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**Report of:** Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of Decision:** 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**Subject:** Children's Social Care Task Group report

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? Children, Young People and Families		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Children, Young People and Families		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? ( <i>Insert reference number</i> )		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i></p>		

### Purpose of Report:

The Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee set out its intention early in the year, to scrutinise a piece of children's social care policy work. They set up a Task Group in October 2017, to fulfil this purpose and decided to focus on two key elements of the Improvement and Recovery Plan:

- Sufficiency and developing the local offer
- Workforce development strategy.

The Task Group have now compiled their report, which was approved for submission to

Cabinet by the Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018. The report makes recommendations across the two areas outlined, plus a third one on cross cutting issues.

This Cabinet report presents the Scrutiny Committee's findings and recommendations to Cabinet.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Thank the Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee for its work in relation to Children's Social Care in Sheffield.
2. Note the Children's Social Care Task Group Report that is attached as Appendix A to this report.
3. Agree that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families provide a response on behalf of Cabinet to the Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee on the recommendations in the Task Group's Report at a date to be agreed, but no later than December 2018.

**Background Papers:**

*(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)*

Appendix A: Children's Social Care Scrutiny Task Group Report.

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Paul Foster  Legal: Andrea Simpson  Equalities: Adele Robinson
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
	2 <b>EMT member who approved submission:</b>	N/A Scrutiny report
	3 <b>Cabinet Member consulted:</b>	N/A Scrutiny report
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name: Deborah Fellowes</b>	<b>Job Title: Policy and Improvement Officer</b>
	<b>Date: 15/3/18</b>	

## **1. PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017 the Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee approved the setting up of a Sub-Group of the Committee to further explore the issues raised at the meeting regarding Looked After Children and Care Leavers, with a view to identifying an area of focus for a more detailed piece of scrutiny work.
- 1.2 The area of focus of the Task Group was refined through the Work Programmes approved by the Committee at subsequent meetings and informed by the Children's Social Care Improvement and Recovery Plans presented to Cabinet in September 2017 and considered by the Committee at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- 1.3 The approved Work Programme at that meeting identified the agreed remit of the Task Group, around key elements of the Improvement Plan, sufficiency and recruitment and retention of staff, and the scope of the project.
- 1.4 The task group reported its findings and recommendations to Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018. At its meeting the Committee noted the contents of the report and approved its submission to Cabinet. This report presents the Scrutiny Task Group's Children's Social Care Report to Cabinet.
- 1.5 The report of the Task Group is attached to this report as Appendix A. it aims to influence the outcome of new policy formulation and decisions around the following two areas:
  1. Budget – sufficiency plan and local offer
  2. Quality – Workforce development, recruitment and retention.

The Task Group formulated its recommendations under three key headings. It recommends that the Council:

- 1.6 **Sufficiency**
  - 1.6.1 Continues with the very positive developments in Family support, providing valuable assistance to vulnerable families in Sheffield, specifically work to further include fathers.
  - 1.6.2 Carries out an evaluation of a range of potential incentives to becoming an in house Foster Carer, for example exemption from Council Tax.
  - 1.6.3 Should continue with the strong philosophy that Sheffield children

should, wherever and whenever possible, stay in Sheffield.

- 1.6.4 Should establish a BME sub group of the Voices Foster Carers group, to focus on this sector and to pull together a specific plan to address the issues.
- 1.6.5 Should adopt a strong corporate approach to Children's Social Care by ensuring that all of its key plans including the Housing and Growth Strategies, can demonstrate clear deliverable links to the Improvement and Recovery Plan.
- 1.6.6 Ensures corporate awareness and understanding of the Signs of Safety initiative, leading to full senior level support of its implementation. This should include officers and Elected Members.

