

# Blackpool Council

20 January 2021

To: Councillors Clapham, D Coleman, Critchley, Hugo, Mitchell, Owen, Stansfield and Wing  
Dr Allen and Ms Sage, Co-Opted members

The above members are requested to attend the:

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 28 January 2021 at 6.00pm  
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 19 NOVEMBER 2020** (Pages 1 - 8)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee held on 19 November 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 YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN - TRANSITIONS** (Pages 9 - 14)

To provide an update on the progress of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan theme area of Transitions.

**5 CHILDREN'S SERVICES MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN** (Pages 15 - 28)

To provide an update on the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Plan – its aims, the contributing work underpinning the plan and the progress to date.

**6 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY** (Pages 29 - 56)

To provide an update on the implementation of the current Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy.

**7 EDUCATION ASSESSMENT UPDATE** (Pages 57 - 60)

To inform the Committee of the headlines in relation to end of Primary Phase assessment, GCSE equivalent assessment and A-Level equivalent assessment in the 2019-2020 school year and to share the current thinking about how the exams and assessments that were scheduled for summer 2021 will be replaced.

**8 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN** (Pages 61 - 82)

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

**9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note the date of the next meeting of the Committee as Thursday 22 April 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](mailto:Elaine.ireland@blackpool.gov.uk)

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## MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2020

### **Present:**

Councillor Hugo (in the Chair)

Councillors

Clapham

Critchley

Owen

Wing

G Coleman

Mitchell

Stansfield

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)

Mr Stephen Ashley, Independent Scrutineer for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children Safeguarding Assurance Partnership

Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services

Ms Moya Foster, Head of Targeted Intervention Services

Ms Jeanette Richards, Assistant Director of Children's Services

Mr Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion

Mrs Elaine Ireland, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 10 September 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

### **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, December 2020 to April 2021 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

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line with the preferred model following the Ofsted review.'

Members questioned how the proposed purchase of the building was progressing as well as seeking clarification on whether the intention was for all Children's Social Care staff to be housed in a single building. The suitability of a town centre location was also questioned.

Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council (Children) reported that the vendor was seeking an unrealistic price for the property and as such the purchase had not proceeded. She advised that the intention was to find a suitable premises for the whole of Children's Services to be housed in a single building and that ideally a town centre location would be preferred due to its accessibility.

## **5 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS**

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

Questions were asked in relation to EX44/2020 '2020-30 Education Vision' with assurance sought that the Council's vision as outlined in the document would be achieved in light of its reduced influence over Academies. Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services highlighted that the Education Vision was not a Local Authority document and as such it had been developed with partners, including Blackpool's Academies, over a series of months. She went on to point out that an open and transparent relationship between the Local Authority and the Academies was of paramount importance. The Committee acknowledged the benefits of Blackpool having established an Education Improvement Board, particularly for a Local Authority of its size.

## **6 BLACKPOOL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - IN THE COMMUNITY**

Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services updated the Committee on the progress of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan theme of 'In the Community'. She reminded the Committee that following the Youth Justice Board and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Prison and Probation inspection in October 2018, Blackpool's Youth Justice Service had received an inadequate rating. Mrs Booth reported that whilst progress had been made since the inspection, she acknowledged that the service still had further work to do to improve practice.

Reference was made to the significant work which had been undertaken with a group of young people involved in anti-social behaviour and was cited as a good example of multi-agency working with the police, Families in Need, Children's Social Care, the Community Safety Team and the Youth Justice Service. The Committee proposed that further work was still needed with regard to anti-social behaviour as despite agreements being in place with families, the negative behaviour from some young people continued. Ms Moya Foster, Head of Targeted Intervention Services advised that a robust support system was in place to offer assistance to parents and carers of children with vulnerabilities and

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specific needs and that work was ongoing to further strengthen links with families.

The Committee requested that a briefing session be provided in order to provide Members with a complete overview of the improvement plan and the cumulative progress to date. In addition, the specific names of the lead persons from the partnership as identified within the agenda report were requested.

**The Committee agreed:**

1. That a briefing session be scheduled to provide a detailed overview of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan and which should include information on the progress made to date;
2. That the names of the officers responsible for each theme of the Improvement Plan be circulated to Committee Members.

**7 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

Mrs Jeanette Richards, Assistant Director of Children's Services provided the Committee with an update on the Children's Social Care improvement plan theme of 'Improving the effectiveness of strategic partnerships to improve outcomes and protect children.'

Reference was made to 'Working Well Together with Children and Families' and the 'Neglect Strategy' which were both documents which had recently been launched in conjunction with Children's Services. The Committee asked that Members be included in the circulation of such documents going forward as well as requesting that the two documents cited be provided to Committee Members as soon as possible.

The Committee was informed that consideration was being given on how best to embed a better understanding and identification of neglect in key workers, specifically within primary schools. In response to a request for additional details of this work, Mrs Richards reported that the Council's Principal Social Worker had led on the provision of training following the launch of the Neglect Strategy, which focused on the identification of signs of neglect at the earliest opportunity. Mr Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion assured the Committee that significant support had been made available to schools alongside a wide range of training provision on neglect.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mrs Richards outlined the six different forms of neglect and the profile tool utilised by practitioners to help identify how signs of neglect might manifest at different age groups.

When asked about which partners still required significant improvement, Mrs Richards reiterated that a general overall improvement was sought to support better outcomes for Blackpool's children. Members discussed the inclusion of third sector partners, with Mrs Richards advising that although there was some good third sector partner engagement, further strengthening of these relationships would be beneficial. Specific detail around individual providers was sought, as opposed to considering the third sector as a whole and Mrs Booth, Director of Children's Services reiterated that further work was needed in the development of the voluntary hub to ensure all third sector partners were adequately

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included.

The Committee sought assurance that any anticipated increased demand over the Christmas period could be adequately dealt with, particularly in light of the current lockdown restrictions and the increased demand this could generate. Mrs Booth reported that due to a proactive approach by the Council, schools and partners there was no anticipation of a significant increase of demand following the current lockdown. Committee Members praised the support which had been accessible to schools during the pandemic, providing feedback of the out-of-hours advice and assistance that had been offered by the Council.

**The Committee agreed:**

1. That the 'Working Well Together with Children and Families' document and the 'Neglect Strategy' be requested for circulation to Committee Members;
2. That the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Members should be included in the circulation of relevant documents going forward;
3. That further updates on the improvement of relationships with third sector partners be reported back to a future meeting of the Committee.

**8 CHILDREN SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE PARTNERSHIP**

Mr Stephen Ashley, Independent Scrutineer for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) attended the meeting to provide an update on the Pan-Lancashire safeguarding partnership arrangements.

After providing a brief summary detailing the formation and structure of CSAP, Mr Ashley reported that since the launch date in September 2019, the partnership had made significant improvements to practices but that further work was needed to ensure continued progress.

Members were advised that current structures which had already been in place had been utilised as the basis for CSAP groups, such as the Neglect and Domestic Abuse groups. In addition, he reported that the Getting to Good Board provided a useful basis for CSAP to undertake scrutiny work and would be utilised as an analysis tool to measure impact and progress. Mr Ashley noted the good progress made by Blackpool, stating that many positives could be identified including the strengthening of partnerships during a particularly difficult period.

Mr Ashley concluded by reporting that he was in the process of completing CSAP's initial annual report, following which he intended to produce future annual reports to run from April to April each year. In addition, he would be aiming for the completion of up to four scrutiny reports per year.

**The Committee agreed:** To invite Mr Ashley back to future meetings of the Committee to present the CSAP Annual Report and subsequent scrutiny reports.

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

Mr Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion presented a report outlining the projected outcomes for children in the 2020 summer examinations at GCSE and A-Level and the anticipated impact on attainment of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Turner reported that a significant proportion of pupils who applied to go to university in September 2020 had been successful despite initial disappointment when grades had been moderated downwards by an algorithm created by the Department for Education. This had also been evident at GCSE level, initially affecting the opportunity for pupils to progress on to college or work and apprenticeships. Once the algorithm had been discounted and the awarding method reverted to centre assessed grades, this allowed children to progress onto their chosen destinations. The Committee requested information on the specific numbers of pupils who had been unsuccessful in gaining a place at their chosen university as a result of the algorithm process as well as the number of examination retakes and appeals, which Mr Turner agreed to circulate to Members following the meeting.

The Committee was informed that Ofsted inspections had been suspended and Mr Turner advised that this would potentially have an impact upon the progress that Blackpool schools that were not yet 'Good' would have towards achieving a grade of 'Good' or better. The Committee questioned whether schools would still be making progress towards their improvement, suggesting that continued development despite the reduction in Ofsted inspections should be aimed for. Mr Turner assured Committee Members that a support package was available to all schools via Blackpool's Education Improvement Board and that progress had not ceased with regards to each school's improvement journey. He anticipated that sufficient progress would be achieved and that monitoring via the Education Improvement Board and Academy Trusts would continue.

The Committee sought information on next year's cohort of pupils who would be due to sit their examinations in summer 2021, seeking clarity on any support that would be provided to pupils to compensate for any learning which had been missed as a result of the pandemic. Mr Turner informed Members that schools would be in receipt of a catch-up grant of £80 per pupil which could be used to provide additional tuition for pupils. In addition he advised that on-line learning packages, remote teaching and the provision of recorded lessons would all be made available for any pupils who were required to miss school due to Covid-19. Decisions were still to be taken with regards to the summer examinations, with the suggestion that pupils might only sit examinations for core subjects.

The support being offered to schools was praised by the Committee and the importance of protecting staff and pupil well-being was noted. Members discussed the system of assessing pupils' well-being via the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School survey (PASS), with the benefits of collecting data on pupils year-on-year to generate a clear profile being considered. Mr Turner confirmed that the PASS assessment had been implemented

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across all Blackpool schools, with a long-term funding commitment being made to the assessment programme.

In response to a question on whether Blackpool had experienced an increase in applications for pupils to be home schooled, Mr Turner reported that Elective Home Education (EHE) had seen an initial surge of cases in September 2020, with approximately 90 per cent of new applications being as a result of the Covid-19 situation. As such, Mr Turner anticipated that a proportion of these would be temporarily home schooled and would apply to return to school once the pandemic had subsided. He informed the Committee that 1.6 full time equivalent members of staff had been recruited as EHE Officers to support families who chose to educate their children at home.

**The Committee agreed:** That the town-wide Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS) survey data be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

### **10 SCHOOL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC SCRUTINY REVIEW - FINAL REPORT**

The Committee considered the final report of the scrutiny review of the School Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**The Committee agreed:** To approve the School Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic report for submission to the Executive.

### **11 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2020-2021**

The Committee reviewed the contents of the Workplan for 2020/2021. As part of its monitoring of the implementation of recommendations and actions, the Committee received a progress update from Mr Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion on the recommendations resulting from the review of Inclusion in Education which were due for a November 2020 update.

In relation to 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,' Mr Turner reported that the appeals information was now clearly outlined and accessible to parents via the Council's website and as such was now easier for parents to access and navigate.

With regards to 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,' Mr Turner advised that a full time equivalent counsellor, based at Educational Diversity was now available to provide Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to all schools. The service included a free

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four week placement on referral through the Athena panel. Mr Turner agreed to report back to the Committee on the impact of the counselling service in twelve months' time.

