

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **8 February 2022**

Training Room, The Beehive Community Resource Centre, Grays, RM17 6XP

Membership:

Councillors Sara Muldowney (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Abbie Akinbohun, Alex Anderson, James Thandi and Lee Watson

Sarah Barlow, Church of England Representative
Kim James, Chief Operating Officer, HealthWatch Thurrock
Nicola Cranch, Parent Governor Representative
Sally Khawaja, Parent Governor Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors John Kent, Augustine Ononaji, Elizabeth Rigby and Lynn Worrall

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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To approve as a correct record the minutes of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 November 2021 and 1 December 2021.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972. To agree any relevant	

briefing notes submitted to the Committee.

4	Declaration of Interests	
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **31 January 2022**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- **Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;**
- **Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and**
- **leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon**

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services

3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 November 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Sara Muldowney (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Abbie Akinbohun, Lee Watson, Elizabeth Rigby (Substitute) (substitute for Alex Anderson) and James Thandi (Substitute) (substitute for Susan Little)

Apologies: Sarah Barlow, Church of England Representative
Nicola Cranch, Parent Governor Representative
Sally Khawaja, Parent Governor Representative

In attendance: Jo Broadbent, Director of Public Health
Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills
Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Janet Simon, Interim Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help
Andrea Winstone, Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND
Grace Le, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

The Chair stated that there was a time limit for the use of the South Essex College venue which was until 9.30pm. She said that if the items on the agenda were not concluded by 9.30pm, the meeting would be adjourned and would recommence at the next meeting.

24. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The Committee confirmed that they had received and read the briefing note – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Procurement which was circulated on 30 September 2021.

25. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

26. Review of High Risk Notifications provided by Children's Social Care (EXEMPT)

Under Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the report was restricted and discussions on the report were held in exempt session.

27. Children's Social Care Performance - Quarter 1 2021-22

The report was presented by Janet Simon.

Referring to EET, Councillor Watson queried whether there were any young people with concerns and if the Adult Social Care (ASC) Team was working with young people through the transition process. Janet Simon answered that ASC was supporting young people. She said that a social worker supported young people up to 18 years old and that there was an aftercare service in place after this.

The Vice-Chair asked when return home interviews were carried out and why there was a low uptake on these. Officers explained that the police was informed once a child returned home and then Inspire would offer the return home interviews. Some young people did not want to take a return home interview and the service was trying to think of creative ways to engage a young person in these. The service recognised this was a key area of focus for them which had been identified in the Focus Visit from Ofsted. However, some young people did not want a return home interview and preferred to speak with their social worker or placement instead of the independent service. Some young people felt that they had the right to go where they wanted and a lot of the missing cases were 16 – 17 year olds. Where young people spoke to their carer or social worker instead of through the return home interview, the service was looking into adding this into the process to ensure it was logged. Inspire was an opportunity for young people to use if they felt they could not speak to their carer.

The Committee queried if there were more males or females in care and if police were involved in missing episodes. Officers answered that there were more males than females in care and that police visited after a child returned home. The Chair recommended that areas of improvement be added into the next report.

RESOLVED:

That members reviewed the areas of improvement in Children's Social Care and work undertaken to date to manage demand for statutory social care services.

28. Thurrock Childcare Sufficiency Annual Assessment 2021

The Chair referred to page 52 and commented that the prices for childcare were shocking and was concerned that some families would not be able to afford these prices. She questioned whether there were funded childcare places for 2 year olds. She pointed out that families earning the living wage would not qualify for funded places and with the amount spent on childcare

costs, it was hardly worth working. She felt that childcare costs were not affordable for Thurrock residents and that there were no provisions during the school holidays in which parents still had to work. Andrea Winstone answered that there were funded childcare places that most parents were entitled to and that these were usually for 3 to 4 year olds. She explained that the childcare rates were from nurseries who provided the childcare and that the provision was there. She said that there was no government funding for 2 year olds as the provision was economically low. There were some schools that provided free after school provisions and children with free school meals had access to holiday provisions.

Councillor Watson thought the breakdown of the nursery provisions in each ward was useful. Referring to the figures in Tilbury and St Chads, she noted that provision was needed and was concerned that there would not be enough due to the two nurseries closing in Tilbury. Michele Lucas said that the consultation for the two nurseries had just ended and potential providers had stated that if they had the capabilities to increase the capacities if needed. She stated that she was cautiously optimistic with finding providers for the nurseries as there were still processes to be completed. Andrea Winstone explained that there had not been issues of parents unable to find childcare placements in the Tilbury and St Chads and that the figures were based on the number of children in the area, not the number of provisions needed as not all parents sent their children into nurseries.

The Chair mentioned a nursery in Chadwell that had been closed and sought more detail which officers would discuss outside of the meeting.

The Chair noted that 8 out of 22 wards had insufficient childcare placements and that one of the wards would have significant development taking place. Michele Lucas explained that the report enabled potential providers to identify where there were opportunities for childcare facilities. It was the statutory duty of the Council to provide placement and the service worked with providers on this.