## **1.7 Recruitment and Retention**

- 1.7.1 Recognise the positive attitude that many existing staff have towards working for Sheffield.
- 1.7.2 Also recognise that, whilst motivation is not always monetary, there is a clear need for a recognition of experience, skills and levels of responsibility
- 1.7.3 In light of the above, develop a clear offer for social workers in Sheffield which includes remuneration and the unique selling point for working in Sheffield.
- 1.7.4 As work to involve fathers develops, ensure that recruitment of social workers is reflective of the gender balance of the client base they are working alongside.
- 1.7.5 Aim to increase investment in the Hub, including consideration of mobile phones, installing large screens for monitoring calls and addressing the accommodation/space limitations.
- 1.7.6 Continue with commitment to the roll out of the Liquid Logic system to replace Care First.

## **1.8 Cross cutting issues**

- 1.8.1 Develop a clear role description of critical friend for the Ward Councillors with Residential Homes in their wards. This should include two distinct roles:
  - Standards and scrutiny – assisting with scrutinising the home to ensure it meets designated standards
  - Community Cohesion – facilitating a positive relationship between the home and its surrounding community

- 1.8.2 Considers how it might best progress towards the development of all age social care, identifying the barriers to joint working across adult and children's social care.
- 1.8.3 Considers the role of Scrutiny on the Challenge Board, for example offering the Chair a place on the Board.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

- 2.1 The work and approach of Scrutiny and its task groups connect to the commitment within the priority theme of "*An In Touch Organisation*" to "*make sure we listen, understand and respond to what people are telling us, treating them with respect at all times*". This Task Group was set up because the Committee wished to carry out a review to assist with a key policy topic for Children's Social Care, with the aim of influencing the outcome of new policy formulation and decisions and ensuring that the Committee's views on effective support to and safeguarding of vulnerable groups, improving services to residents in the city and meeting the Council's commitments around Fairness and Poverty are taken on board during the development of this policy.

The work of the group focused on specific elements of the Children's Social Care Improvement and Recovery Plan which contributes to all the priorities detailed in the Corporate Plan 2015-18. The primary focus of improving the health and wellbeing of families across Sheffield by providing the right services at the right time and in the right place, ensures we are able to meet increasing (and increasingly complex) demand. To achieve better health and wellbeing we will become a more in-touch organisation and contribute to thriving neighbourhoods and communities and a strong economy. Finally, the focus of this work is very much about meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, therefore tackling inequalities and redressing equity of service.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 Members considered user consultation evidence throughout the entire review and were particularly interested to hear information from the Voices of Foster Carers group.
- 3.2 Specific consultation also took place with frontline workers within Children's Social Care

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

- 4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

4.1.1 As a Public Authority, we have legal requirements under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. These are often collectively referred to as the ‘general duties to promote equality’. To help us meet the general equality duties, we also have specific duties. We have considered our obligations under this Duty in this report and found that there are no direct equality of opportunity implications arising as a result of this report. However, any specific changes to service delivery or policy arising in response to scrutiny recommendations will need to include the consideration of equality implications, to continue to ensure the Council fulfil our statutory obligations.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The implementation of any of the recommendations from the Committee’s report may be subject to further decision making in accordance with the Leader’s Scheme of Delegation. This would include any financial and commercial implications.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The implementation of any of the recommendations from the Committee’s report may be subject to further decision making in accordance with the Leader’s Scheme of Delegation, and the legal implications of any proposal would be fully considered at that time.

4.3.2 Scrutiny committees have an explicit power to make reports or recommendations to the Executive under section 21(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 2000.

**5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 An alternative option in relation to the recommendations would be to do nothing with the Committee’s report. However, given the time and effort spent by the Task Group, and contributions made to the work from a number of Council staff this is not recommended.

An alternative option in relation to the recommendations below would be respond to the Committee’s report over a much longer timescale. However, this would risk the recommendations from the report becoming out of date and would effectively have the same effect as doing nothing.

**6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 To enable the Scrutiny Committee to monitor the outcome of its recommendations the Committee would welcome a response from the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families with regards to its recommendations.

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