**12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Committee was noted as Thursday 28 January 2021, commencing at 6pm.

**Chairman**

(The meeting ended at 7.15pm)

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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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
<b>Meeting</b>	28 January 2021

## YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN - TRANSITIONS

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on the progress of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan theme area of Transitions.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of progress made on the theme of Transitions in order to provide scrutiny, challenge and support.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

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

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

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 No other alternative options to be considered.

### 5.0 Council priority:

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

### 6.0 Background information

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

6.2 The findings of the inspection resulted in Blackpool Youth Justice Service receiving an inadequate rating. Prior to the inspection it had been recognised that improvements were needed both in the strategic partnership and the operational teams 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 to achieve good outcomes.

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

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

- 6.4 Early in 2020, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) requested that all YOTs completed a self-assessment based on the updated Standards for Children in Youth Justice Services (2019). Five self-assessments were completed, one of which focused on Transitions. The transitions theme is a child first approach and focuses holistically on the variety of transitions a child may make. The YJB acknowledged that this was a new area for YOTs to develop and would require a substantial commitment from partner agencies to achieve progress and practice development. The YJB planned to undertake moderation and validation visit to authorities where needed. This month, January 2021, Blackpool Youth Justice Service have been notified that the YJB assessment team felt that Blackpool had given an honest National Standards assessment of Blackpool's improvement journey. The YJB acknowledged that Blackpool is now at the stage of implementing/adopting tools, systems and processes therefore no further action from the YJB is needed.
- 6.5 To inform the self-assessment our YOT Service Manager and Team Managers completed a number of audits alongside the Senior Probation Officer from the National Probation Service (NPS) as part of the standards for youth justice self-assessment. The audits evidenced some areas of good practice and identified areas which require improvement. A multi-agency partnership meeting was convened with colleagues from NPS, Health commissioning and provider services, Education, Children's Services and Housing to review the self-assessment and develop an action plan to look at the array of transitions which vulnerable children may encounter. This group continues to meet on a regular basis to review the initial plan and develop opportunities for practice improvements. The action plan is shared and reviewed by the YOT Executive Board on a bi-monthly basis.
- 6.6 Via the self-assessment and audits the following areas were acknowledged as requiring development and are contained in the themed action plan for the service and partners to develop:
- Service Level Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) needed to be reviewed with partners and updated. The pan-Lancashire MoU with NPS is being reviewed this month.
  - Elements of the transition and resettlement plan will be completed on a pan-Lancashire basis as NPS works across the whole of Lancashire. Developments will be agreed across the three local authority areas to ensure consistency of service provision.
  - It was evident that a child open to the YOT can make numerous transitions during their time with the service. Clearer guidance, practice procedures and training will be developed and delivered to ensure practitioners have a full understanding of these. A small working group comprising of the YOT Service Manager, Team Manager, lead practitioner and seconded

specialist workers will be developing a number process and practice guidance to ensure that changes in practice are implemented.

- A multi-agency audit at a strategic and practice level will be completed mid-2021 to measure strategic and practice improvement impact. Data will also be explored during the audit as a possible route to monitor transitions.
- The transition and resettlement theme has clear links to the improvements being completed around the *In Secure* theme. The theme leads in each area will ensure progress against actions is shared and that there is a joined up response to relevant sections.
- A recent audit focusing specifically on the transition from youth justice to probation has surfaced further development points and these will feed into the updated plan.

6.7 At the end of December 2020 the Council was informed, by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP), that Blackpool had been chosen to be part of a Northwest area pilot thematic inspection of youth to adult transitions across criminal justice agencies.

This inspection will set out to see what influences the decision to transition a young person and what a good transition looks like for them at the different stages; decision making, pre transition, during transition and post transition.

The inspection will be conducted remotely and will focus on:

- young people transitioning from YOTs to probation services subject to community orders
- young people transitioning from YOTs to probation services subject to the community element of a custodial sentence
- young people transitioning from YOTs to probation services as a result of committing a further offence
- young people remaining with the YOT and not transitioning to probation services

The start date of the inspection, originally January 2021, is due to be determined following a request to HMIP by the North West Association of Directors of Children’s Services to defer the inspection due to the timing of the announcement and the additional pressures faced by Local Authorities due to the COVID pandemic.

6.8 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

7.1 None

**8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 The YOT partnership will fund the service in 2020/2021 through the budget outlined below:

AGENCY	STAFFING COSTS (£)	PAYMENTS IN KIND – REVENUE (£)	OTHER DELEGATED FUNDS (£)	TOTAL (£)
LOCAL AUTHORITY	129,051	-	-	129,051

POLICE SERVICE	43,674	-	41,941	85,615
NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE	40,000	-	5,000	45,000
CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP	39,974	-	15,444	55,418
POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER	-	-	-	-
YJB GOOD PRACTICE GRANT	327,141	-	4,499	331,640
OTHER	-	-	294, 535	294,535
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>941,259</b>

There are no current budget pressures.

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 There are no legal implications to consider

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

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

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 In Blackpool young people from a white ethnic background accounted for 96% of all young people receiving a youth caution or court conviction. Those from a black ethnic background accounted for 1%, those from an Asian ethnic background for 0% and those from a mixed ethnic background for 3% (data from Executive Board September 2020).

It has been identified that Our Children, who are looked after, are disproportionality supported by our YOT service. A working party is established to consider the issues and take any relevant action.

We have identified as an area of development the need to ensure protected characteristics and diversity are specifically referenced and considered in our transition process.

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

12.1 There are no sustainability, climate change or environmental factors to consider.

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 The work in developing the in transitions and resettlement theme relies on working closely with internal and external colleagues. There is a regular multi-agency meeting in place, where partners will

be consulted and involved in service developments.

The service is strengthening its consultation and co-production approach with our young people and victims to support improved service delivery.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None

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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
<b>Meeting</b>	28 January 2021

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Plan – its aims, the contributing work underpinning the plan and the progress to date.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That the Committee notes the report provided and considers the progress made to date in implementing the strategy.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The Children's Services Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and additional investment was approved by the Council's Executive on 13 July 2020. This report provides an update on progress in implementing the strategy over the following six months.

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 Modelling undertaken by Finance and Corporate Development Unit colleagues took into account three different scenarios: the likely consequences of the next five years following the same pattern as the previous five years; the likely impact of already agreed and proposed activities over the next five years; and the likely impact of the projects requiring additional investment (in addition to the already agreed and proposed activities).

4.2 The modelling showed that a continuation of past trends will lead to substantially escalating cost over the next five years. It also shows that the impact of initiatives already in place and ongoing will substantially mitigate cost pressures. The modelling also demonstrates the value of investing in further activities targeted at critical cost drivers: the placements of children in public care. Finally, the model shows that expenditure on Children's Services is unlikely to fall in the next two financial years, but should do so in the following three years after that.

## **5.0 Council priority:**

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

## **6.0 Background information**

- 6.1 The revised medium term financial strategy built on and developed the transformative work undertaken in Children's Services over the previous 18 months. Through that time, services had improved and become more robust and work with vulnerable families had become more effective and child and family focused. The medium term financial strategy makes clear the link between better support for children and families and long-term cost reduction. The strategy also emphasised that to achieve more for children and families, more quickly, further investment in critical areas of the service was required. Modelling suggested that investment will be repaid in both improved outcomes for children, young people and their families and in reduced costs to the Council.
- 6.2 The drivers for rising expenditure in Children's Services are well understood and have been for some time: the number of children in care and the number of those children in costly residential placements or independent fostering agency foster homes.
- 6.3 The medium term financial strategy is ambitious, but it needs to be, given the current level of expenditure on Children's Social Care. It is critical that the financial pressure arising from children in care and the cost of their placements be addressed. The Council's exposure to the external market in placements for children in care needed to be reduced and limited. The MTFP and its supported work-streams sought to do so.
- 6.4 Supported by ongoing investment by the Council and under the oversight of the Department for Education Commissioner and Adviser, between February 2019 and July 2020, Children's Social Care has been reviewed and redesigned, beginning with the multi-agency safeguarding hub and the assessment and support teams and then working backwards through the service. This led to a much more robust, resilient service overall. It has also led to legacy issues being addressed, especially around long-term neglect and children and families with repeated cycles of Children's Social Care involvement. This, in turn, led to an increase in the number of children in care from the late autumn of 2019 and into 2020.
- 6.5 This growth in the number of children in care substantially increased the pressure on Children's Services' budgets, as the Council's own foster home capacity was exhausted. This then led to an increase in the number of children placed in foster homes purchased from independent fostering agency placements, in addition to increased fragility in placements and escalation of a steady number of young people into the most expensive placements of all: children's homes.
- 6.6 Working with colleagues from Essex County Council, Blackpool reviewed critical parts of its Children's Services designed to keep children with families and reduce the cost of finding homes for those children who have to enter care. This led to the redesign of the 'Edge of Care' offer and this report and the further proposals agreed in July 2020 sought investment to transform the fostering service and the recruitment and training of foster carers, together with funding for an innovative project to step-down children in children's homes to foster homes, by using a time-limited therapeutic children's home.

6.7 Following agreement of the Medium Term Financial Plan, an Implementation Board was set up to monitor progress, which consists of senior officers from Children's Services (DCS and Assistant Director), Finance, Legal Services, the Corporate Delivery Unit, the Chief Executive and the Director of Communications and Regeneration. The Board meets monthly and has now met four times.

Underpinning the Medium Term Financial Plan were five work programmes:

- **Fostering Service Transformation** - The recruitment campaign launch for new foster carers took place on 13 January 2021. Recruitment following the soft launch of the revised support offer and payment package continues, with 15 assessments of putative foster carers ongoing. New applicants have had panel dates for approval postponed because of delays in completing the necessary checks, in particular medical checks. Approval at panel should follow in the New Year. Revised payment rates for foster carers were successfully implemented in November 2020. Tighter management of the service and, by extension, foster carers is leading to some turnover in foster carer households, in addition to some carers being lost through Special Guardianship, or alternatively temporarily having no children in placement.
- **Therapeutic Children's Home and Step Down** – Initially delayed through registration difficulties (it was due to open in early October 2020), but operating since late November 2020 with the first child entering the home before Christmas. For the two years of the project, 12 children a year will enter the home for a 16-week period before being supported to step down into foster care for 12 weeks.
- **Legal Services Transformation** - Recruitment into new roles within the structure is complete, with all but one now in post. Locum solicitors all finished before Christmas. Recent increased activity in court has led to higher expenditure in October 2020 on external counsel fees. Focus in the New Year will be on reducing external counsel fees, improving relationships with the court and supporting better presentation of the Council's position on individual cases in court.
- **Edge of Care Services** - The new service has expanded its reach over the past month. The Families Together Intervention Team is now working with a total of 23 families (53 children). The service has further capacity and is reviewing families with longer term child protection plans to identify further families for support. In addition, the Families Together Family Group Conference Co-ordination team is working with families with 69 children. Over the past nine months the service has worked with or is currently working with families including 243 children and young people, of which fewer than 10 per cent have entered public care. While it is too early to arrive at a clear estimation of the effectiveness of the services, initial indications are positive. In a wider context, the number of children entering care in Blackpool has slowed significantly. The number of children entering public care over the past six months is lower than at any point in the past six years, with entry rates for those aged five years or older lower than at any point in the past decade.
- **Discharges from Care** - Four panels considering the permanence for children with full care orders met during November 2020, December 2020 and early January 2021, with further panels planned running into the New Year. The number of children leaving care continued at a high rate, with 119 children leaving in the past six months, with an acceleration during the autumn as Family Courts resumed more regular sittings. A further group of those children identified for discharge during the original project work in the winter of 2019/2020 are due to be heard in court in the first two

months of 2021.

