In the circumstances and given the ever-present and increasing levels of social need in the town, this represents a good achievement.
- 5.16 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

6.0 List of Appendices:

6.1 None

7.0 Financial considerations:

7.1 None

8.0 Legal considerations:

8.1 None

9.0 Risk management considerations:

9.1 None

10.0 Equalities considerations:

10.1 None

11.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

11.1 None

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None

13.0 Background papers:

14.1 None

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Date of Meeting:	19 November 2020

SUMMER 2020 EXAMINATION RESULTS AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the outcomes for children in the 2020 summer examinations at GCSE and A-Level (or equivalent) and to consider the impact upon attainment of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider what the prevailing issues will be for Blackpool children in the 2020/2021 school year.

2.2 To allow Members to understand what the 2021 examination series may look like for students and families.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 It is important for the Council to be informed about the onwards impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Blackpool children and what it will mean for their outcomes and future life chances.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

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

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 No alternatives.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 Schools were subject to partial closure from March through until the end of August 2020. Schools were only open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers. This meant that the summer 2020 series of exams had to be cancelled and the students were awarded centre-assessed grades. It is highly likely that this will be replicated in 2021, although currently there are plans for a delayed series of examinations approximately four weeks later than normal, in June and July 2021.
- 6.2 It is widely noted that the closure of schools and the reduced face-to-face contact caused by pupils having to self-isolate will cause some pupils to suffer from adverse effects of the pandemic, particularly mental health issues and issues around educational progress and attainment. The Government has identified £650 million of funding for schools to provide catch-up tutoring to individuals or small groups. This equates to around £80 per pupil. There will be considerable impact in the next couple of years at least, possibly over the next decade, on the progress and attainment of children in Blackpool and across the country.
- 6.3 There is no available data for schools at an individual level and any percentages quoted here are unvalidated and not subject to scrutiny by Ofsted, Department for Education or publishable in school league tables. National reporting suggests that levels of attainment are significantly higher than if pupils had set nationally benchmarked and moderated examinations. The information that we have available, which schools and colleges have asked not to be referred to except as amalgamated percentages and headlines, shows that pupils largely achieved more highly than when they would sit a normal series of examinations. GCSE percentage pass rate at 4+ in English and Maths, 5+ in English and Maths and overall pass rate at A-Level or their vocational equivalents were higher than in 2019.
- 6.4 A significant proportion of the pupils who applied to go to University were successful, after initial disappointment when grades were moderated downwards by an algorithm created by the Department for Education. This was also evident at GCSE level, initially affecting the opportunity for pupils to progress on to college or work/apprenticeships. When the algorithm was discounted and the awarding method reverted to centre assessed grades, this allowed children to progress onto their chosen destinations.
- 6.5 Ofsted inspections are currently suspended and this will have an impact upon the progress that Blackpool schools that are not yet 'Good' will have towards achieving a grade of 'Good' or better. However, due to the lack of a published set of exam results and progress scores, Blackpool schools are still in a good position to be able to achieve the 'Good' grading at next inspection. The Council is hopeful that Montgomery Academy, South Shore Academy and Highfield Leadership Academy will all be 'Good' at their next inspection. Currently all Blackpool schools, with the exception of two Primary schools and three Secondary Academies are at least 'Good', as rated by Ofsted.
- 6.6 As an interim measure, whilst inspections are suspended, we have seen a number of visits to schools to discuss with school leaders their response to the pandemic. These have all been positive. Seven visits have currently been carried out. There is no grade given and a summary letter is published. Three letters have been published so far and a summary of the national themes will be published by Ofsted at set intervals.

- 6.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No
- 7.0 List of Appendices:**
- 7.1 None.
- 8.0 Financial considerations:**
- 8.1 The Committee is asked to consider the ongoing financial implications to the town of children not being able to progress into further education, higher education and/or the workplace.
- 9.0 Legal considerations:**
- 9.1 None.
- 10.0 Risk management considerations:**
- 10.1 This pandemic is a risk to the financial stability of the town, levels of employment, the quality of education and to the town's priorities in relation to 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.'
- 11.0 Equalities considerations:**
- 11.1 There will inevitably be a disproportionate impact, nationally and locally, on disadvantaged children and families.
- 12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**
- 12.1 None.
- 13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**
- 13.1 None.
- 14.0 Background papers:**
- 14.1 None.