The Chair asked whether private providers could provide affordable and flexible childcare placements. Michele Lucas explained that the business model for childcare businesses included government funded places and private charges. There were some schools that were keen to include nurseries in their schools to enable a child to start nursery there to ensure an education pathway in the school. Andrea Winstone said that there was a Childcare Sufficiency Officer that worked with providers to ensure they were supported. She said that there were not full nurseries in the borough so there was no demand for more placements.

The Chair queried whether there was data on the number of providers that had closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Andrea Winstone answered that there were two. One was not financially viable and the other one was unable to acquire the number of placements needed to keep the nursery running. No providers had lost money due to the pandemic as they were paid through the Early Years Funding.

The Chair requested that a briefing note to be circulated to the Committee to update them on the progress of finding providers.

RESOLVED:

That Children's Services O&S reviewed and approved the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021.

29. Low Income Families and Child Poverty update (2021) for the Children and Young People JSNA product (2017)

The report was presented by Jo Broadbent.

The Chair commented that the government had abolished the child poverty act but the issues was still present. She noted that the report showed an increase to 1 in 3 children living in poverty and questioned the impact of this on children. Jo Broadbent answered that children growing up in poverty were affected by a range of factors such as future outcomes, growing up disadvantaged, poorer health, higher risk of teen pregnancy, risky behaviour and higher risk of this cycle leading into future generations. There was a need to work with parents to help them find well paid work.

The Chair noted the DfE's plan to tackle child poverty through education and asked if this required more than just a focus on education. Jo Broadbent explained that this related to the next item on the agenda and that broader strategies were needed to address child poverty.

Referring to the State of the Nation government report, the Chair commented that this was the most recent data on child poverty and enquired what recommendations the service had taken from this report. Jo Broadbent stated that she would not be able to provide a full answer as the highlights from that report had been considered as part of the current report. She said that the State of the Nation report set out how Local Authorities could support families in deprived areas with free school meals and other initiatives to. She highlighted that there were a broader range of issues to consider alongside child poverty such as food poverty.

The Chair enquired about the Brighter Futures Strategy (BFS) and if Covid-19 pandemic had impacted upon this. She said that a range of other issues needed to be considered alongside the BFS. Sheila Murphy explained that this strategy was broken down into key priorities that included education and mental health. It looked at improving the lives of children and other agencies were involved such as Public Health, schools and the police to ensure a good representation on the board. She said that referrals had continued during Covid-19 and that missing education had caused issues for children and making sure that they were able to catch up with this. As services such as children's centres had closed during the pandemic, parents were not able to use the support of these services and may have escalated to other issues such as mental health. She said that there were other funding such as for

school holidays, activities that included lunch and the Essential Living Fund (ELF) from government.

The Chair asked how long the ELF process took. Sheila Murphy answered that the process was relatively quick as it was designed for emergency situations. The Local Authority had also put extra funding in to support this process.

The Committee agreed to suspend standing orders at 8.18pm to allow the agenda to be completed.

Referring to appendix 1, Councillor Watson asked if the JSNA was a continuous updated document every year. She asked if other JSNAs were fed into child poverty strategy. She sought clarification on the data used and the action plan on child poverty. Jo Broadbent answered that the process was to cover a range of topics and not consider just one topic each year. She said that there were a range of JSNAs and council policies that included child poverty as these were interrelated and that the most up to date data was used. The Brighter Futures Strategy would be circulated to Members.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Committee were asked to consider and comment on the content of the updated chapter for the Children's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment product.

1.2 The committee were asked to agree that this updated chapter is added to the published document.

30. Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh

The report was presented by Jo Broadbent.

The Vice-Chair mentioned that the report had also been heard at Health and Wellbeing O&S last week and Members had asked that the survey to be shortened. Jo Broadbent answered that the survey comprised of a tick box exercise on the first page and then went on to more specific questions. There had been 65 responses so far although there were less responses on the more specific questionnaires.

The Chair commented that the strategy was big and queried on how accessible this was for everyone. Jo Broadbent explained that the strategy was of a high level and technical and the service had been working with HealthWatch and CVS who were asking simpler questions to engage people. This information was shared with the service who was able to incorporate this into their survey.

Councillor Thandi asked if air quality was included in the survey and whether there was a solution to reduce this in Thurrock. He also asked why life expectancy was low in Thurrock. Jo Broadbent explained that reducing air

quality was difficult and that there was currently no air quality monitoring officer in place to manage this area. There were a number of concerns on the impact on air quality from large developments such as the Lower Thames Crossing. On the low life expectancy, she explained that this was due to inter-generational and deprivation issues. Thurrock had one of the highest smoking and obesity rates in the country.

In regards to obesity, Councillor Akinbohun pointed out that there was not enough help for young people with their weight as gyms were too expensive so young people in deprived areas were unable to afford memberships. She stated that the high street was filled with fast food restaurants with no healthy options. She said that the increase of fast food delivery services only made it easier to order fast food. Jo Broadbent answered that there was a weight management service that was funded by Public Health and that extra funding had been provided this year to tackle obesity which would consider a range of approaches. She said that there were some Local Authorities that banned fast food services near schools which would be something for Thurrock to consider.