- 6.8 Reporting to the Board identified the unplanned ending of placements for children in care as both a major concern in itself because of the impact on the child and a significant driver for cost increases. There has therefore been a further work programme added to the strategy focused on **Children in Care Experiencing Multiple Homes**. Work has begun to develop a more child-centered process to matching each child to the best suitable home, exploring what sort of additional support would be effective in supporting children at risk of an unplanned ending in placement and developing a more consistent approach to managing unplanned endings to placements. Work will be informed by analysis of a sample of recent unplanned endings, followed by focused learning and reflection pulling together expertise from the social work service and support teams.
- 6.9 As part of the reporting, critical risks to delivery of the plan are identified, mitigation identified and progress discussed. The two risks that pose the most significant challenge to the delivery of the objectives are: **Vacancies and levels of experience in key social work teams**, which, in spite of ongoing recruitment and new approaches and additional incentives, remains an ongoing issue for the Council and **Delays in family court hearings**, where there remains a substantial and increasing legacy of court proceedings lasting more than six months and in discharges from care awaiting court scheduling. There is tighter oversight of court proceedings within the Council and closer working between legal services and Children's Services, but practice still needs to improve further to combat avoidable delays. The courts also continue to operate at reduced capacity.
- 6.10 Overall, across the first six months of the Medium Term Financial Strategy there have been many positive developments and most of the building blocks are now in place. However, as anticipated in the modelling, these changes have yet to have an impact on the pressure on social care budgets, as it will take time for these projects to impact on the cost drivers: children in residential placements and Independent Fostering Agency foster homes. The financial pressure from these placements is significant and remains so, with the full year effect of new placements agreed during 2020 being felt in 2021/2022.
- 6.11 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

## 7.0 List of Appendices:

- 7.1 Appendix 5(a) – Children Service's Medium Term Financial Strategy

## 8.0 Financial considerations:

- 8.1 Maximum Investment of £1.2m per year for two years in the therapeutic children's home and Specialist Foster Carer project.

Investment of £1.1m in Foster Carer Payment rates.

Investment of £300,000 to support the reorganisation of the Fostering Service (full estimated cost £470,000, but a proportion of the additional cost to be met using existing funds).

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 There are no direct equalities considerations. The long-term impact of the changes are likely to be more children in Blackpool either living with their own birth family or with another family in the Blackpool area.

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

12.1 There are no direct climate change considerations, although one outcome of the MTFP should be fewer children placed at distance from Blackpool, which would reduce the necessity of longer distance travel for social work visits and ongoing contact with birth family

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 The progress summary contained within the body of the report reflects the papers provided to and the discussion at the MTFP Implementation Board, which contains senior officers from Children's Services, Finance, Legal Services, the Corporate Delivery Unit, the Chief Executive and Director of Communications and Regeneration

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None.

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## MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### Aim of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Over the next 5 years, we will seek to reduce expenditure on Children's Services by 33% from current levels, while improving the outcomes of local children and families.

To achieve this, we will support fewer children through statutory services, with more families supported by universal services and early help services. In particular, we will have fewer children in care; and more of those children will be supported by foster carers recruited and approved by the council. Most importantly of all, we will have many fewer children in care living in children's homes and other residential provision.

### Underpinning Aims

Over 5 years, we will:

- **Reduce the total number of children placed in residential provision (rate per 10k) to national average levels** - a reduction of 66% required
- **Reduce the number of children placed in foster care with independent fostering agencies by 75%** - a reduction of 120 children, based on those children currently placed with in foster homes with IFA carers
- **Reduce the total number of children in care (rate per 10k) to the average of similar authorities** - a reduction of 47% required.
- Reduce the total number of children with child protection plans (rate per 10k) to the average of similar authorities – a reduction of 44% required.
- Reduce the number of section 47 enquiries undertaken (rate per 10k) to the average for similar authorities - a reduction of 30% required.
- Reduce the number of referrals accepted by children's social care (rate per 10k) to the average for similar authorities - a reduction of 31% required.
- Reduce the total number of children aged 0-17 supported by Children's Social Care (rate per 10k) to the average for similar authorities - a reduction of 25% required.
- Reduce the total size of the workforce in line with the reduced number of children open to children's social care.

We will also invest 15% of the savings achieved from the above in preventative services supporting Children and Families.

The underpinning aims are roughly ranked in their order of importance, financially speaking. The aims highlighted in bold have specific activities or projects to support their achievement. Achievement of the other aims will principally be supported through implementation of the new model of practice, together with training and development of staff and tight management and analysis of performance.

The following paper details the specific projects being undertaken to address the main cost drivers, the ones highlighted in bold.

The analysis overleaf explains the logic of the savings achieved by the aims. Figures are indicative, but based on actual cost and spend.

<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy Logic</b>			£ 47,500,000	Total projected spend on Children's Social Care 2020/21				
	# in resi.	# in care	# CPP	# Sec 47	# referrals	# CIN	# IFAs	Staff Cost
Blackpool number	70	656	361	1147	2789	1908	161	
Source date	01/04/2020	01/04/2020		1/2/20 to 1/5/20	1/2/20 to 1/5/20	01/04/2020	01/04/2020	
Blackpool rate per capita of c&yp	0.002	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.10	0.07	0.01	
Blackpool rate per 10k	24.2	227.0	124.9	396.8	964.9	660.1	55.7	
Blackpool # c&yp 0-17 (mid 2018 estimates)	28,904							
Comparator Rate per 10k	9	119.6	70	278	662	496		
Source	Nat. Ave 2019	SN Ave 2019	SN Ave 2019	SN Ave 2019	SN Ave 2019	SN Ave 2019	SN Ave 2019	
Expected Reduction under MTFS	63%	47%	44%	30%	31%	25%	75%	10%
Percentage reduction as a number	44	310	159	343	876	474	121	
Unit Cost	£ 130,100	£ 17,677					£ 24,500	£ 11,725,975
Saving	£ 5,722,631	£ 4,707,770					£ 2,958,375	£ 1,172,598
Total Annual Saving	£ 14,561,373	31% of the total current spend						
<i>Note 1: Unit Cost Saving for Residential is between an average weekly residential cost (£3,500) and a costly IFA placement (£1,000), annualised</i>								
<i>Note 2: Unit Cost saving for the number of children in care is the annual cost of an in-house foster care placement using new payment rates (skills based)</i>								
<i>Note 3: Unit Cost Saving for IFAs is the difference between current average IFA cost per year (£42,233), adjusted to remove mother &amp; baby IFA placements, which distort the average upwards; and the average for in-house foster carers using the new payment model (£17,667).</i>								
<i>Note 4: Staffing Cost is the 2020/21 Staffing Expected Spend for CSC</i>								
<i>Note 5: No cost saving is attributed to a fall in the number of CP plans, Sec. 47s, Referrals or number of children in need. All savings from these reductions are bundled into savings from staffing costs</i>								

## **Introduction**

Firstly, it needs to be recognised that this analysis of Blackpool's problematic level of expenditure on Children's Services is not new – the drivers have been clearly identified, understood, articulated and modelled before, especially in the work of Finance colleagues.

However, in spite of the clarity of the analysis, the council has struggled to contain cost pressures and fundamentally address the cost drivers, especially, the number of children in care and the number in expensive placements. In fact, perversely, as understanding has increased, so has the size of the problem. Some of the rise is driven by exacerbating external factors, such as increasing demand in the market for placements for children in care, especially residential placements; and consequent unit cost rises. However, a substantial part of the rise stems from a long term inability to consistently address and remedy the drivers of rising cost. In short, while the council has been clear about the reasons for rising cost it has been unable to satisfactorily address those causes.

Secondly, a lot of the building blocks of an effective MTFP are already in place. This paper (and the focus of the detailed appendices) mainly covers the additional projects and initiatives that are proposed to tangibly affect and reduce the key cost drivers (numbers of children in residential placements, number of children in independent fostering agency (IFA) foster homes and the number of children in care). But these proposals should not be seen in isolation: they necessarily sit on top of what has already been put in place.

### *Building Blocks already in place*

1. The most important recent change that should affect the MTFP is the implementation of the new approach to social work practice, 'Blackpool Rocks', which seeks to change the way that local services operate: building relationships with local families and children and adopting a more positive strength-based approach. Local professionals are being trained in this approach and the recording system is being amended to support the new approach to practice. In addition, social work managers have received training from Partner in Practice colleagues from Stockport, which is designed to support social workers in working in the new manner.
2. Tighter oversight of care planning in the Care Planning Senior Officer Panel; and greater senior oversight of children at critical periods in their care planning, especially those on the cusp of entering care (in Public Law Outline pre-proceedings); and those that have just entered care, either on a section 20 agreement, or on an Interim Care Order.
3. Closer working relationships with partner agencies, through the overarching Children's Partnership Board; but also through joint training, discussion and working with partners at critical parts of the children's social care system, such as Child Protection Enquiries, Conferences and Reviews; and in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Awaken and other partnership teams.
4. Creation of a Family Group Conferencing Team, working with extended family groups to develop robust family plans for caring for children, chiefly as a tool for preventing entry into care, but also as a means of stepping down children and young people from care.

In the list of projects and activities that follows, it is important to consider the inter-relationship and dependency of the initiatives. For maximum transformative effect, Blackpool needs to move forward on all fronts simultaneously.

### **The Logic for the Proposals**

Since the main source of cost pressure is from the placements of children in the council's care, action in the short and medium term needs to be focused on this area. It is both the most volatile area of expenditure and the area where a coherent strategy can have greatest impact in the medium term.

The overall *demand* for placements will be mainly addressed by the long term strategy and processes outlined above, together with the revised Edge of Care service approved recently by CLT. The *supply* of placements, the *local market* for placements and most importantly our *care planning* for children in care, especially those in residential placements are all more likely to be affected by a different approach.

Broadly speaking, there are five component parts to the medium term strategy – all intended to reduce the numbers entering care, expedite children leaving care; or step down children and young people in care from the more expensive/most expensive types of provision:

1. A comprehensive review and transformation of the fostering service and payments to carers (Fostering Business Case is Appendix B)
2. Development of an therapeutic children's home with outreach support and Specialist Foster Carer Recruitment to support step-down from residential placements. This will need to be procured from a private sector provider, given the urgent need to reduce spend in this area and the absence of specific skills and experience within the council.

*It is these two that aspects require additional investment*

3. A revised 'Edge of Care' Service, to reduce the number of children entering care.
4. Continued application of the Dartington Service Design Lab methodology, building on the work already undertaken by Innovate Project Team, Legal Services and Supporting Our Children teams, seeking to mainstream the work, with support from the Corporate Delivery Unit.
5. Developing a semi-independent offer building on the Positive Transitions model that is currently working well, but directed at children in care, esp. those in residential placement.