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager.
Date of Meeting:	19 November 2020

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC FINAL REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the final report of the scrutiny review of the School Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To approve the final report of the scrutiny review of the School Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic for submission to the Executive.

2.2 To monitor the implementation of the report's recommendations/actions.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To review the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review prior to further approval by the Executive.

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? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1. At its Workplanning Workshop on 2 July 2020 the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee identified the topic of the School Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic as an

important area requiring scrutiny. As a result, Committee Members were invited to join a working group to undertake a scrutiny review of the issue.

- 5.2 The importance of undertaking the review swiftly was recognised due to the time sensitivity of the issue and the need to determine if schools had done everything required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils during the medical emergency.
- 5.3 The findings and resulting recommendations from the working group's review are contained within the final report for consideration and approval by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, following which the report will be submitted to the Executive for approval.

Once approved, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee will monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.4 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 10(a): School Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic Scrutiny Review Final Report

6.0 **Financial considerations:**

- 6.1 There are no foreseen financial implications as a direct consequence of the recommendations, however schools have incurred some costs due to the Covid Secure arrangements they have had to put in place such as the provision of hand sanitiser/hand wash stations and face coverings. In addition, during lockdown schools would have lost income due to the closure of children centres and after school clubs.

7.0 **Legal considerations:**

- 7.1 None.

8.0 **Risk management considerations:**

- 8.1 None.

9.0 **Equalities considerations:**

- 9.1 None.

10.0 **Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

- 10.1 None.

11.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

11.1 None.

12.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

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Blackpool Council



SCHOOL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT

1.0 Background Information

1.1 At its Workplanning Workshop on 2 July 2020 the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee identified the topic of the School Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic as an important area requiring scrutiny. As a result, Committee Members were invited to join a working group to undertake a scrutiny review of the issue.

1.2 A working group was established, consisting of the following Members:

- Councillor Jane Hugo
- Councillor Kim Critchley
- Councillor Andrew Stansfield
- Councillor John Wing
- Mrs Helen Sage, Co-opted Member

1.3 The importance of undertaking the review swiftly was recognised due to the time sensitivity of the issue and the need to determine if schools had done everything required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils during the medical emergency.

1.4 This review relates to the following Council priority:

Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

2.0 Methodology

2.1 The working group held a total of two meetings, but reviewed the majority of its evidence during an information session, as detailed below:

Date	Attendees	Purpose
27 July 2020	Councillors Jane Hugo, Andrew Stansfield and John Wing Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion, Blackpool Council Elaine Ireland, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser	To agree a scope and request any additional information required for the review.
August 2020	Councillors Jane Hugo and Andrew Stansfield Attendance at the headteachers' 'Return to School' meeting.	To observe discussions by schools on the measures in place to support a safe return to school.
9 September 2020	Councillors Jane Hugo, Kim Critchley, Andrew Stansfield and John Wing Mrs Helen Sage, Co-opted Member Paul Turner, Head of School Standards Safeguarding and Inclusion, Blackpool Council Elaine Ireland, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser <u>Sources of information:</u> Feedback from Blackpool headteachers on the support provided by the Council. Review of attendance data during the phased reopening of schools. Responses from the JustUz group of young people on their experience of attending school during the pandemic or the support they received for home education. Review of the provision and distribution of technology for disadvantaged families, children and young people across Blackpool.	To review and discuss the data and information gathered.

3.0 Detailed Findings and Recommendations

3.1 Context of the Review

Timeline of Events

18 March 2020 - Secretary of State for Education announced that schools in England would close from 20 March 2020 for an unspecified period of time.

The UK government announced that GCSE and A-Level exams would be cancelled and that grades would be based on a combination of predicted grades and teacher assessment.

19 March 2020 - The Prime Minister announced that schools would still open for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils and additional guidance on eligibility was issued by the Department for Education.

1 June 2020 – Primary schools in England began to open more widely to Nursery classes and children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

8 June 2020 – Lancashire County Council’s Director of Public Health advised Lancashire schools to remain closed to all but the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils. Blackpool Council continued to give the clear message that schools were open for the specified year groups.

9 June 2020 – The government announced that despite previous plans, primary schools would now not reopen more widely to other year groups due to rising concerns of infection rates.