The Vice-Chair thought that the strategy was sensible and achievable but the issue was public engagement. He felt that shorter questions were needed and that the current questionnaire was a fail. Jo Broadbent said that the strategy had been due to start before the pandemic and would have taken a different approach.

Councillor Watson enquired about the timeline of the strategy. Jo Broadbent answered that the engagement process would end in December, then the first draft would go onto the Health and Wellbeing Board in January before going onto other committees. It would eventually go onto Full Council.

Councillor Watson noted that the procedure was council based and not national government. She pointed out that the strategy could be pushed back to enable a better consultation to take place. The Chair agreed and said that the questionnaires needed to be better worded and clarified. Jo Broadbent said that she would consult with the Health and Wellbeing Board and Portfolio Holder. She stated that the strategy had already been pushed back once and would be out of date by December.

RESOLVED:

That members noted the consultation exercise, consider and propose opportunities to engage the public and interested parties during the consultation period.

The meeting finished at 9.04 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 December 2021 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Sara Muldowney (Chair), Alex Anderson, John Kent (*substitute*) and James Thandi
- Apologies:** Councillors Graham Snell (Vice-Chair) and Lee Watson
Sally Khawaja, Parent Governor Representative
- In attendance:** Lucy Boatman, Youth Support Worker
Dr Jo Broadbent, Director of Public Health
Priscilla Bruce-Annan, Safeguarding and Children's Manager
Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Education and Skills
Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director Children's Services
Janet Simon, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help
Sarah Williams, Service Manager – Education and Support Service
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer
- Jenny Coles, Independent Chair & Scrutineer – Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Sarah Barlow, Church of England Representative
Nicola Cranch, Parent Governor Representative
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

The Chair stated that there was a time limit for the use of the Beehive venue, which was 9.30pm. She explained that if items on the agenda were not concluded by 9.30pm, the meeting would be adjourned and would recommence at the next Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2022.

31. Minutes

The Chair highlighted page six of the minutes and stated that she had specifically requested a RAG rated action plan on the LSCP recommendations. She added that she had also proposed additional recommendations to both the report on Children's Services Savings – Education and Skills, and the report on Proposed Budget Reductions for Children's Social Care and Early Help, and requested that these be added to the minutes in bold.

Subject to these amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 were approved as true and correct record.

32. Items of Urgent Business

The Chair stated that she had one item of urgent business that she wished to raise, which related to the nurseries consultation that had recently finished. The Assistant Director Education and Skills explained that a briefing note had been sent to the Committee, and would form part of the report that would be submitted to Cabinet in January.

The Chair felt that a good number of responses had been submitted to the consultation, as almost 300 responses had been received. She questioned if the consultation had been digital only. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that it had been mostly digital, but paper copies had been supplied to the relevant affected services. The Chair highlighted that 96% of respondents had felt that access to local nursery placements was either important or very important. The Chair stated that the Committee had seen a Childcare Sufficiency Report that evidenced a lack of childcare places in Tilbury St Chads, before the potential closure of these nurseries and the loss of another 126 places. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that there were a small proportion of schools and the rest were local nurseries, but that she did not have these numbers to hand, but would find this information and report back to the Chair. The Chair questioned if there would be enough time between January Cabinet and the potential closure in March to find an alternative provider. She explained that to her knowledge there was only one other local nursery in Tilbury St Chads. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that both nurseries discussed in the report would remain open until August, but initial interest had been received for when the procurement process began in January. She added that feedback had also been received from other providers that more placements could be opened if necessary. The Chair welcomed the news that the nurseries would stay open until August. The Corporate Director Children's Services added that it was difficult to gauge the level of interest until Cabinet gave approval for the procurement process to proceed at January's Cabinet meeting. She explained that the team would then go to market for the procurement of the nurseries and feedback would be given to the Committee during this process.

Councillor Thandi questioned if initial interest in the procurement of the nurseries had been strong. The Corporate Director Children's Services replied that it was difficult to say but there had been an indication of initial interest, and the team were hopeful that this would be developed once the full procurement pack had been released. The Committee agreed the briefing note.

33. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

34. Youth Cabinet Verbal Update

The Youth Cabinet Representative stated that the Youth Cabinet had been holding monthly meetings, and had been focussing on three main projects. She explained that these projects were: pollution and recycling, particularly promoting the idea of plastics recycling to pre-school children by creating a sculpture made out of waste plastic; mental health; and working with the police to create a YouTube video. The Youth Support Worker added that Essex Police had been working well with the Youth Cabinet to produce this video.

Councillor Kent questioned how the Youth Cabinet had met during COVID-19. The Youth Cabinet Representative replied that they had been meeting monthly via Zoom, but had also been holding regular Zoom activity evenings, taking part in online quizzes and making friends. She added that the waste plastics sculpture had been delayed due to the pandemic, but Youth Cabinet were hopeful that this could begin in the New Year.

35. Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership - Verbal Update

The Chair highlighted that she had requested a RAG rated action plan report be brought to this Committee meeting, and requested that a written report, with the RAG plan included, be brought to February's Committee meeting.

