

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	<b>Delyth Curtis</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>2 July 2015</b>

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT REPORT

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To inform the Scrutiny Committee of the work undertaken by Children's Services to allow effective scrutiny of the service.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 For Members of the Scrutiny Committee to note the contents of this report and identify any further information and actions required, where relevant.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To fully inform Members of the Scrutiny Committee on the day to day work of the Children's Services Directorate to allow effective scrutiny.

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

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

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Not applicable

### 4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is

- Tackle child poverty, raise aspirations and improve educational achievement
- Safeguard and protect the most vulnerable
- Improve health and well-being especially for the most disadvantaged
- Create safer communities and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

## **5.0 Background Information**

### **5.1 Children Social Care**

5.1.1 The improvement plan continues to be a priority for Children Social Care. There is evidence that the authority is responding proactively and embedding good practice across the service supported by partners. The Department for Education (DFE) spent two days in June 2015 reviewing the progress made against the improvement plan. During this period the DFE representatives spoke to senior management, members, partners and front line staff in children social care and safeguarding with a focus on the improvement since the last inspection. The feedback from the DFE was positive and as an authority we await the outcome of whether the government will lift the improvement notice.

5.1.2 A key priority moving forward is to embed a Council wide response to **Corporate Parenting** and enhance the outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting Panel will continue to focus on priorities for looked after children and undertake its duties to this cohort of children in Blackpool. However in order to embed a council wide response a recent presentation has taken place with the Senior Leadership Team whereby leaders were asked to consider what their service could pledge to those children that, as a council, we have a shared commitment to. An induction to corporate parenting is planned prior to the commencement of the next Corporate Parenting Panel; along with a corporate parent conference in September 2015 to highlight the role of the whole council in undertaking its duties as corporate parents.

**5.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Blackpool** continues to be a focus of priority and improvement. This is overseen by the Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board and is a standard agenda item along with quarterly reports to the board. There continues to be a Pan Lancs approach and standardised protocols which link to a Blackpool Action Plan overseen by the CSE Sub group. Blackpool Local Authority has come under scrutiny from a variety of agencies to understand the prevalence of CSE in Blackpool and we are presently undertaking a self-assessment to identify and review the gap analysis in order to be able to commission services to ensure the response to CSE both in terms of identifying, disrupting and prosecuting along with safeguarding victims is robust and fully embedded. The establishment of a Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) meeting is underway which will further embed the knowledge of patterns and trends of Missing Children and CSE in Blackpool

5.2.1 A recent bid to become part of the "**New Belongings**" to support the Care leaver's improvement plan was successful and Blackpool is presently working with the project to support a continued focus on improving the service to care leavers.

**5.3 Fostering Fortnight** recently took place with activity related to championing the achievements of Blackpool's present foster carers and also highlighting to the community the need to increase in house foster carers in order to support those children who need this response in their local community. The activity included tea parties as recruitment events where several of Blackpool's own foster carers attended and spoke to people who had come along to find out more about fostering. There was a Long Service Award where all foster carers who have been with Blackpool for 15 years received a certificate. This event

was called 500 years of fostering because the 23 carers have completed a cumulative total of just over 500 years of fostering and on the evening of the 11<sup>th</sup> the Blackpool Tower was lit up in recognition of fostering.

#### **5.4 Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB)**

- 5.4.1 BSCB and board partners continue to work closely together to strengthen partnership working. BSCB are currently focusing on strengthening performance information available to the board aimed at enhancing capacity to scrutiny and challenge.
- 5.4.2 BSCB are also working on the implementation of a bespoke neglect tool supported by the NSPCC. There are plans to initially pilot the bespoke neglect tool and then roll it out across all services delivering to children and young people across Blackpool. This new approach will enable professionals to recognise and assess neglect more consistently whilst also helping us to provide the right help and support to those families where it is most needed. There are currently 358 children on Child Protection Plans of those, 210 (58.7 per cent) have a category of neglect.
- 5.4.3 Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board has published three Serious Case Reviews (SCR) since December 2014 on its website namely Child BR (Dec 2014), Baby Q (March 2015) and Child BT (May 2015).
- 5.4.4 In addition Blackpool Safeguarding Childrens Board will shortly publish a SCR in relation to Child BS age two years.
- 5.4.5 A further two Serious Case Reviews have been commissioned one in relation to a serious sexual assault and the other following the unexpected death of a young baby . A Concise Learning Review (as outlined in the North West Learning and Improvement Framework) has been commissioned to consider a case were Sexually Harmful Behaviour was prevalent.