15 June 2020 – Secondary schools in England reopened for pupils in Year 10 and Year 12 only. School attendance was not compulsory for pupils until the start of the new academic year in September 2020.

August 2020 – Schools were issued with guidance to help with the safe reopening for all pupils from September 2020, when attendance would again be compulsory for all eligible pupils.

September 2020 – Schools in England reopened fully to all pupils.

3.2 The working group noted that only 75 per cent of Blackpool pupils expected to be in school attended at least one session in school before the summer holidays. The Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion agreed that this figure could have been better and offered a number of explanations which had impacted on attendance levels, namely the Public Health message urging people to ‘Stay at home,’ coupled with parental logistical difficulties in getting children to school. A further factor identified was that of the differing messages being received from Lancashire and Blackpool, with Lancashire County Council taking the decision not to reopen its schools more widely. Members agreed that this may have caused confusion to Blackpool parents and could have negatively impacted on pupil attendance figures.

3.3 Key Learning

3.3.1 Examples of best practice from across Blackpool were sought, with St John Vianney’s Catholic Primary School reporting pleasing pupil numbers. Contributing factors were identified as being the communication of a very clear message from the school that the Blackpool Public Health message was the only relevant guidance for parents, along with a proactive pastoral team who contacted any reluctant parents to provide reassurance and the opportunity to visit the school prior to sending their children back.

3.3.2 Clear communication from schools and a robust stance on an unequivocal message to parents was identified as being key to schools’ successful reopening, with a number of channels of communication being utilised:

- Direct communication to schools from the Council which schools then distributed to parents, with this continuing over the summer holidays to reiterate the message to parents that schools were reopening as normal in September;
- A package which was coordinated by the Council’s Communications Team, which included radio messages, leaflet drops, social media updates and notices in local and national newspapers;
- Weekly countdown reminders to the start of school over summer and the continuation of the messages throughout September in order to target any parents who had not sent their children back.

3.4 Elective Home Education

3.4.1 Concerns were raised as to the potential increase in families opting for Elective Home Education (EHE) following the lockdown as a result of several months of compulsory home schooling. A number of measures were identified which would mitigate this risk:

- No additional support was offered to families who opted to home school once the restrictions were lifted and all virtual learning ended in September in order to encourage all families to send their children back to school;
- Any children identified as being considered ‘at risk’ of not returning to school were proactively contacted by the attendance team to deter any applications for EHE and the team had been supplemented with extra staff to assist with this process;
- The Council sent a letter to all Blackpool-educated families informing them that no school places would be held and there was no guarantee that a place would still be available in the same school in the future once an application for EHE had been completed;

- Feedback suggested that families had actually been deterred from home schooling after experiencing the reality first hand.

3.5 Health and Safety

- 3.5.1 The Council's Health and Safety Team undertook the role of reviewing and giving feedback on all of the educational establishments, excluding Further Education and Higher Education, in Blackpool. This included Local Authority schools, Academies with a Council Service Level Agreement and any school in the area requiring help, advice and guidance. All school risk assessments sent to Children's Services were shared with the Health and Safety Team who then reviewed and provided feedback on the risk assessment directly to the school and to Children's Services.
- 3.5.2 After feedback and amendments had been implemented, the Health and Safety Team visited all Local Authority schools to carry out a monitoring exercise to ensure that all elements incorporated into the risk assessments were actually reflected in the procedures in place. All monitoring visits proved this to be the case. Further school visits also took place in September once pupils had returned.
- 3.5.3 Feedback from the Health and Safety team indicated that the vast majority of Headteachers and School Business Managers fully understood and embraced the guidance and all appeared to have worked hard to ensure their schools were Covid Secure in line with Health and Safety law and current government guidance. The Health and Safety Team offered continued support to schools as well as providing guidance and advice with any queries and concerns which schools raised.