The Independent Chair and Scrutineer Thurrock LSCP introduced the report and stated that she had recently been chosen for the role, and would be focussing on the future of scrutiny and safeguarding in terms of children. She stated that Sir Alan Wood had carried out a national review of Local Safeguarding Childrens Boards four years ago, and from this LSCPs had been developed, and had been enshrined in legislation in 2017. She explained that this legislation made the local authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and the police equally responsible for child safeguarding, and the LSCP had an overarching role to co-ordinate safeguarding in the area and implement learning from serious case reviews. She added that Thurrock's LSCP had a constitution that enshrined these principles, and helped to hold partners to account. She stated that Thurrock's LSCP were currently working on: early identification of vulnerability; increased learning within the partnerships to ensure learning was embedded and changes could be made when required; and ensuring information was shared effectively.

She explained that Thurrock's peer review last year had highlighted the need for scrutiny and governance, which was why she had been appointed into the role. She stated that she would be reviewing the arrangements for broader scrutiny aiming for it to be objective and a critical friend. She explained that the peer review had driven actions to support Thurrock's scrutiny, particularly through the increased use of Key Performance Indications (KPIs) and improved multi-agency partnerships, such as with the police, health colleagues, and schools. She added that additional quality assurance had been implemented, such as multi-agency audits from the LSCP. She summarised and stated that the LSCP could provide safeguarding assurance

information to Committee Members, and a report would be brought to Committee next year which would outline their upcoming priorities.

The Safeguarding and Children's Manager stated that there were four reviews and one peer review action plan currently underway. She stated that these were:

1. Frankie – 14 actions identified (11 blue and 3 amber)
2. Sam and Kyle – 18 actions identified (16 blue and 2 amber)
3. Leo – 14 actions identified (1 blue, 4 green, and 9 amber)
4. Shay and Ashley – learning published but not yet ratified through governance processes.

She explained that blue actions meant the work had been embedded into the service; green meant complete but not yet embedded; and amber meant work had been started but not yet completed. She added that the peer review had identified 26 actions, 23 of which were now blue and 3 of which were amber.

The Safeguarding and Children's Manager added that the reviews had identified four overarching themes of: information sharing; professional curiosity; thresholds and escalations; and working with resistance. She stated that lots of work was ongoing on these actions and data was being collected via the LSCP Dataset to form the basis of the 2022-2024 LSCO delivery plan.

Councillor Anderson questioned if the amber actions were on course for completion, and if they had deadlines. The Safeguarding and Children's Manager replied that all amber actions were on course for completion. She mentioned that the team had been holding numerous awareness sessions, and were trying to deliver these on a more spread-out timescale to ensure maximum attendance.

The Safeguarding and Children's Manager, and the Independent Chairperson and Scrutineer Thurrock LSCP left the meeting at 7.45pm

36. Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy 2022-23

The Assistant Director Education and Skills introduced the report and stated that it was presented before the Committee on an annual basis. She highlighted the charge that related to Grangewaters which had increased by 64% and explained that this was because it was an activity that required the whole lake and staff onsite to manage. She explained that previously this had been undertaken by volunteers or by holding other activities that required onsite staff at the same time, but this was no longer feasible. She summarised and stated that the team tested the market for fees and charges, and the proposals would be implemented in April, if agreed by Cabinet.

Councillor Kent highlighted the increase of 64% at Grangewaters, and asked if this was for the Water-ski and Jet-Ski Club, and if any consultation had been undertaken with them. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that

conversations had been ongoing throughout the season, as they used the whole lake and it had been difficult to identify space for them. She explained that there were no volunteers identified in future, so staff costs would increase. She stated that the Club had felt disappointed that there had been no space for them this year, but the team would continue to work closely with them in future. Councillor Anderson questioned how the overall pricing of Grangewaters related to the national average. The Assistant Director Education and Skills answered that pricing at Grangewaters was lower than the national average, but Grangewaters followed a different pricing strategy as it was aimed for local community use.

The Chair stated that over 50% of the fees and charges increases outlined in the report were above inflation. She asked if any consultation had been undertaken for these increases. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that some of the fees and charges had only been increased by approximately £1 above inflation, and this was low when compared to the national average. She stated that the team had spoken with services and service users before proposing an increase in fees and charges. The Chair questioned why the commercial rate hall charge had been removed. The Assistant Director Education and Skills responded that this related to the Thurrock Adult Community College building, which was not in operation. She stated that the removal of fees and charges relating to Grangewaters had been to simplify and streamline the system.

Councillor Kent questioned the approval process for the report. The Assistant Director Education and Skills explained that the report would go to February's Cabinet meeting for their sign off. Councillor Kent stated that he would not agree to give director delegated authority to change the fees and charges in year, and felt that this should have some Member oversight, for example in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder. Councillor Anderson questioned if the recommendation relating to director delegated authority had been previously included in fees and charges reports. He also questioned how regularly director delegated authority was utilised. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that the recommendation relating to director delegated authority had been included on fees and charges reports for the past few years, but had rarely been used by directors to amend a charge once it had been agreed.