In addition, there are a large number of supporting initiatives currently being undertaken to reshape the local market for placements and Blackpool's relationship to that market, most importantly:

- Proactive engagement with the local Independent Fostering Agency market through direct work with key local providers; and work with Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen and Cumbria on how we can more effectively, jointly contract for more complex, hard to find care through jointly contracting for placements, such as large sibling groups, early adolescents and children with complex needs. (revised Commissioning Strategy in Appendix C)
- Shaping the local residential children's home market, trying to ensure more of the local capacity, of which there is plenty, is available to Blackpool children and young people, rather than children from further away.
  - Blackpool has 70 Ofsted registered 'children's home' beds in the town (24 children's homes, owned by 7 providers). All 7 providers are being approached to talk about how we can have a relationship of "Blackpool first" for their placements. This will include the possibility of paying to keep beds free when we have a child that is likely to imminently need a home in such specialist provision.

## MODELLING IMPACT TO INFORM FINANCIAL PLANNING

It is extremely difficult to model the impact of all of the proposed initiatives listed above, as they all are closely linked. To a large extent the conclusions of the modelling reflects the assumed effectiveness of the strategies and/or the ineffectiveness of previous strategies.

However, with these limitations in mind, we have developed three broad scenarios:

1. Modelling through the impact of doing nothing, i.e. assuming that the long term net annual increase in children in care continues and the local authority is no more effective than in the past 5 years in either meeting placement needs from in-house provision, exiting children from care expeditiously, or preventing their entry in the first place.
2. Modelling the likely impact of currently agreed projects/initiatives.
3. Modelling the likely cost-benefit/impact of additional proposed projects/initiatives in addition to those already in place, namely:
  - a. Therapeutic children's home/Specialist Foster Care Step-Down from residential provision
  - b. Fostering Service Transformation.

### ***Model 1 – Nothing Changes and the next five years follow the same trajectory as the last 5 years.***

This is most simply modelled through looking at the average entry into care for the past 5 years (2015 to 2019), the average rate of exit and the increase in the use of higher cost placements (IFAs and residential provision).

Using this methodology (more detail is available in Appendix A), suggests an increase in spend over the next 5 years as below. The analysis also suggests that there would be over 830 children in care by the end of the period.

Total estimated spend for 2020/21 (000s)	£ 47,500					
<b>Additional Pressure from (all 000s)</b>		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Residential provision		£ 1,040	£ 2,080	£ 3,120	£ 4,160	£ 5,200
Independent Fostering Agency Placements		£ 1,248	£ 2,496	£ 3,744	£ 4,992	£ 6,240
Numbers in Care		£ 87	£ 87	£ 87	£ 87	£ 87
<b>Total Pressure</b>		<b>£ 2,375</b>	<b>£ 4,663</b>	<b>£ 6,951</b>	<b>£ 9,239</b>	<b>£ 11,527</b>
<b>Total estimated spend (000s)</b>		<b>£ 49,875</b>	<b>£ 52,163</b>	<b>£ 54,451</b>	<b>£ 56,739</b>	<b>£ 59,027</b>

Alternatively, using the model developed to look at the impact of proposed changes and projects outlined below, the increase in spend is less, but the rise in the number of care is even higher (870+)

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Total Pressure	7,987	9,861	9,739	10,272	12,864
Total Projected Spend	48,487	50,361	50,239	50,772	53,364
				<i>all figures in '000s</i>	

In sum, while the headline figure differs depending on the complexity of the methodology used, both models show a substantial increase on what is already a significantly overspending budget.

### ***Model 2 – Models the impact of currently agreed initiatives and makes assumption about their effectiveness and reach (these assumptions are outlined in more detail in the attached Appendix A)***

Using a tougher average baseline for net entry into care based on the past 4 and a half years (2016 to end of May 2020), which gives a net increase of slightly less than 50 children a year, but applying

assumptions around the effectiveness of key activities that are either on-going, or are planned and do not require additional investment.

Key activities include:

- Changed approach to practice (Blackpool Rocks),
- Repeated ‘Dartington Service Lab’ review of cases;
- Revised Targeted Prevention (‘Edge of Care’) service
- Improved management of the Fostering Service, but no change in rates
- Regional Adoption Agency functioning effectively and widening the number of possible adopters.

This gives a summary trajectory as below, which sees steady projected spend for the first two years, at £47m before falling to £41m by the end of year 5 – still £0.5m above the budgeted spend for 2020/21.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Pressure	£ 6,893	£ 6,189	£ 3,165	£ 849	£ 513
Total Projected Spend	£ 47,393	£ 46,689	£ 43,665	£ 41,349	£ 41,013
				<i>all figures in '000s</i>	

Of course, one can amend the assumptions to be more or less optimistic, the assumptions used are based on 50% effectiveness in the key activities. The modelling suggests that the two most important planned initiatives are the Edge of Care Service and the repeated identification and targeted work to achieve exit from care (Dartington). This is because of the reach of the two activities and because they address cost drivers at source (entry into care and exit from care).

The biggest driver for savings is from stemming entry into residential provision through better work preventing entry into care (the revised ‘edge of care’ offer). If entry into residential provision can be more effectively limited, then the age profile of those currently within the provision will lead to a natural decline in the total number (as has been modelled in the past by colleagues in Finance). A further issue worth considering here is that 10 young people currently in residential provision entered care in the past 12 months. So there is more of a connection between entry into care and residential numbers than one might initially assume. This means that it is crucial to both avoid entry and to have effective alternatives to residential provision for older children who do enter care, which is one of the reasons why the additional investment in the council’s fostering service and a change in the relationship with external, private-sector fostering agencies is potentially so important.

The financial modelling only considers the projected spend on children in foster care and residential provision. It does not consider spend on children in care in other types of provision, which is assumed to remain steady throughout the period, nor does it consider any wider changes on staffing numbers.

It is likely that success in the key activities above will have other impacts, such as lower numbers of children in care, a lower number of children in other placements (not fostering or residential); a lower total number of children open to children’s services; and hence a lower number of workers required. Looking at recent trends and the pattern of current placement, it is likely that the next five years will also see more children placed in supported accommodation (often as a step-down from residential provision at 16 years old); more children in adoptive placements (and more expenditure on those placements); but fewer older children in care; and children in care for less time and leaving at a younger age.

The overarching message from the modelling is that, on the basis of the current and planned activity, the likely case scenario is that spend will be contained over the period of time at about £0.5m above

the 2020/21 budget, but with very significant overspends projected particularly in years 1 and 2. The overall number of children in care would fall markedly (down to 422 at the end of the period).

**Model 3 – Models the impact of currently agreed initiatives, as per model 2, and the cost-benefit impact of additional projects (more detail in Appendix A)**

The model builds on model 2, but with the addition of two further projects designed to affect critical cost drivers at source: numbers in of children in residential care; or foster homes purchased by the local authority from Independent Fostering Agencies. As noted earlier, the council has seen growth of the number of children in residential care over the past 5 years (+50%); and rapid growth in the number in IFA placements over the past year (+60%).

The model:

- Apportions net growth of children in care across ‘foster care’ and ‘other’ placements, based on where children are likely to be placed (mainly foster care), as per model 2 above; but
- Changes the apportionment of this net growth between internal and external fostering to reflect the rebalancing over the next 5 years towards internal fostering and away from external fostering.
- For those currently in external fostering placements, it is assumed that movement out of those homes is most likely to occur at placement breakdown, or because a child leaves through age. We will not generally be seeking to move children from settled placements.
- Analysis of IFA placements between March 2019 and March 2020, shows 20% of those in an IFA placement in March 2019, moved to a different fostering or home environment placement during the following year. The model uses this figure (20%) to define the group where there is the possibility of a movement in any one particular year. The age profile of children in IFA placements is also used as a predictor of likely movement out of these placements.
- The model uses the costs outlined in the Fostering Business Case, regarding the investment required in the service and the rates paid to foster carers; and the cost of a therapeutic children’s homes/Specialist Foster Carer two-year project proposal.
- The model assumes 50% effectiveness in the therapeutic children’s home/Specialist Foster carer proposal; and assumes that the council is able to recruit and retain foster carers.

This model gives a summary trajectory of spend as below:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Pressure	8,173	6,081	(495)	(4,726)	(6,793)
Total Projected Spend	48,673	46,581	40,005	35,774	33,707
				<i>all figures in '000s</i>	

As might be expected, the model shows that the proposals, by addressing critical cost drivers directly, cause projected spend to fall sooner; and, by changing the balance of fostering provision, achieve greater longer-term savings. In short, if successful, they will more than pay for the additional investment required. Moreover, detailed modelling of the therapeutic children’s home and specialist foster carer proposal indicates that it only has to be successful with a third of children in the project to be financially self-sustaining. Finally, the overall number of children in care is projected to fall to just over 400 (407).

**A Final Note**

Delivery of the savings described in the paper is critical to the sustainability of the council and can only be achieved through a cross-council effort. While many aspects of delivery squarely lie with children’s services and social work professionals and managers, experience shows that the degree of change required will need extensive support from other officers with complementary skills, especially colleagues in finance, legal services and the corporate delivery unit. A cross-council project team working cohesively on the major projects listed in the paper and reporting to a senior officer in

Children's Services, will be essential to maintaining momentum and achieving the scale of change required. Given its centrality to the council's budget planning, there also needs to be regular progress reports to CLT, both overall, but also for the critical individual component projects. This is a very significant transformational programme and needs to be managed as such.

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Philip Thompson, Head of SEND and Early Years
<b>Meeting</b>	28 January 2021

## SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To provide an update on the implementation of the current Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy.

The current strategy expires at the end of 2021 and in February a working party will begin to review and create a new strategy. Members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee will be involved in this working party.

### 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.

3.2 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 There are no options to be considered at this time, this report is an update on progress so far.

### 5.0 Council priority:

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

### 6.0 Background information

- 6.1 The update requested by the Committee to cover the post-16 elements of the strategy has been expanded to cover the whole strategy as progress towards the post-16 outcomes has been hampered due to the impact of Covid-19.

- 6.2 **Priority One - To support early year's providers and mainstream schools to improve inclusion and education for all children with SEND.**
- 6.2.1 The Inclusion Advisory Teacher Team has taken on four additional staff. These staff will focus on early identification and support schools with meeting the needs of pupils with SEND much earlier.
- 6.2.2 A graduated Approach framework and toolkit has been developed with partners to support the early identification of SEND and to provide a toolkit of support tools for education settings. Over 400 school-based staff have participated in online learning courses developed by the Council.
- 6.2.3 In 2017, 68 per cent of Education, Health and Care plans issued resulted in children attending special school. In 2019-2020, it was 35 per cent. A significant improvement for inclusion in mainstream schools.
- 6.2.4 Blackpool still has 20 per cent of its school-aged children identified as having special educational needs. The national average is 14 per cent. Blackpool also has 4.6 per cent of its children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, national is 3.4 per cent.
- 6.3 **Priority Two - To develop a continuance of local provision and services to meet the needs of children with SEND.**
- 6.3.1 In November 2020 the Council received a national award for parental engagement in developing the local offer and provision.
- 6.3.2 The consultation with Mainstream Schools to open Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision units in their schools went well and there were five successful applications:
- Marton has opened a provision for children with Autism and complex needs for 32 pupils with EHC plans.
  - Mereside will offer a respite provision for children with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) for 12 pupils.
  - Thames has opened a provision for children with SEMH for 12 pupils with EHC plans.
  - Boundary will open a provision for children with SEMH for 12 pupils with EHC plans in January.
  - Revoe has opened a provision for children with Moderate Learning Difficulties and complex needs for 12 pupils with EHC plans.
- 6.3.3 There are no provisions as yet at secondary level but talks are ongoing with those Headteachers.
- 6.3.4 The Lotus Free school for children aged 10-16 is now open and has 21 pupils across year 6, 7 and 8.
- 6.4 **Priority Three - To improve Post-16 education, employment and training.**
- 6.4.1 The Council is working with Special School partners in considering the extension of the estate of the Special Schools to The Oracle building on St Anne's Road. This provision will create a post-16 centre of excellence for SEND, to support the reduction of Young People not in education employment or training in Blackpool and support young people into college or work.