3.6 Provision of Technology for Disadvantaged Families, Children and Young People

- 3.6.1 On 19 April 2020 the Department for Education announced funding for laptops and Wi-Fi devices for vulnerable children and young people as part of the response to Covid-19. Laptops were promised for any disadvantaged families, children and young people who did not currently have access to them. Government eligibility criteria outlined that devices should be provided to care leavers, children and young people aged 0 to 19 with a social worker and to disadvantaged Year 10 pupils. In addition, internet access, through 4G hotspot devices, was also to be made available for care leavers, young people aged 11 to 19 with a social worker and disadvantaged Year 10 pupils.
- 3.6.2 Allocation and distribution of devices for disadvantaged Year 10 pupils was the responsibility of the Local Authority for maintained schools or the appropriate Academy Trust. As a result, Blackpool Council was only responsible for the provision to disadvantaged Year 10 pupils within the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). The Department for Education (DfE) allocated 20 devices to the PRU. For disadvantaged Year 10 pupils across Blackpool who attended an Academy, schools received their own allocations and ordered these directly from the DfE.
- 3.6.3 Allocation and distribution of devices for children with a social worker and for care leavers was the responsibility of the Local Authority. 906 devices were allocated based on the DfE eligibility formula.

3.6.4 The Council worked with the PRU and the social work teams to identify children and young people who were in need of a laptop and/or internet access. Devices arrived in late June and the majority were delivered to school settings in early July. Around half of the devices were delivered via schools thereby enabling the schools to add the devices to their own systems and networks. Schools then made arrangements to handover the device directly to the child or young person. The remainder of the devices were delivered directly through social workers or an allocated worker.

3.6.5 Some of the comments the working group received from young people on their experiences of home schooling included the following:

'My teachers have been really supportive, they have rung me and my carers every week to see how I am.'

'I have been completing my school work on-line every day.'

'I didn't feel very well supported at the start but then the last four weeks when we had set lessons to do then I did feel more supported. I am not that worried about going back to school after the summer as I am pretty much up to date with all my work and I did learn things from my lessons.'

3.7 Second Wave Preparation

3.7.1 Reassurance was sought as to the preparations in place for a potential second wave of the virus. The working group was informed that as provisions for remote learning had now been implemented, these would be easier to reactivate as required. Communication channels with schools and parents had now also been set up as a result of the initial wave and so messages could efficiently and easily be sent immediately following any change in government restrictions. It was felt that valuable lessons had been learnt during the first lockdown and Members were assured that provisions were adequately in place to effectively manage any future restrictions.

3.8 Conclusion

3.8.1 Following a full review of the data and after consideration of responses from headteachers, pupils and key Council officers, the working group was satisfied that adequate provisions had been made for the safe return to school for children and staff.

3.8.2 Concerns remained regarding the, as yet unknown, longer term mental health implications arising from the pandemic and Members raised this as an area requiring close monitoring and consideration in the months ahead. The potential impact on academic performance was also considered, with agreement reached that the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee should continue to monitor schools' results data over the long term.

3.8.3 Members wished to commend the efforts of the schools and the supporting Council officers in the implementation of virtual school provisions and a safe return to the classroom for Blackpool's children and young people.

3.9 Recommendations

- R1 That further consideration be given by Council officers to the implementation of measures to monitor and address the potential impact on mental health to both pupils and school staff as a result of the pandemic.
- R2 That the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee should continue to monitor academic performance and the impact of the pandemic on affected cohorts.
- R3 Council officers should continue to review practices in preparation for a second wave.
- R4 A best practice summary guide should be produced and distributed to schools by the Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion which outlines the key success criteria as identified during the initial closure and reopening.
- R5 A letter of thanks should be extended from the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee to Headteachers and schools for their commitment and efforts in the continued safeguarding of pupils’ learning and wellbeing in exceptional circumstances.

4.0 Financial and Legal Considerations

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 **There are no foreseen financial implications as a direct consequence of the recommendations**, however schools have incurred some costs due to the Covid Secure arrangements they have had to put in place such as the provision of hand sanitiser/hand wash stations and face coverings. In addition, during lockdown schools would have lost income due to the closure of children centres and after school clubs.

4.2 Legal

4.2.1 **There are no foreseen legal implications as a direct consequence of the recommendations**, however there could be significant financial/legal risk if a civil claim was brought against a school for Covid-19 (if a member of staff or pupil were to get the virus). Covid-19 is an uninsurable risk and therefore the school/Council would be liable for any claim if negligence could be proved. As long as the Covid Secure risk assessments continue to be updated and monitored to ensure that they are working in practice and that the schools continue to follow the national guidance about opening then this will protect them should a claim be received. The health and safety team have continued involvement with the schools to offer advice and guidance as required to mitigate this risk.