Councillor Kent suggested that recommendation two be amended to include "director delegated authority, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, or appropriate Member oversight". A vote was held on this recommendation amendment. There were two votes in favour (Councillors Muldowney and Kent), and two votes against (Councillors Anderson and Thandi). As the vote was tied, the Chair received the casting vote and voted for the recommendation. Therefore, the recommendation was amended.

Councillor Kent suggested an additional recommendation which read "The Committee did not support fees and charges increases above the current rate of inflation of 4.2%". A vote was held on this recommendation. There were two votes in favour (Councillors Muldowney and Kent) and two votes against

(Councillors Anderson and Thandi). As the vote was tied, the Chair received the casting vote and voted for the recommendation. Therefore the proposed additional recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Noted the revised fees and charges including those no longer applicable, and commented on the proposals currently being considered within the remit of the Committee.

2. Noted that director delegated authority, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder or other appropriate Member oversight, will be sought via Cabinet to allow Fees and Charges to be varied within a financial year in response to commercial requirements.

3. Did not support fees and charges increases above the current rate of inflation of 4.2%.

37. Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Social Care

The Assistant Director Education and Skills introduced the report and stated that a previous report presented to the Committee in July had requested data on attainment, but explained that this was currently not available. She stated that therefore this report outlined how the service was supporting children on a holistic level. She stated that a survey had been sent out to schools to collect this information, and the completed report had been sent back to schools for their information. She added that it was also good to hear that the Youth Cabinet were undertaking work relating to mental health, as this was a concern within the service.

The Assistant Director Education and Skills stated that the main elements of the report related to the socialisation of children, particularly those children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as children required socialisation with their peers that they did not necessarily receive during the pandemic. She stated that some children had enjoyed isolation, whereas others had not, so the report highlighted a mixed individual picture. She explained that work was being undertaken to support children's socialisation and consultation had been undertaken during the pandemic to find out what schools needed. She commented that from this consultation the team had set up 'The Hangout' and 'The Junior Hangout' to improve children's socialisation.

The Assistant Director Education and Skills stated that the pandemic had also had an impact on children's learning, as schools had reported that children had lower stamina and resilience for learning. She highlighted that the School's Forum had also reported increased speech and language problems among the EYFS cohort, which could lead to an increased number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in the future. She stated that the team were therefore working closely with schools to ensure teachers and other professionals were working with children experiencing speech and language difficulties.

The Assistant Director Education and Skills added that the team were also seeing challenges amongst Year 11 pupils in schools, but highlighted that the government was still planning for exams to take place next summer, but this was dependent on a number of factors including the new Omicron variant. She clarified that schools were still experiencing problems relating to COVID-19 as some schools were seeing significant outbreaks, and children and staff were having to self-isolate, so the team were working to mitigate these challenges. She stated that attendance was currently 90% which was lower than pre-COVID levels, but in line with the national average.

The Assistant Director Children's Social Care (CSC) and Early Help added that the team had now moved to business as usual, with 98% of contact happening face-to-face, with remote contact only occurring as an exception after being risk assessed. She explained that the team were also using hybrid working, with some people in the office and some people working from home. She added that the courts had also decided to maintain a hybrid system, with the majority of court proceedings occurring via video, and only occurring in-person if necessary. The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help explained that an Ofsted focussed visit had occurred in June, which had found that Thurrock had been creative during the pandemic and staff had received regular updates on guidance and advice. She added that teams were now starting to meet in-person, particularly when a new starter entered the team as it provided a chance for them to meet and get to know everyone.

The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help stated that throughout the height of the pandemic the team had continued to help children, and had mostly moved online, including all training and the monthly forum meetings. She added that during the height of lockdown, central government had lifted some duties required by social workers, but Thurrock had continued as business as usual for as much as possible. She stated that face to face meetings with foster carers were now beginning again, but felt that foster carers had adapted to using the technology well. She added that some children who had not been living at home had struggled as they could not have regular face to face contact with their families, but some older children and teenagers had enjoyed the video calls with their families as it meant they could talk to their families more regularly and fit these contact meetings around their lives. She explained that in May 2021, 129 contacts had been via video and 67 contacts had been in person. She explained that the team had also worked to help care leavers who had felt isolated during the pandemic, by providing them with laptops, Wi-Fi and bikes to maintain work and social contact. She added that some care leavers had also been affected by the reduction in Universal Credit payments and the rise in gas and electricity payments.

Councillor Anderson highlighted the rise in domestic violence incidents during the pandemic, and asked if these were reducing now lockdown measures had eased. He queried what Thurrock Council could do to reduce domestic violence in the borough. The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help replied that Thurrock worked closely with partners such as the Domestic Violence Board to look at trends in domestic violence, both within Thurrock and on a

national level. She stated that domestic violence rates had increased during COVID-19, but referral rates for children had decreased due to the closure of schools. She added that Thurrock had a specialist Domestic Violence Worker that worked with both men and women to create a safe environment for them, and worked with police to ensure children at risk of domestic violence were quickly assessed.