- 6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? **No**
- 7.0 List of Appendices:**
- 7.1 Appendix 6(a) - SEND Strategy
- 8.0 Financial considerations:**
- 8.1 The appointment of four additional Advisory Teachers and the cost of the resource provision has been agreed and is being funded by the designated school grant and Schools Forum and aims to reduce the related overspend.
- 9.0 Legal considerations:**
- 9.1 Children and Families Act 2014 compliance is covered by the SEN Strategy.
- 10.0 Risk management considerations:**
- 10.1 There are no decisions to be taken within the report but the risk of the Council not meeting statutory requirements for children with SEND is significant and can impact the Council financially and with regards to its reputation.
- 11.0 Equalities considerations:**
- 11.1 Children and young people with disabilities have protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Implementing the SEND Strategy fulfils the Council's legal obligation to ensure young people with disabilities receive an education.
- 12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**
- 12.1 Sustainability is covered in the appended strategy.
- 13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**
- 13.1 Internal and external consultations will take place in respect of the review of the strategy as they have in previous years. The Council will in this review have a focus on co-production of the vision and strategy.
- 14.0 Background papers:**
- 14.1 None

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# SEND Strategy 2019 - 2021

## Blackpool Council

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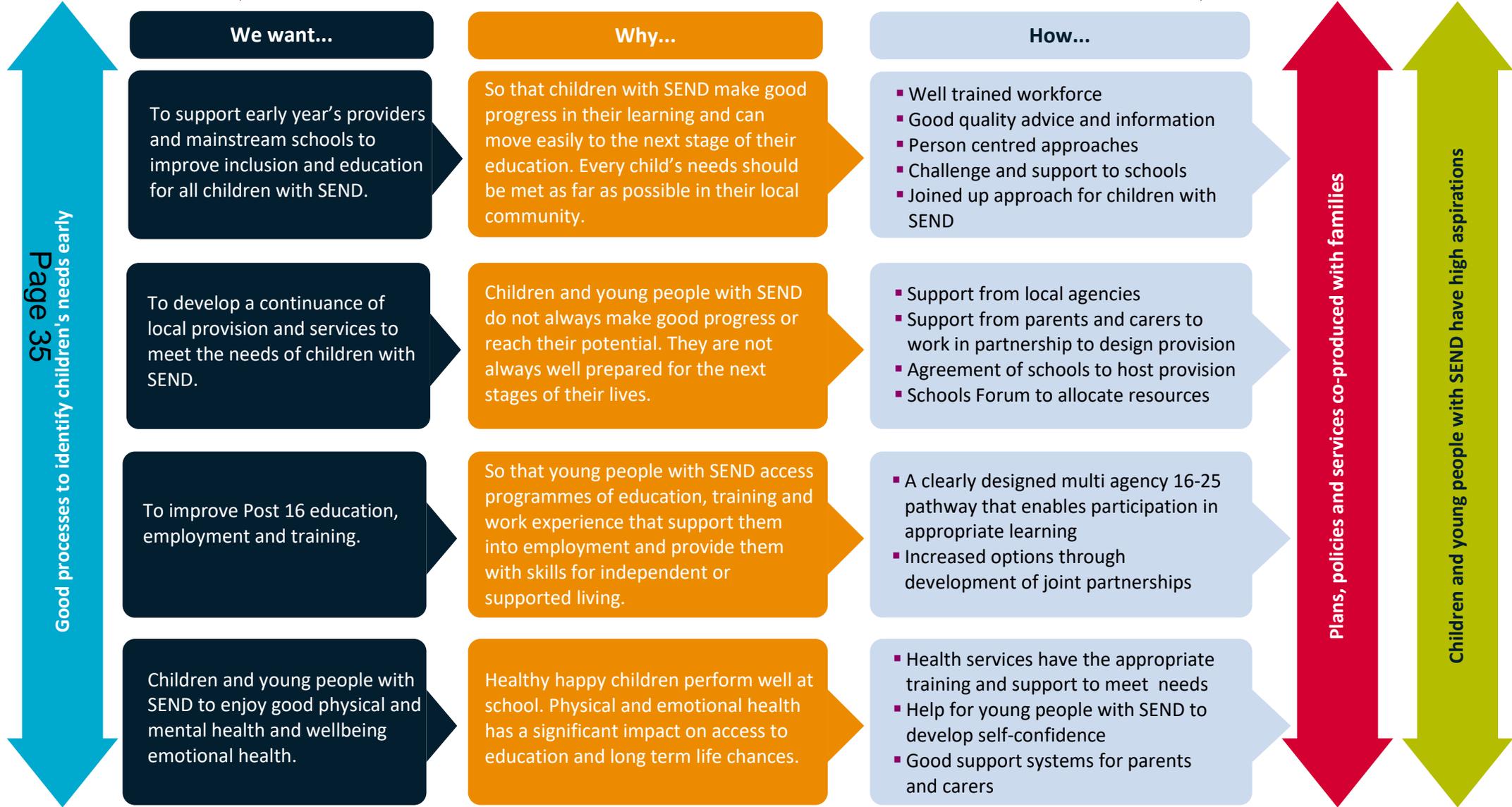


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# Summary of SEND Strategy for 2019 - 2021

**Our vision...**  
 Is for all children and young people in Blackpool, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities or are looked after, to have the right support and opportunities at the right time.  
 So that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood.



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 Good processes to identify children's needs early

Plans, policies and services co-produced with families

Children and young people with SEND have high aspirations

# Introduction

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the biggest changes to SEN in a generation; a new statutory duty on the local authority to ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents/carers are at the centre of decision making and they are given the right support and information to ensure they are able to participate in decisions which help them to achieve good outcomes.

Now in 2018, we have completed a review of our progress in delivering the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014; this document is our shared vision and our next steps for improving the outcomes for every Blackpool child and young person with SEND.

This strategy aims to meet the requirements of the Children and Families Act in a way that is ambitious, inclusive and realistic in a challenging financial context. It forms the Council's policy for SEND.

Developments so far include the formation of a SEND Strategy Board and Operational groups focusing on the effectiveness of the local area to meet the needs of young people with SEND. The board oversees the strategic vision and implementation of the SEND reforms. Person centred planning, young people and parental engagement have been key focuses since 2014. A Young People's Engagement Strategy has been written and a Young People's Voice Coordinator appointed across health and education. The Local Area have made positive efforts to complete the conversion of Statement to Education, Health and Care

plans (EHCP) in a timely manner and all conversions were completed within the DfE timescales set.

Positive engagement is now in place with parents/carers and members of local third sector organisations are members of the SEND Board and Operations Group. Local Authority Officers attend parent forum meetings and parental engagement days occur with a multi-agency approach to gaining parental feedback.

The SEND Board oversee the completion of the Local Area Self Evaluation and monitors the action plan behind it. The development of the Local Offer continues to improve and there is an expectation the Local Offer will become a daily platform for people to use for identifying support and accessing resources.

Going forward we recognise that there is still much to do, to keep pace with demand, to improve the quality of provision further and to ensure that more children and young people can have the specialist support they need in local schools and early years settings.



## Our vision for SEND support in Blackpool

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**Our vision is for all children and young people, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities or are looked after to have the right support and opportunities at the right time, so that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood**

We want to be aspirational and ambitious for all our children and young people with SEND, especially where that child may be looked after. To achieve our ambitions for children and young people with SEND, we will continue to focus on taking actions to reduce inequalities and closing the gap between those who already do well and those who may need extra support to thrive.

Where possible we believe that every Blackpool child and young person should be supported in the community where they live.

We will achieve this through access to good high quality local early years provision, schools and further education settings. In addition to the right learning opportunities, children with SEND should be offered access to appropriate health and care support in response to their assessed needs.

Underpinning this vision is

- A focus on individual strengths and assets
- An understanding of children, young people and families' skills and knowledge
- A focus on building resilience
- The effective use of finances and resources
- Enhancing social networks
- Developing a deeper understanding of the barriers children, young people and their families/carers may face
- Strengthening the involvement in community activities.

Blackpool is committed to early intervention and prevention, providing early help in a timely way so that the needs of local children and young people do not increase. Making sure that we identify needs early and provide the right support, is key to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We will continue to focus on a 'Quality First' approach in our universal settings (in early years, schools and colleges) so that more children learn and make good progress without the need for additional support.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting all our children and young people with SEND.



## Our vision for SEND support in Blackpool

### Everyone who comes into contact with children and young people with SEND and their families has a role to play in:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing the impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

We want to provide a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to age 25. This means high quality and well-integrated services across education, health and social care, which work closely with young people, their parents and carers and where individual needs are met without unnecessary bureaucracy or delay. We aim to meet the needs of children and young people in universal and mainstream settings wherever possible and where more specialist help is needed, we will aim to provide it in Blackpool wherever possible.

We want the journey from childhood to adolescence and through to adulthood to be a good and positive experience for every child and young person. We want them to be getting the right information, advice and guidance in the right places at the right time depending on their needs. We want young people's experience of adolescence to be one where taking informed risks, making choices, being

challenged and challenging boundaries is about the preparation for adulthood journey.

The term "special education needs" does not mean the child/young person's needs will only be educational. Whilst educational progress is fundamental to the SEND Code of Practice, ensuring that children and young people with SEND have access to good opportunities to make educational progress requires a broader approach which includes family and health needs.



## Strategic principles

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### In essence, our vision is underpinned in our strategic principles

- Our plans, services and policies are coproduced with families
- Children and young people with SEND feel safe and protected from harm. They are seen, heard and helped, effectively safeguarded, properly supported and their lives improved by everyone working together
- A person-centred approach to service delivery
- A focus on inclusive practices, removing barriers to learning and high-quality teaching
- Systematic, proactive and appropriate early identification and early help and provision made available locally within supportive communities
- Children, young people and their parents/carers are enabled to plan and make choices about their support and involved as much as possible in decision making
- Greater independence, choice and control for young people and their families over support
- Successful preparation for adulthood, including supporting independence, independent living and training and employment
- Partnership – Education, Health and Social Care services working well together, supported by voluntary and independent organisations and sharing accurate information in the best interests of the child and family
- Integrated, evidence based, high quality services, interventions and approaches – locally provided as far as possible
- Funding and support are allocated fairly and openly.