School Response to Covid-19 Pandemic Scrutiny Review Action Plan

Recommendation		Cabinet Members' Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Lead Officer	Committee Update
R1	That further consideration be given by Council officers to the implementation of measures to monitor and address the potential impact on mental health to both pupils and school staff as a result of the pandemic.				Paul Turner	
R2	That the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee should continue to monitor academic performance and the impact of the pandemic on affected cohorts.				Paul Turner	
R3	Council officers should continue to review practices in preparation for a second wave.				Paul Turner	
R4	A best practice summary guide should be produced and distributed to schools by the Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion which outlines the key success criteria as identified during the initial closure and reopening.				Paul Turner	
R5	A letter of thanks should be extended from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee to Headteachers and schools for their commitment and efforts in the continued safeguarding of pupils' learning and wellbeing in exceptional circumstances.				Paul Turner	

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager.
Date of Meeting:	19 November 2020

COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2020-2021

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the contents of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2020-2021.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To approve the Committee Workplan, taking into account any suggestions for amendment or addition.

2.2 To monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations/actions.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure the Workplan is up to date and is an accurate representation of the Committee's work.

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? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1. Scrutiny Workplan

A Scrutiny Workplanning Workshop was held on Thursday 2 July 2020 to consider items for

inclusion on the Committee's workplan for the 2020-2021 municipal year, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 11(a). The workplan is a flexible document that sets out the work that will be undertaken by the Committee over the course of the year, both through scrutiny review and Committee meetings.

Committee Members are invited to suggest topics at any time that might be suitable for scrutiny review through completion of the Scrutiny Review Checklist. The checklist forms part of the mandatory scrutiny procedure for establishing review panels and must therefore be completed and submitted for consideration by the Committee, prior to a topic being approved for scrutiny.

5.2 **Implementation of Recommendations/Actions**

The table attached at Appendix 11(b) has been developed to assist the Committee in effectively ensuring that the recommendations made by the Committee are acted upon. The table will be regularly updated and submitted to each Committee meeting.

Members are requested to consider the updates provided in the table and ask follow up questions as appropriate to ensure that all recommendations are implemented.

5.3 **Ten Year Education Strategy Consultation**

Following an invitation to all Committee Members, representatives of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee attended two briefing sessions with Mr Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion on the proposed Ten Year Education Strategy.

Committee Members requested several amendments to the document as well as identifying areas which they felt required further elaboration within the strategy. Mr Turner incorporated all suggestions prior to submitting the amended document for consideration and approval by the Executive on 2 November 2020.

5.4 **Inclusion in Education Scrutiny Review**

5.4.1 Following the Committee's approval of the Inclusion in Education final report at its meeting on 10 September 2020, Councillor Stansfield as Lead Member met with the Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration to discuss the proposed Action Plan of Recommendations.

5.4.2 Attached at Appendix 11(c) is the resulting Action Plan of Recommendations which incorporates the Cabinet Member's comments.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

5.5 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 11(a): Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workplan

Appendix 11(b): Implementation of Recommendations/Actions

Appendix 11(c): Inclusion in Education Action Plan of Recommendations

6.0 Financial considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Risk management considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Equalities considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

11.1 None.

12.0 Background papers:

12.1 None.

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APPENDIX 11(a)

Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2020-2021	
Extra Meeting TBC (Summer 2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Headstart Update – To receive an update on the work of Headstart. 2. Blackpool Families Rock - To receive a presentation on the new Blackpool Families Rock working model. 3. Corporate Parent Panel – To receive information from JustUz.
19 November 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Offending Team Improvement - To receive an update in relation to the YOT Improvement Plan theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Community 2. Children’s Social Care Improvement – To receive an update in relation to the Improvement Plan Theme of: Improving the effectiveness of strategic partnerships to improve outcomes and protect children. 3. Children Safeguarding Assurance Partnership – To receive an update on the Pan-Lancashire partnership arrangements (formerly the BSCB). 4. Education – To receive an overview of results data and consider the impact of Covid-19 on attainment levels. 5. School Response to Covid-19 Pandemic Scrutiny Review Final Report – To consider the final report from the scrutiny review of the school response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
28 January 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Offending Team Improvement - To receive an update in relation to the YOT Improvement Plan theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions 2. Children’s Social Care Improvement – To review the Children’s Services Medium Term Financial Plan. 3. SEND – To receive an update in relation to the SEND theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve Post 16 education, employment and training. 4. Education – To receive an overview of results data.
22 April 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Offending Team Improvement - To receive an update in relation to the YOT Improvement Plan theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children In Secure Accommodation 2. Children’s Social Care Improvement – To receive an update in relation to the selected Improvement Plan Theme. 3. Education/SEND – To receive an update in relation to the SEND theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a continuance of local provision and services to meet the needs of children with SEND.