Councillor Kent stated that Children's Social Care had moved mostly online during the pandemic, and asked how this had impacted staff. The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help replied that some staff had caught COVID, and two staff remained off work due to long COVID. She explained that during the pandemic staff had worked on a rota basis and had supported each other. She clarified that all staff had access to the required PPE when appropriate, and had utilised creative ways of visiting children, such as meeting at the park. The Corporate Director Children's Services added that she had liaised with the Director of Public Health and ensured that social workers and foster carers were prioritised for their vaccines. She stated that once the vaccine resource base had increased, some schools, SEND pupils, and vulnerable staff were also prioritised for their vaccines. Councillor Kent thanked teachers and social workers at Thurrock Council for their hard work throughout the pandemic. He stated that schools had continued to teach and had remained open for the children of key workers, whilst moving teaching quickly and efficiently online. He commented that he had heard anecdotal evidence of older teenagers working better and having better learning outcomes whilst learning from home, and asked how the Department for Education would take forward the learning from the pandemic, and implement different modes of learning where appropriate. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that the Department for Education were currently undertaking research into learning experiences for children and looking at the positives and negatives of different types of learning modes. She stated that during the pandemic schools had worked together to help one another, and met with Thurrock Council weekly to discuss their needs and concerns. She added that any learning identified by the Department for Education would take some time to be agreed, but would utilise and implement those positive experiences in the future. Councillor Kent felt it was good to see laptops and Wi-Fi being provided to those families that needed it, but asked if families had received help with connection and data costs. He stated that prepaid Wi-Fi cards were available relatively cheaply, and asked if the Council had looked into this. The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help replied that these had been offered to care leavers when necessary. The Assistant Director Education and Skills added that school's had picked this up with the appropriate families and had worked with the Council to identify solutions, particularly with SEND children.

The Chair felt it was good to see Children's Social Care had returned to business as usual as soon as possible, and thanked the team and schools for their efforts throughout the pandemic. She stated that COVID-19 had been the biggest educational disruption since World War 2 and had affected different parts of the country in different ways, due to regional lockdowns. The Parent Governor Representative stated that it had been challenging to ensure all children maintained their learning during the pandemic, but schools had

provided both online and paper based materials as required. She explained that governors had met virtually either weekly or twice weekly during the height of the pandemic and schools had continued to work hard. She thanked all the teachers for their hard work during this difficult time, and for their continued work now as COVID cases in schools continued to rise. She stated that COVID in schools created a domino effect, which often meant the majority of the class and the teacher could be self-isolating at any one time.

The Parent Governor Representative explained that primary schools were now seeing their EYFS cohort struggle with phonics, particularly those children for whom English was a second language. She stated that schools were now offering early morning tutoring and breakfast clubs, but there was some reluctance to take this offer up by parents. The Assistant Director Education and Skills thanked governors for their hard work during the pandemic, and felt that the whole schools system had done well to adapt. The Church of England Representative stated that she was a teacher who had changed jobs during lockdown. She felt that different schools were using different methods of teaching, but all were providing laptops and SIM cards where necessary.

The Chair questioned what support was being offered to Year 11 pupils who would be sitting their GCSEs next summer. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that schools were offering additional booster classes and catch up sessions. She stated that although the government had confirmed that exams would be held next summer, this was dependent on COVID levels, and this uncertainty could cause anxiety for some students. The Youth Cabinet Representative stated that a vaccination bus had been stationed outside of her college, which she had found useful and a positive experience. She added that lots of her friends and teachers had attended the vaccination bus to get their vaccine, although she felt advertisement of the bus and the vaccine rollout as a whole had been poor on social media. Councillor Thandi questioned how vaccines were being delivered in schools. The Parent Governor Representative replied that the schools immunisation scheme were delivering the programme.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Supported the work that schools are undertaking to enable children and young people to experience positive learning opportunities.

2. Recognised the work of children's social care to improve outcomes for children and meet their needs as we have entered into the recovery phase of COVID-19.

38. Pupil Place Plan Update (2021-2025)

The Service Manager Education and Support Service introduced the report and stated that it was produced for Committee on an annual basis and provided the key highlights of the PPP. She explained that birth rates had hit a record high in 2015/16, but had reduced by 7% in 2020, which could leave

surplus places in schools in five years' time. She stated that the PPP allowed the team to think strategically about capital works, such as where to place bulge classes, and which schools to work with for additional places. She stated that all schools were consulted on the PPP and when finding additional placements as required. The Service Manager Education and Support Service stated that the team currently had concerns regarding capacity in Stanford-le-Hope and Corringham, which she hoped would be rectified by Abbots Hall Primary becoming a two form entry. She stated that the team also had concern regarding capacity in Tilbury and talks were underway with both the Gateway Free School and Tilbury Pioneer Academy regarding additional placements. She stated that the team considered the PPP regularly at monthly meetings and were currently considering Year 1 placements following the high birth rates in 2015/16. She mentioned that there had been over 4000 in-year applications received for primary and secondary school placements, due to families moving to England, moving to Thurrock, or requesting different school placements. She explained that approximately 2000 places had been offered, and explained that not all 4000 requests had been offered a place due to factors such as parents not moving to Thurrock after they had requested a place. She explained that both Thames Park Academy and Orsett Heath Academy were currently in temporary locations, with Thames Park Academy scheduled to move to their permanent location in September 2022 and Orsett Heath Academy scheduled to move to their permanent location in Easter 2023. She explained that Treetops School had recently accepted additional classroom space, so would be moving to their permanent location in Easter 2022.