## Key enablers

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### The key enablers to take this strategy forward and to realise our vision

#### Processes

**Page 40** A well-planned continuum of provision from birth to 25 years that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. This means integrated services across education, health and social care which work closely with parents and carers and ensures that individual needs are met without unnecessary bureaucracy and delay.

- Ensuring local SEND services are inclusive of and integrated with high quality Social Care, NHS and voluntary and community services so that the experience of families accessing services is positive and children and young people's learning, development, safety, wellbeing and health outcomes are well promoted alongside their educational progress and achievements.
- Our strategy requires a robust system of early identification of children and young people's needs. Early identification is being developed on the principle of evidence based, targeted interventions delivered by trained staff to ensure families have their needs met early and they do not experience the level of challenge and difficulty in their lives that require statutory interventions.
- A coherent SEND system designed with the child's need at the centre.
- The success of our strategy is reliant on a multi-agency and whole school/team approach rather than a stand-alone and therefore fragmented "silo" approach to children and young people with SEND.

#### Infrastructure and resources

- Strong strategic leadership by the Council, the education sector and Health, across the SEND system in Blackpool.
- Local education, training and support: a place in a good or outstanding school or provision, mainstream where appropriate, as close to home as possible with health and social care support for children and their families.
- Improving provision and increasing parental choice: working in partnership with providers in the voluntary, community and independent sectors who share our values and vision.
- As we continue to see our High Needs expenditure increase, indications are that the National Funding Formula will cap this. Partnership working with schools will be fundamental to develop more effective and innovative ways to use high needs funding in mainstream schools.



# Key enablers

## People

- Parents/carers and young people to have confidence in SEND services in improving the quality of life for them and the opportunity to coproduce these services.
- Early years settings, schools, colleges and care support services to have the capacity, skills and confidence to deliver high quality provision for children and young people with SEND to improve their educational and health outcomes and their access to wider social development and opportunities and to participate in their local community.
- The importance of providing good training for all staff, whichever setting they are working in. To achieve this aim, we need to use the best expertise and knowledge in educational establishments and other services, to increase capacity throughout the area by sharing best practice and by promoting a model of collaborative working and shared responsibility.
- A commitment to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people, which supports inclusion and understands the barriers to learning, independence and successful preparation for adulthood.

## Joint strategic leadership and management

- Strong governance, accountability and challenge through the Blackpool SEND Strategic Partnership Board.
- The vision for SEND is a golden thread weaving through all provider services, including schools, through a clear commitment from senior leaders including school governing boards.
- Robust pace and delivery of our plans through joint working with the range of support, provision and services across a child or young person's life from birth through to young adulthood.
- All teams and services working towards our strategy through team plans, individual performance and development targets.
- Budgets aligned to our strategic priorities.



## Strategic objective - One

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We want to support early year's providers and main stream schools to improve inclusion and education outcomes for all children particularly those with SEND, including those children who are looked after

Research tells us conclusively that high quality care and learning experiences in the early years have a significant impact on outcomes for children and lay the foundations for better life chances. There is no group for whom this is more important than children with SEN and Disabilities.

We are committed to ensuring the inclusive education of children and young people and the removal of barriers to learning.

There is an expectation that all educational settings will work to enable all children and young people to develop, learn, participate and achieve their best possible educational potential and achieve their aspirations.

We want every child's needs to be met, as far as possible, in their local community, by local early years providers and mainstream schools.

We expect every early years provider and mainstream school to make effective provision for children with SEND, so that they make good progress in their learning and can move on easily to the next stage of their education and later into employment and independent adult life.



# Strategic objective - One

Why is this important	What outcomes do we want to see?	What do we need in place to achieve our outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Taken from the January 2018 statistics in Blackpool there are 18,996 school age children. There are 3,037 currently identified as having a special educational need, this is 16% of the total school population. There are 555 pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan not including early years and post 16</li> <li>▪ The national average split of pupils with EHC plans is 47% in mainstream and 53% in special. In Blackpool the split is 21% in mainstream and 79% in special</li> <li>▪ The total percentage of pupils with SEND support is 18.9% compared to an England average of 14.6%</li> <li>▪ Blackpool meets the England average for the number of pupils with EHC plans</li> <li>▪ The total number of pupils with EHC plans in mainstream schools is significantly less than the national average even though the numbers identified are higher than average. The total</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The percentage of children with SEND assessed in Early Years Foundation Stage as achieving a Good Level of Development to increase year on year. These children are better able to engage with the national curriculum and more likely to reach their full potential at school</li> <li>▪ Children and young people with SEND achieve well at every stage of their learning, including in Literacy, Phonics, and Maths at all key stages, including post 16. This will be demonstrated through good exam results</li> <li>▪ All children and young people with SEND make good progress relative to their starting points and needs</li> <li>▪ The overall gap between attainment of children with SEND including those who are looked after compared with all children to reduce</li> <li>▪ The number of children with SEND being excluded from schools to reduce</li> <li>▪ Above expected levels of attendance for children with SEND</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integrated reviews for all two and three year olds in early years provision, to support the early identification of SEND</li> <li>▪ Professionals who work with very young children, including health visitors, identifying children with SEND early and making appropriate onward referrals</li> <li>▪ Funding arrangements in early years settings and mainstream schools to identify, assess and support children with SEND, following the graduated approach set out in the SEND Code of Practice (“assess, plan, do, review”)</li> <li>▪ A knowledgeable and well trained workforce with sufficient skills to support children with SEND effectively in early years settings and schools</li> <li>▪ Access for families and schools to a range of support services to assist with identification and assessment</li> <li>▪ Good quality information, advice and guidance to assist early years settings and schools to meet the needs of children with SEND</li> <li>▪ Commitment to person centred approaches across all education settings and services so that children and families are equal partners in decisions which are made about how their needs are met</li> </ul>

## Strategic objective - One

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number of pupils on SEND support is also above national average in mainstream schools

- In real terms this means approximately 131 pupils (71 at primary and 60 at secondary) are in special school provision more than mainstream

- Children with SEND to make clear evidence based progress against their EHC plan outcomes
- The percentage of children with EHC plans who are being educated in mainstream as opposed to special schools, to increase to be consistent with national averages

- NHS providers work in a formal partnership arrangement with the council to provide a joined up approach for children with SEND
- The School Improvement Board to challenge and support schools in raising attainment, attendance and improve outcomes for young people
- Rigorous scrutiny of pupil documentation in place to ensure maximum benefit and use of all funding given to schools for SEND/LAC to ensure wise spending than has maximum impact on outcomes for learners

## Strategic objective - Two

We want to develop a continuum of local provision to meet the needs of children with SEND, including Moderate Learning Difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Social Emotional and Mental Health

Blackpool Council maintains a range of provision for children with special educational needs. Most children with SEND will have their needs met in their local mainstream schools. All schools have delegated SEN budgets to help them to support children who have SEND but who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan, that is, children who are at “SEN Support”. In the case of children with Education, Health and Care Plans, the school’s resources will be supplemented by additional funding provided by Blackpool Council. There is now a high level of pressure for places in our local special schools which needs to be addressed, as well as increasing numbers of children transferring to non- Blackpool special schools. Blackpool will never be entirely self- sufficient in being able to meet the needs of all children with SEND locally. However, there is scope to develop more local provision so that more children are able to have their needs met in local schools and within their own communities.

The cost of specialist placements outside of Blackpool is rising to a significant extent; the rate at which these costs are rising is not sustainable in the long term and could lead to a reduction in local SEND support services in order to move resources in to specialist placements.

It is fully acknowledged that there will always be some young people who require very specialist provision which cannot be provided within Blackpool. However, if we can create additional local provision to meet the needs of some of these young people, this will have benefits for those young people and their families and will also enable us to contain costs of specialist placements and protect local SEND support services.

## Strategic objective - Two

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Why is this important	What outcomes do we want to see?	What do we need in place to achieve our outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In Blackpool there are three Special Schools, in addition a new school for students with social, emotional and mental health needs is due to open during 2019. Currently pupils have to travel long distances outside Blackpool to attend independent special schools</li> <li>▪ The special school provision is at capacity and the number of children with EHC plans educated in specialist provision exceeds the average for England. The High Needs budget has increasing pressure to fund places outside Blackpool and this is unsustainable</li> <li>▪ The vision is for a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to age 25 in Blackpool that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. This means integrated services across education, health and social care which work closely where individual needs are met without unnecessary bureaucracy or delay</li> <li>▪ Where schools and other education settings offer good or outstanding provision, children and young people with SEND can be supported to achieve their ambitions and make good progress</li> <li>▪ Data shows us that a significant number of children and young people with SEND do not always make good progress or reach their potential, and are not always will prepared for the next stages of their lives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most children with EHCPs attend and achieve well in high quality local provision and are able to remain with their families and in their local communities</li> <li>▪ Children remain in contact with local services and as a result of remaining within local education services, and so have continuity of support</li> <li>▪ There is an enhanced range of local specialist provision and reduced reliance on external specialist placements</li> <li>▪ The number of children with Education, Health and Care plans remains within national averages</li> <li>▪ Where children do need to become Looked After, their needs arising from the EHCP are fully considered when deciding upon suitable education and home placements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agreement of local schools to host new provision, where the provision is going to be linked to an existing mainstream or special school</li> <li>▪ Support from other local agencies including health to develop new facilities in partnership</li> <li>▪ Support from local parents/carers to co-design the new provision and ensure it meets parents/carers requirements</li> <li>▪ Agreement from the Schools Forum to allocate resources to meet the set up and running costs of new specialist provision</li> <li>▪ The use of the Local Authority Inclusion, Virtual School, Education Psychology, Children with Complex Needs, and SEN officer teams to support schools with inclusive whole school practice approaches</li> </ul>

## Strategic objective - Three

We want to improve Post 16 - education, learning, employment and training

We want all young people with SEND in Blackpool to fulfil their potential and, as far as possible, meet their aspirations; so that they lead happy, healthy lives and are able to make positive contributions as members of their communities.

We want to support this vision through high quality provision in education, training, work experience, apprenticeships and study programmes that support young people into engagement or employment and provide them with skills for independent or supported living.