Scrutiny Review Work	
Ongoing	Inclusion in Education - Final report has been approved by the Executive. The Committee will now undertake monitoring and overview of recommendations.
July 2020	Input into the consultation process for the proposed Alternative Provision/SEND Plan.

Ongoing	School Response to Covid-19 Pandemic – Final report for consideration and approval by the Committee, before being submitted to the Executive.
September 2020	Input into the consultation process for the draft Ten Year Education Strategy.
TBC	Close scrutiny of Children’s Social Care Medium-Term Financial Plan to include information on the proposed increase in investment in Fostering . Item was referred from the Audit Committee on 25 June 2020.
November/December 2020	Better Start Task and Finish meeting to review the work to date of Better Start as it reaches its half-way point.
TBC	The Experience of Looked After Children in Blackpool To gain an understanding of the journey of a cohort of Our Children including scrutiny of their experiences with various partners such as the Police, Health Services and schools. To potentially also include their experiences of Alternative Provision. Links to the following themes taken from the CSC Improvement Plan: <i>1. Improve the systems and quality of Agency Decision Maker’s processes for approval and matching of foster carers and adopters.</i> <i>2. Ensure that our social workers are prepared for court proceedings.</i>
TBC	Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools To review the provisions within schools to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. Potential link to SEND target of: <i>‘Children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health.’</i>

APPENDIX 11(b)

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
1	20.06.19	To receive key performance data in relation to A Better Start.	January 2021	Merle Davies, Director, Blackpool Centre for Early Child Development	Ms Davies confirmed that the first full set of key performance indicators would be available for consideration by the Blackpool Better Start Partnership Executive Board in December 2020, following which the data would be provided to the Committee.	
2	09.01.20	To receive the findings of the National Association of Children's Services examining the costs of residential placements for children and the impact on Local Authorities.	April 2020	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services	Delayed due to Covid-19 pandemic.	
3	09.01.20	To receive results of YOT re-inspection once completed.	TBC	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services		
4	09.01.20	To receive the findings of the Department for Education impact study on out of area placements.	TBC	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services	Awaiting information from DoE.	
5	09.01.20	To receive a presentation on the Blackpool Families Rock model of working.	TBC	Kara Haskayne, Head of Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker	To be presented at the Special meeting of the Committee, date as yet to be confirmed but anticipated to be Summer 2021.	
6	13.02.20	To receive Medium Term Financial Planning information in relation to Children's Social Care.	18 June 2020	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services	To be considered at the January 2021 Committee meeting. Relevant Member briefing session arranged for 3 December 2020.	

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
7	13.02.20	To receive longer term planning information via the Children and Family Strategic Partnership action plan.	TBC	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services	To be circulated once available.	
8	10.09.20	To seek further information from the Director of Community and Environmental Services on the work underway to review ways to increase youth service provisions across the town.	Ongoing	John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services	Mr Blackledge to update the Committee once further work has been undertaken.	
9	10.09.20	That officers give regard to including CYP Members in future consultation processes on policies/projects relevant to the remit of the Committee.	Ongoing			

Inclusion in Education Scrutiny Review Action Plan

	Recommendation	Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Lead Officer	Committee Update
R1	(a) Blackpool's In-Year Admissions process should be reviewed by the School Admissions team as a matter of urgency.	Agreed		Jan 2021	Paul Turner	
	(b) Academies should maintain clear and positive lines of communication with parents and make efforts to discourage requests for in-year transfers wherever possible. The Council's Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion should closely monitor all in-year transfers and report any concerns to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.	Agreed		Jan 2021	Paul Turner Academy Heads	
	(c) Appropriate training and guidance should be provided to all Academy staff who receive enquiries about admissions to ensure correct and appropriate advice is offered to parents. Academies should maintain records of all training undertaken, with the Council's Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion undertaking annual checks of training records.	Partly agreed – the Council has no legal jurisdiction over the Academies but will work closely with them to clarify admissions guidance and to act in an advisory role.		Update Jan 2021	Paul Turner Academy Heads	