The Parent Governor Representative asked if bulge classes could be removed once they were added. The Service Manager Education and Support Service replied that bulge classes were applied to a particular cohort, and the bulge class would remain until that cohort had left the school. The Parent Governor Representative then asked if some schools were oversubscribed. The Service Manager Education and Support Service replied that those areas marked in red in the report were areas of concern, such as Stanford-le-Hope, Corringham and Tilbury, but these were monitored monthly alongside in-year applications. Councillor Kent welcomed the report as he felt the PPP led to proactive decisions and was comprehensive. He questioned point 3 on page 77 of the agenda, and queried if parents had a choice in school places, and if not, if the report could be reflected to amend this. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that parents could only express a preference rather than having a choice and this would be removed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Reviewed the PPP and noted the areas within Thurrock that will require additional school places going forward.**

The Service Manager Education and Support Service left the meeting at 8.27pm.

39. SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Action Update

The Assistant Director Education and Skills introduced the report and stated that Ofsted would be revisiting Thurrock in relation to the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) in December, and would be on site between 13 and 15 December. She explained that all relevant documents would be submitted to Ofsted by their deadline, which would identify how actions within the WSOA had been addressed. She explained that Thurrock needed to show sufficient progress on the recommendations, and the key document would be the Impact Statement which had come before Committee. She added that Ofsted had previously identified action regarding governance and scrutiny, and felt that the Committee had taken their role of scrutiny seriously. She mentioned that this a revisit rather than a re-inspection, and Ofsted would be talking to schools, health colleagues, young people, parents, Directors and Senior Managers. She summarised and stated that the RAG rated document provided for Committee would form part of the evidence submitted to Ofsted.

The Corporate Director Children's Services added that the team had worked hard since the last inspection two years ago, and had worked collaboratively with colleagues from health and education. She stated that there was a large agenda for Ofsted's onsite visit, although some meetings with parents and young people would be held virtually. She explained that both the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted would be visiting and their findings would be presented in a progress letter next year. The Assistant Director Education and Skills added that as part of the local offer, SEND children had been asked to design a mascot, which had been judged by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. She felt that the team had been undertaking lots of engagement work and the evidence of this would be presented to Ofsted.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and wished them luck on the re-visit. She added that choosing a winner for the mascot competition had been difficult, and thanked everyone for their hard work on the entries. She felt glad to see that the majority of recommendations were now blue or green RAG rated. Councillor Anderson echoed the Chair's comments and thanked the team for their hard work, as well as wishing them luck for the upcoming visit.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Scrutinised the work that has been undertaken during the period outlined in the report and offered support and challenge.

40. Update on the Progress of the Recommendations in the Annual Public Health Report of Serious Youth Violence and Vulnerability

The Director of Public Health joined the meeting at 8.45pm.

The Director of Public Health introduced the report and stated that it had been completed by the previous Director of Public Health in 2019/20 and since then the Violence and Vulnerability Board (VVB), which had been set up in the summer, had begun working to take forward the recommendations. She

stated that the VVB had held two meetings so far, which had established governance processes and the future work programme, ensuring that they added value and did not duplicate work. She stated that direct action had been undertaken with the perpetrators and victims of youth violence, and areas of further work had been identified, such as exclusions. She stated that the report had identified four areas of work, and the VVB had added a fifth area regarding raising awareness. She explained that the four areas were:

1. Surveillance, which was mainly undertaken by the police, and information was then pulled together by the public health team. There had been some progress in this area, but the team had had difficulty in recruiting an experienced data analyst. A data analyst had now started this week who would develop a predictive model of violence.
2. Primary prevention, which improved protective factors and reduced risk through work with parents and schools.
3. Secondary prevention, which included youth outreach work in schools.
4. Tertiary prevention, which reduced harm and took action on gangs.

The Director of Public Health stated that a number of projects were being developed and provided a comprehensive programme.

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health for the comprehensive report and asked for clarification regarding the levels of prevention. The Director of Public Health explained that the levels of prevention were developed using a public health model, and gave the example in a public health setting that primary prevention considered increasing physical activity; secondary prevention considered treatment by the GP; and tertiary prevention considered treatment at hospital to prevent further adverse outcomes. The Assistant Director Education and Skills added that the VVB had links across Essex and had received funding for the Olive Academy to undertake outreach work for children at risk of permanent exclusion. She stated that this funding, and other funding avenues, were a direct result of the report.

Councillor Kent stated that this approach had first been undertaken in Glasgow, which had seen long term investment. He queried if the Council were committed to the approach in the long term, and if any tangible outcomes had been seen so far. The Director of Public Health replied that the Council was committed to the long term approach, and would start to see the benefits in five to ten years. She stated that the Council were also committed to ensuring the entire system and a range of organisations remained committed. She stated that lots of work was ongoing, for example the multiagency operation to tackle gangs in Thurrock, so it was difficult to determine which outcomes were the result of the report or other operations. She stated that the team were now starting to use intelligence to prevent youth violence, and were also utilising a holistic approach.