## Strategic objective - Three

Why is this important	What outcomes do we want to see?	What do we need in place to achieve our outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We want all young people with SEND in Blackpool to fulfil their potential and as far as possible meet their aspirations so that they lead happy, healthy lives and are able to make positive contributions as members of their communities</li> <li>▪ We want to support this vision through high quality provision in education, training, work experience, apprenticeships, and study programmes that support young people into engagement or employment and provide them with skills for independent or supported living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision available to all young people with SEND aged 16-25 to enable them to access purposeful activities (including education, work experience, supported employment, supported internships, apprenticeships, training including voluntary and community projects as appropriate)</li> <li>▪ All young people with SEND have a clear destination pathway and they are able to make appropriate progress whatever their starting point</li> <li>▪ All young people with SEND Post 16 and their parents and carers have access to high quality impartial carers have access to high quality impartial careers advice guidance which prepares them for their next steps in life</li> <li>▪ All young people have access to work related learning activities, as appropriate to their level of ability to enable them to work towards paid employment wherever possible</li> <li>▪ Through partnership working and joint commissioning arrangements for Post 16 SEND services are delivered in a coordinated way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A clearly defined multi agency 16-25 pathway for all young people with SEND that enables participation in appropriate learning opportunities which enable young people to reach their potential and achieve as much independence in life as they can, including paid employment wherever possible. There is no automatic entitlement for young people with an EHCP to remain in education until the age of 25, and for some young people there will be more appropriate pathways to adult life</li> <li>▪ Our vision of SEND Post 16 recognises that some young people with SEND will require longer to achieve their education or training outcomes to enable them to prepare for adulthood in a meaningful way, therefore we need in place:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High quality provision for education, work experience, supported internships and employment</li> <li>▪ Jointly commissioned arrangements and agreed protocols between the Blackpool SEND Strategic Partnership Board, its</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Strategic objective - Three

- All young people have access to a range of SEND Post 16 services and support to provide increased choice and control
- Reduction in NEET figures for SEND and Looked After Children

- partners and its providers for agreed standards of provision
- Increased options and appropriate pathways for Post 16 with Blackpool and its neighbouring local authorities through development of joint provision where appropriate
- Strengthened collaborative partnership working between Education, Children's and Adult Social Care services and Health to enhance local provision for young people with significant needs

## Strategic objective - Four

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We want children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health

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A happy and healthy child will have the best opportunities for learning. The Education, Health and Care Plan will ensure that all children with SEND receive integrated support from education, health and social care services. Support for children with SEND will be the golden thread running through all these services and staff will have the capacity, skills and confidence to provide family centred support to all children.

There will be a focus on prevention and early intervention to ensure that health and care services are provided in a timely manner. Children and families will be provided with information about their health and social care to enable them to make informed choices about the services that they receive. These can and will evolve as the child grows, focussing on early years and adapting as required.

Emotional health and wellbeing underpin child development. This strategy will ensure that all children with SEND to receive appropriate service to support their health and wellbeing needs.

## Strategic objective - Four

Why is this important	What outcomes do we want to see?	What do we need in place to achieve our outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We know that healthy, happy children perform well at school and we know how a child’s physical and emotional health has a significant impact on their access to education and their long-term life chances</li> </ul> <p>We will work together in partnership with children and young people and their families/carers to improve access to the support they need in order to have good health, from both universal and specialised services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information about health provision is clearly explained to children and young people</li> <li>▪ Children and young people learn how to manage their own health and wellbeing</li> <li>▪ Universal services are understood and accommodate the needs of children and young people</li> <li>▪ Children and young people are satisfied with the quality of services offered to meet their needs and have confidence in the professionals working with them</li> <li>▪ Children and young people feel involved in planning and decision making about their health</li> <li>▪ The families of children and young people have the support they need to help them to support their children</li> <li>▪ There are effective networks for children and young people, including friends and family</li> <li>▪ Children and young people’s care is coordinated and connected so people understand their needs and jointly meet them so that they don’t have to keep telling their story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Universal health services which have the appropriate training and support to meet the needs of children with SEND</li> <li>▪ Specialist health services which have the appropriate training and support to meet the needs of children with SEND</li> <li>▪ Specialist health services which can be assessed in a timely manner way as possible, and support made available for families if they do need to wait to access services</li> <li>▪ All providers offering person centred services which put the child at the centre</li> <li>▪ Good co-ordination between services</li> <li>▪ Support systems for parents and carers of children with SEND</li> <li>▪ Help for young people with SEND to develop self-confidence and resilience</li> </ul>

## The strategy will be successful if...

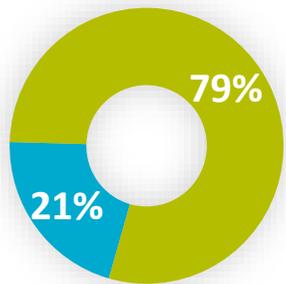
- There are clear processes to identify children's needs early and partners communicate and coordinate services well working together to meet these needs
- Early preventative services help parents/carers to provide appropriate physical and emotional care to their children
- We rely less on statutory assessment of children's special educational needs (SEN) and more on getting the right level of support when it is needed
- Reviews are thorough and lead to improvements in outcomes for the child or young person
- Children and young people with SEND can take part fully in all aspects of education, community and fun activities
- We meet children's needs in mainstream settings wherever possible, and when more specialist help is needed we are able to provide this in Blackpool wherever possible
- We use appropriate evidence-based interventions so all children and young people at all key points through to adulthood. All children, young people and families are positive about their experiences
- There is well co-ordinated transition for children and young people at all key points through to adulthood. Children, young people and families are positive about their experiences
- Children and young people with SEND have high aspirations and we support them to be independent and well prepared for adult life
- We know that provision is improving outcomes: that aspirational yet realistic targets are agreed and progress towards them monitored, and that children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers have been involved in setting and reviewing goals
- We give young people with SEND and their parents/carers the right information and advice about the services they can use at the right time
- Practitioners in education settings feel confident about providing for children with a broad range of SEN and working closely with their parents/carers to provide effective evidence based approaches across the setting
- Children and young people with SEND tell us that they are satisfied with services and that their needs have been met appropriately
- Our workforce has the right skills, competencies and confidence to meet needs of children and young people with SEND
- Children and young people with complex and additional needs have more choice in services based in the community



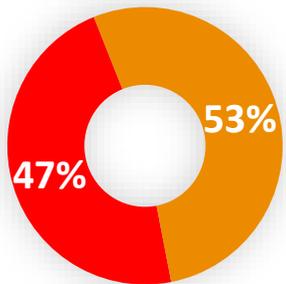
# Key data

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Comparison of pupils with EHC plans 2018



Mainstream Special  
Blackpool

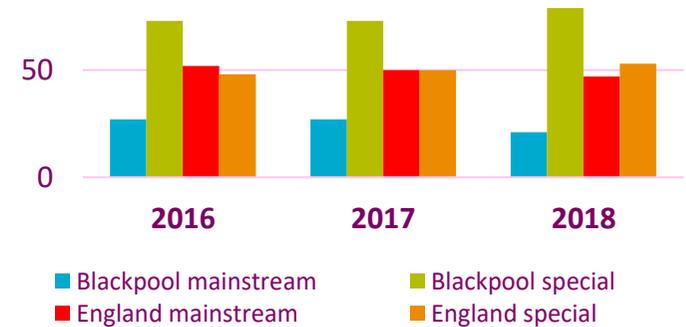


Mainstream Special  
England

## The Challenge

- 3.5%** Higher than the England average number for pupils with SEND Support
- 4.3%** Higher than the England average number for pupils with SEND
- 32%** More pupils on EHC Plans in special schools, compared to mainstream than England average

Percentage of pupils with EHC Plans by type of school

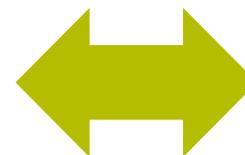
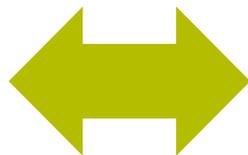


Percentage of pupils with SEND support



## Going forward...

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### Successful delivery of the strategy

Requires a partnership approach owned by all stakeholders working with children, young people and families, including:

- Health
- Education
- Social Care
- Schools
- Voluntary and community organisations

### Blackpool SEND Strategic Partnership Board

- Will ensure that the work is undertaken to achieve the vision
- Monitor and challenge progress
- Will bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to enable public, private, community and voluntary organisations to work together

### Blackpool SEND Operational Group

- Provides the strategic drive, co-ordination and oversight
- Receives regular performance and outcome indicator reports

#### Partners

Grouped under thematic priorities:

- Will be the delivery mechanism for implementation of the strategy

## Delivery plan

The delivery plan is maintained by the SEND strategy board and copies are available if requested.

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### **SEND Team**

Children's Services  
PO Box 4  
Blackpool, FY4 1NA

### **Contact**

**T:** (01253) 476602  
**E:** [send@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:send@blackpool.gov.uk)  
**[www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk)**

To ensure our services are accessible to all, documents are available in alternative formats.  
Please ask for details.

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**SEND Team**

Children's Services  
PO Box 4  
Blackpool, FY4 1NA

**Contact**

**T:** (01253) 476602  
**E:** [send@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:send@blackpool.gov.uk)  
**[www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk)**

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion
<b>Meeting</b>	28 January 2021

## EDUCATION ASSESSMENT UPDATE

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the headlines in relation to end of Primary Phase assessment, GCSE equivalent assessment and A-Level equivalent assessment in the 2019-2020 school year.
- 1.2 To share the current thinking about how the exams and assessments that were scheduled for summer 2021 will be replaced.

### 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.
- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? N/A
- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

- 4.1 None

### 5.0 Council priority:

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

### 6.0 Background information

- 6.1 No formal examinations took place in summer 2020 due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. To enable students to receive qualifications, it was announced that students who were due to sit A level, AS level or GCSE exams in the summer of 2020 would receive a calculated grade. For each student,

schools and colleges have provided a centre-assessed grade for each subject. This is the grade that their school or college believe that they would have achieved had exams gone ahead, taking into account a range of evidence including, for example, non-exam assessment and mock results. It was intended that these grades would be put through a process of standardisation, using a model developed with the Office of Qualifications and Examinations (Ofqual) to arrive at the final calculated grade.

- 6.2 On Monday 17 August 2020 Ofqual confirmed that there would no longer be a standardisation process for AS and A levels or GCSEs and instead all students would be awarded the centre assessment grade submitted by their school or college, unless it was lower than their calculated grade, in which case the calculated grade would stand. Unless there was evidence that a processing error had been made, these grades were to be final. Revised A and AS level grades went to schools and colleges on 19 August 2020, replacing the calculated grades that were issued on 13 August 2020.

Students were largely able to use the grades they received in the summer to move on to their next step.

- 6.3 Students who did not feel their final grade reflected their ability, or who were not able to receive a grade in the summer, had the opportunity to sit an exam in the autumn term. AS and A level exams took place in October and GCSE exams in November 2020.

- 6.4 The examination series for summer 2021 will now also not go ahead and Ofqual and the Government are now beginning a consultation on how best to proceed.

- 6.5 In light of the evolving public health measures, schools and colleges were able to continue with the vocational and technical exams that were due to take place in January 2021, where they judged it right to do so.

The following Primary School assessments scheduled between April and July 2021 have been cancelled:

- KS1 teacher assessments
- KS2 tests and teacher assessments
- Phonics screening check

Schools do not need to complete any further activities to prepare for these assessments. Local authorities will not need to undertake monitoring or moderation activities.

- 6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

- 7.1 None

**8.0 Financial considerations:**

- 8.1 None

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 None

**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 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams?priority-taxon=b350e61d-1db9-4cc2-bb44-fab02882ac25>

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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager.
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	28 January 2021

## 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 Workplan 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 note the action plan of recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review of the School Response to Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 2.3 To approve the scoping document for the Better Start Scrutiny Review.
- 2.4 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: 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 8(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 8(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 **School Response to Covid-19 Pandemic Final Scrutiny Report**

Following the Committee's approval of the School response to covid-19 Pandemic final report at its meeting on 19 November 2020, Councillor Hugo presented the report to the Executive for approval.

- 5.3.1 Attached at Appendix 8(c) is the resulting agreed Action Plan of Recommendations which incorporates the Cabinet Member's comments.