Recommendation	Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Lead Officer	Committee Update
<p>(d) Admission meetings with parents and start dates for new pupils should be provided by Academies within timeframes agreed with the Council to avoid lengthy delays and prolonged gaps in a pupil's education provision. The Council's Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion should closely monitor admission meeting timeframes and pupil start dates and report any concerns to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>Agreed, however national consultation on proposed changes to the School Admissions Code is currently ongoing and anticipated to be completed by January 2021. These changes will impact implementation of the recommendation but can be incorporated into guidance provided to Academies.</p>		<p>Update Jan 2021</p>	<p>Paul Turner Academy Heads</p>	
<p>(e) More prescriptive admissions procedures should be reintroduced by the Council's Admissions Team, with a unified procedure agreed with the Academies and introduced across the trusts. The Council's Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion should lead on the coordination and implementation of the admission procedures.</p>	<p>Partly agreed – whilst supportive of this recommendation, the Council lacks legal jurisdiction but will seek to standardise admissions procedures across the Academies as far as possible within its advisory role.</p>		<p>Update Jan 2021</p>	<p>Paul Turner</p>	

	Recommendation	Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Lead Officer	Committee Update
R2	Wider communication and publication of the continued pursuit of court proceedings should be implemented by Academies to discourage Elective Home Education applications in cases where non-attendance sanctions are being pursued. Academy Principals and Headteachers should report their implemented measures to the Council's Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion.	Partly agreed – the Council would advise discouragement of EHE only in cases where provision has been identified as being unsatisfactory and can act in its advisory role to Academies to suggest a tightening up of their procedures.		Update Jan 2021	Paul Turner Academy Heads	
R3	The appeals process should be clearly explained to parents via the provision of a simple information leaflet clearly explaining the process, to be produced by the Council's Admissions Team and issued by Academies.	Agreed		Nov 2020	Paul Turner	

	Recommendation	Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Council Lead Officer	Committee Update
R4	The Council should ensure that Fair Access Process meetings should return to their previous format whereby Headteachers were present and involved in the process. Commitment to attend from Academies would be required in order to allow fair and transparent administration of the allocation of places. The Council's Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion to report back to the Committee on the implementation of the recommendation within twelve months.	Partly agreed – Academies have ultimate control over their own processes but the Council is supportive in putting the recommendation to the Academy Chief Executives and Headteachers for implementation.		Update April 2021	Paul Turner Academy Heads	
R5	(a) To address the issue of each Academy operating its own appeals process, the whole system should be reviewed and brought into alignment across the Academies. This would be coordinated by the Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion in conjunction with the trusts.	Not accepted. The appeals process is managed individually by each Academy and as such the Council is unable to enforce alignment across the Academies as a whole.			Paul Turner	

	Recommendation	Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Council Lead Officer	Committee Update
	(b) Appeal letters to parents should be more user-friendly and all Academies should use the same format. This would be coordinated and approved by the Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion.	Partly agreed – the Council is supportive of the recommendation and will work with Academy Trusts to advise on the format of appeal letters.		Update Jan 2021	Paul Turner	
R6	That the Council's Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion work with all academies to identify the support required within each school for pupils in need of mental health provision, for example in the form of counselling sessions from appropriately trained specialists. Once the support required had been identified, to work with the academies to put that provision in place and report back to the Committee on progress in approximately twelve months.	Agreed		Nov 2020	Paul Turner	
R7	To request that Academies consider the reintroduction of Council representation on their Local Governing Bodies in order to allow valuable input from elected Councillors and an additional link with the Local Authority.	Agreed – the Council will issue the request to Academies.		Jan 2021	Paul Turner Academy Heads	

Recommendation		Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Council Lead Officer	Committee Update
R8	A Blackpool Schools' Pledge should be created by the Council's Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion, in conjunction with Academy Principals and Headteachers, with the joint aim of providing timely and appropriate school places for all Blackpool secondary pupils. All Academy Headteachers should be encouraged to sign up to and adhere to the Pledge. The Pledge should be reviewed annually with the Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion reporting any compliance issues to the Committee.	Agreed – this can be incorporated into the launch of the 'Ten Year Education Strategy.'		Jan 2021	Paul Turner Academy Heads	