#### **5.5 Commissioning**

- 5.5.1 Work is underway between Blackpool Council Commissioning, Public Health and Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that Commissioning work-streams are mapped and aligned. The following is complete:
- Mapping and compilation of a shared database of contracts across Adult and Children's across all service areas.
  - Identification of suitable contracts where a lead organisation can monitor and commission with a view to reducing duplication of commissioned services and making best use of resource
  - Process devised for sharing information, including commissioning reviews and intentions and for ensuring compliance with statutory obligations
  - Processes are in place to share market intelligence, needs and informing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).
- 5.5.2 Next Steps:

To consider a model for a revised structure and reporting for Social Care, Public Health and CCG commissioning to ensure economies of scale and best use of resources

## **5.6 School Improvement**

### **5.6.1 The new Ofsted Framework for Inspection**

Sir Michael Wilshaw released on June 15<sup>th</sup>, the new Framework that will be used to inspect maintained schools and academies (including Early Years), further education and skills providers. The new Framework will be used from September onwards. Four judgements of Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate remain the same. There will be a new short inspection that will be used for existing Good schools that will last for one day. The following areas will be judged:

- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management;
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare;
- Outcomes for children and learners;
- Effectiveness of Safeguarding (new judgment)

5.6.2 The progress of pupils will remain a key driver in determining each judgment.

### **5.7 Follow up Actions:**

The School Improvement Service is currently realigning school categories to better support key developments outlined by Ofsted, particularly around outcomes for children, pupil progress, Schools moving to Outstanding, and the effectiveness of whole school safeguarding. This will require a restructure and a refocus of activity within existing teams.

### **5.8 School Inspections (March – June 2015)**

- Montgomery: 10.4.15. HMI Monitoring visit stated effective progress
- Boundary Primary: 21.4.15. Moved from Good to Requires Improvement. HMI Monitoring visit on 11.6.15 stated Effective Progress.
- Hawes Side Academy: 7.5.15. Moved from Requires Improvement to Good.
- South Shore Academy: 18.5.15. Remained Special Measures
- Devonshire Academy: 20.5.15. Moved from Good to Requires Improvement.
- Park Special School: 27.5.15. Remained Outstanding
- Unity: 4.6.15. Awaiting outcome

## **5.9 Business Support and Resources**

### **5.9.1 Schools Forum**

The Schools Forum is the statutory body that oversees the use of school funding, notably the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (c£103 million in 2015/16). It is consulted on the local authority formulae for the distribution of budgets to schools and nurseries, and makes decisions about the amount to be retained by the Council to spend on certain central support services to schools. Recent business of the Forum has included:

- A review of the banding system that is used to determine levels of funding for pupils in special schools. A move to a new system based on the one developed by Blackburn with Darwen Council is being progressed, as the methodology has been found to deliver an increased level of flexibility to link funding to the complexity of needs of pupils.
- A review of the charging of schools whose pupils access education provision at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Concern has been raised about the increasing number of pupils in the PRU, and Schools Forum is evaluating options for the role of funding in creating appropriate incentives to enable schools to support pupils in mainstream settings.
- Consideration of options for the use of accumulated DSG reserves. Forum members are evaluating pressures across the whole school funding system (schools, high needs pupils and early years) in order to determine how one-off accumulated reserves can be best put to use to minimise future pressures.
- Performance monitoring of children’s centres. The Schools Forum has approved the allocation of £1 million per annum for three years as a contribution to Council services from DSG. This funding has been notionally allocated to school based children’s centres.

#### 5.9.2 **School Profile**

The production of the School Profile has been accomplished, for both phases – Primary and Secondary. The Profile is a comprehensive document which encompasses a wide range of performance measures, cross referenced with an array of contextual data. From Reception to GCSE data, every educational phase is included, in addition to attendance data, geographical data and socio-economic data. The Profile has been produced in order to provide our schools (both mainstream and academies) to interpret their data for the purpose of self-evaluation, school improvement and to assess against Local Authority and national standards. Each School Profile is easy to read, highly informative and highlights information to each school by way of trend data, charts and thought-provoking correlations of data such as attendance vs attainment. The Profile will be deployed to schools before the end of the summer term which would provide an invaluable insight into schools’ performance prior to the end of the academic year.

A high level version of this document has been created in conjunction with the School Profile – the Blackpool Education Profile. This Profile is a Local Authority edition which provides Children’s Services Directors, Head of Service and School Improvement Officers with valuable data for the purpose of challenging schools on a wide range of educational and contextual influences.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

#### **List of Appendices:**

None

#### **6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 Some of the areas of current and future work will require consideration of legal issues, options and potential impacts.

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 None

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 Some of the areas of current and future work will require consideration of financial issues, options and potential impacts.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 There are some risks in the current system. These are being addressed by current or planned work.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None attached