## 5.4 **Better Start Scrutiny Review**

At its Workplanning Workshop on 2 July 2020 the Committee agreed to add the topic of a mid-way review of Blackpool Better Start to its workplan. As a result Committee Members were invited to join a working group to undertake the scrutiny review. In order to utilise the wide range of expertise and knowledge from across the Council, all interested Scrutiny Members were invited to join the working group.

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

- Cllr Jane Hugo
- Cllr Kim Critchley
- Cllr Peter Hunter
- Cllr Andrew Stansfield
- Mrs Helen Sage

The working group agreed the detailed draft scope for the scrutiny review and held two fact-finding meetings on 2 December 2020 and 9 December 2020. Attached at Appendix 8(e) is the scoping document for consideration by the Committee.

5.4.2 At least one further meeting of the working group is intended, with the aim of reviewing the data collected to date and identifying any additional evidence required before formulating recommendations.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**5.5 List of Appendices:**

Appendix 8(a): Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workplan

Appendix 8(b): Implementation of Recommendations/Actions

Appendix 8(c): School Response to Covid-19 Pandemic Action Plan of Recommendations

Appendix 8(d): Inclusion in Education Action Plan of Recommendations

Appendix 8(e): Better Start Scrutiny Review Scoping Document

**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 8(a)

<b>Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2020-2021</b>	
Extra Meeting TBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Headstart Update</b> – To receive an update on the work of Headstart.</li> <li>2. <b>Blackpool Families Rock</b> - To receive a presentation on the new Blackpool Families Rock working model.</li> <li>3. <b>Corporate Parent Panel</b> – To receive information from JustUz.</li> </ol>
28 January 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Youth Offending Team Improvement</b> - To receive an update in relation to the YOT Improvement Plan theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitions</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Children’s Social Care Improvement</b> – To review the Children’s Services Medium Term Financial Plan.</li> <li>3. <b>SEND</b> – To receive an update in relation to the SEND theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve Post-16 education, employment and training.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. <b>Education</b> – To receive an overview of results data and an update on any changes to the summer examinations process as a result of the pandemic.</li> </ol>
22 April 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Youth Offending Team Improvement</b> - To receive an update in relation to the YOT Improvement Plan theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children In Secure Accommodation</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Children’s Social Care Improvement</b> – To receive an update in relation to the selected Improvement Plan Theme.</li> <li>3. <b>Education/SEND</b> – To receive an update in relation to the SEND theme of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a continuance of local provision and services to meet the needs of children with SEND.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

<b>Scrutiny Review Work</b>	
July 2020	Input into the consultation process for the proposed Alternative Provision/SEND Plan.
September 2020	Input into the consultation process for the draft Ten Year Education Strategy.
November 2020	Input into the consultation process for the draft Home to School Transport Policy.
Commenced November 2020	Input into the consultation process for the development of the Literacy Strategy.
Commenced December 2020	<p><b>Blackpool Better Start</b></p> <p>A working group has been formed to review the work to date of Blackpool Better Start as it reaches its half-way point.</p>
February 2021	Input into the development of the SEND Vision and Strategy.
Ongoing	Scrutiny review of <b>Inclusion in Education</b> . Final report was approved by the Executive, the Committee will now undertake monitoring and overview of recommendations.

Ongoing	Scrutiny review of <b>Schools Response to Covid-19 Pandemic</b> . Final report was approved by the Executive, the Committee will now undertake monitoring and overview of recommendations.
TBC	Close scrutiny of <b>Children's Social Care Medium-Term Financial Plan</b> to include information on the proposed increase in investment in <b>Fostering</b> . Item was referred from the Audit Committee on 25 June 2020.
TBC	<p><b>The Experience of Looked After Children in Blackpool</b></p> <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Improve the systems and quality of Agency Decision Maker's processes for approval and matching of foster carers and adopters.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Ensure that our social workers are prepared for court proceedings.</i></li> </ol>
TBC	<p><b>Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools</b></p> <p>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></p>
TBC	<p><b>SEND Funding and Capacity</b></p> <p>Cabinet Member referral.</p>

# APPENDIX 8(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 was held on 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 has advised that lead officers will attend the appropriate CYP Scrutiny Committee meeting to discuss the scope of the review and the proposed approach that will be taken with regards to consultation and mapping work in order to enable the Committee to feed into the process.	
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			
10	19.11.20	That a briefing session be scheduled to provide a detailed overview of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan and which should include information on the progress made to date;	TBC	Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Service		
11	19.11.20	That the names of the officers responsible for each theme of the Improvement Plan be circulated to Committee Members.	Completed	Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Service	Circulated to all CYP Committee Members on 20/11/20	
12	19.11.20	That the 'Working Well Together with Children and Families' document and the	Completed	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services	Circulated to all CYP Committee Members on 23/11/20	

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
		'Neglect Strategy' be requested for circulation to Committee Members.				
13	19.11.20	That further updates on the improvement of relationships with third sector partners be reported back to a future meeting of the Committee.	June 2021	Director of Children's Services		
14	19.11.20	That Mr Ashley attend future meetings of the Committee to present the CSAP Annual Report and subsequent scrutiny reports.	October 2021	CSAP Independent Scrutineer		
15	19.11.20	The town-wide Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS) survey data be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.	June 2021	Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion		

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## APPENDIX 8(c)

### School Response to Covid-19 Pandemic Scrutiny Review Action Plan

Recommendation		Cabinet Member's 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.	The mental health of our school community is a regular consideration at meetings in our governance structure, to include Blackpool Education Board, Renewing Education group (Covid return to school) and our weekly public health Q&A session. Relevant themes and issues are shared across the wider partnership to influence intervention support.	Yes	April 2021	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.	The every day business of monitoring achievement will continue.	Yes	April 2021	Paul Turner	

Recommendation		Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Lead Officer	Committee Update
R3	Council officers should continue to review practices in preparation for a second wave.	This work is ongoing and will continue to be responsive to government guidance through our Renewing Education group.	Yes	February 2021	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.	Best practice is shared through our governance arrangements, specifically through our Renewing Education group and public health question and answer sessions. Learning is already communicated through our governance structures and to every school establishment. A summary guide would therefore be a duplication.	No	N/A	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.	This would be welcomed.	Yes	January 2021	Paul Turner	Cllr Hugo to circulate a draft letter to Committee Members before submitting to Paul Turner for distribution to schools.

# APPENDIX 8(d)

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	Yes	Jan 2021	Paul Turner	This has been reviewed and it meets the nationally agreed requirements of the school admissions code.
	(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	Yes	Jan 2021	Paul Turner Academy Heads	This has been actively happening since September. The numbers of in-year moves have reduced significantly, although this may be because of Covid as well as action on behalf of the Council and partners.

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cabinet Member's Comments</b>	<b>Rec Accepted by Executive?</b>	<b>Target Date for Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Committee Update</b>
	(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.	Yes	Update Jan 2021	Paul Turner Academy Heads	This has not yet been offered due to the Covid crisis and demands upon people's time.

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>Yes</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>Yes</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.	Yes	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	Yes	Nov 2020	Paul Turner	Appeals information is now clearly outlined and accessible to parents via the Council's website and as such is now easier for parents to access and navigate.

	Recommendation	Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	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.	Yes	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.	<b>Not accepted.</b> 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.	No		Paul Turner	
	(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.	Yes	Update Jan 2021	Paul Turner	

Recommendation		Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Lead Officer	Committee Update
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	A full time equivalent counsellor, based at Educational Diversity is now available to provide Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to all schools. The service includes a free four week placement on referral through the Athena panel. Mr Turner agreed to report back to the Committee on the impact of the counselling service in twelve months' time.
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.	Yes	Jan 2021	Paul Turner  Academy Heads	

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cabinet Member's Comments</b>	<b>Rec Accepted by Executive?</b>	<b>Target Date for Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Committee Update</b>
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.'	Yes	Jan 2021	Paul Turner  Academy Heads	

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<b>Scrutiny Review Scope</b>	
<b>Proposed Title</b>	<b>Scoping Date</b>
Review of Blackpool Better Start	November 2020
<b>Criteria and reasons for selecting topic</b>	
As Better Start reaches its five-year half way point, Committee Members felt it was an appropriate time to undertake a review of how the first half of the £45 million funding had been used and to determine how effective the projects had been as well as looking ahead to proposals for the remaining five years.	
<b>Which priority within the Council Plan does this topic address?</b>	
Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.	
<b>What are the main objectives of the scrutiny?</b>	
To review the projects undertaken by Blackpool Better Start over the past five years and to assess the impact of the work on Blackpool families. To consider the planned projects for the remainder of the scheme and to gain information on proposals for continuation and sustainability at the end of the ten year funding period.	
<b>What possible outcomes are envisaged in terms of service improvements / benefits to the community?</b>	
Assurance that the annual funding of £4.5 million has been utilised to positively impact on the lives of Blackpool families and that future projects address the specific needs of Blackpool's parents and children.	
<b>How will the public be involved? (consider invitations / press releases for meetings, consultation with community groups / clubs, etc)</b>	
Explore ways to engage with end-users of Better Start services.	
<b>How will the scrutiny achieve value for money for the Council / Council Tax payers?</b>	
Ensuring efficient use of Blackpool Better Start funding.	
<b>What primary / new evidence is needed for the scrutiny?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance data and details of Better Start projects undertaken;</li> <li>• Information on any proposed continuation of Better Start on completion of the current funding;</li> <li>• Feedback from service users.</li> </ul>	
<b>What secondary / existing information will be needed? (include background information / existing reports (consider Internal Audit) / legislation / central government information and reports, etc.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recorded information sessions from the Better Start Virtual Annual Conference held on 4 November 2020;</li> <li>• Town-wide performance data as collected as part of the impact study by Professor Leon Feinstein of Oxford University;</li> <li>• Details of proposed future projects and how they were selected.</li> </ul>	
<b>Which Council officers / departments will provide information, advice and assistance for the scrutiny?</b>	
Merle Davies, Centre for Early Child Development Director Clare Law, Centre for Early Child Development Deputy Director Colette Golcher, Senior Manager Early Years Mel Farman, Development Manager Simone Moore, Connector Sarah Peers, Connector Vicky Walker, Development Manager Annette Algie, Business Manager Colin Smy, Community Engagement Officer Relevant Cabinet Members – Councillors Lynn Williams and Kath Benson	

<b>What expert witnesses will the panel request input from outside of the Council?</b>
Professor Leon Feinstein, Oxford University
<b>What type of meetings (e.g. fact finding, evidence gathering, consultations, questioning, site visits), and how many in number are envisaged for the scrutiny?</b>
Two half-day task and finish meetings were initially proposed to undertake fact finding, evidence gathering and analysis of the data presented, although at least one further meeting will also be required. In addition, all Members were invited to attend the 'Five Years of A Better Start Virtual Conference 2020' and all recorded information sessions were made available after the event.
<b>Timescales / likely duration of enquiry</b>
Commencing November/December 2020.
<b>Lead Scrutiny Officer</b>
Elaine Ireland
<b>Scrutiny Panel Members</b>
Cllr Jane Hugo Cllr Kim Critchley Cllr Peter Hunter Cllr Andrew Stansfield Mrs Helen Sage