The Chair stated that in December 2020 two knife point muggings had occurred in Chadwell St Mary, and she had found it difficult to follow these up with the police. She felt that residents had been frightened by these incidents and asked what the team were doing to prevent stabbings and muggings by

young people. The Director of Public Health replied that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that was being developed considered the fear of crime and violence. She explained that actions could be taken by the police that could not be disclosed to the public for confidentiality reasons, but that it was important to ensure good communication channels with residents, and this had been one of the recommendations from the report. The Corporate Director Children's Services added that the Community Safety Partnership worked closely with the police on anti-social behaviour, and residents could contact them at any time. The Youth Cabinet Representative stated that the Youth Cabinet had been working with the police to build a relationship, but felt that the police did not have a large enough social media presence. She stated that the Youth Cabinet were producing a YouTube video with the police regarding crime, which would be shown to young people.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Assured themselves of the progress of the recommendations in the Annual Public Health Report of Serious Youth Violence and Vulnerability.

2. Contributed to the delivery of the agenda, ensuring that communities have a voice within the agenda.

3. Agreed an annual report on the work of the Violence and Vulnerability Board be brought to the Committee.

41. Work Programme

The Work Programme was amended as follows:

1. An update on the Ofsted re-visit be provided to the Committee.
2. The report on the impact of COVID-19 would be removed.
3. The report on Inspire would be provided to the Committee as a briefing note.

The meeting finished at 9.08 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

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8 February 2022		ITEM: 6
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Progress Update on Peer Review and Case Review - Action Plans		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Priscilla Bruce-Annan, Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Early Help		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director, Children’s Services		
This report is public.		

Executive Summary

This report provides Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members with an update on the range of work of the LSCP and progress made in relation to Priority Setting, working with other Thurrock Partnerships and Boards and Learning and Development. In addition this report provides an overview of the action plans in the individual reviews and progress on each recommendation.

The responsibilities of the LSCP are laid out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision-making for children and families’

Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) were established under the Children Act (2004) to review cases where a child has died and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. SCRs could additionally be carried out where a child has not died, but has come to

serious harm as a result of abuse or neglect. The aim of SCRs was to establish learning for agencies and professionals to improve the way that they work together to safeguard children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018), changed the structure of SCRs, these reviews are now known as Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs). Responsibility for learning lessons lies with a national panel – the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) – and with local safeguarding partners.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Committee note the update on the work of the LSCP and the progress made on Action Plans to date.

2. Update on LSCP work

- 2.1 The LSCP priorities for 2022-2024 are under consideration by the Independent Chair Scrutineer and Statutory Partners. To include the views of the whole partnership in this process, a 'Quality Conversation' session was held attended by multi-agency frontline practitioners to explore and discuss the priorities of the partnership for 2022-2024. Feedback from this session along with the results of a frontline practitioner questionnaire will be shared with the Independent Chair Scrutineer and Statutory Partners and will contribute to the priority setting process.
- 2.2 Working with The Adults Safeguarding Board (SAB), The Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB) and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), a shared priorities document has been agreed and will be published in February 2022. This document will be refreshed as partnership and board priorities are reviewed.
- 2.3 Professor Carlene Firmin, Durham University delivered a keynote presentation on Contextual Safeguarding at the Annual Signs of Safety Conference 2021, 'Building Better Connections'. This was organised jointly by Thurrock LSCP and Thurrock Children's Services. The conference was very well attended by over 135 delegates and received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Delegates felt the content was timely and of a high standard. Sessions on the comprehensive multi-agency Learning and Development programme, delivered virtually continue to be very well attended. The programme has now been expanded to include training in the areas of Extra-familial Harm, Every Contact Counts and Trauma Informed Practice.
- 2.4 Ongoing work on the annual audit schedule ensures continuous improvement in quality assurance and hearing the voice of the child and family through engagement and participation.
- 2.5 The role of the LSCP is to ensure the Safeguarding Children in Education Audit is completed by schools and collated. A report is currently being written

and any learning will be shared directly with schools and via learning and development events.

- 2.6 Data and information has been gathered by an external reviewer in relation to the commissioned Thematic Review into Serious Youth Violence and Gang Related Crime. A separate Deep Dive Audit of the case related to the Thematic Review has been carried out and will be aligned with the review. The final report with recommendations will be published in February 2022. Once published all identified learning will be disseminated across the partnership and a multi-agency action plan devised to meet the recommendations.
- 2.7 One of the Priorities for the LSCP is Neglect. In response to this a Neglect Group has been formed and a strategy is in place to oversee the partnership priority 'To reduce the prevalence and impact of Neglect'. This group reports into the LSCP governance structure.

3. Case Reviews and Peer Review Action Plan Update

- 3.1 All case review action plans are developed through meetings attended by multi-agency representatives, to identify actions required by the partnership to address the recommendations. These action plans have been ratified through the LSCP Learning Practice Review Group, Management Executive Board and Statutory Partners.

SCR Sam & Kyle Action Plan published July 2020.

- 3.2 Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) commissioned Serious Case Reviews (SCR) into the circumstances surrounding the support and service provision to two young children, referred to in the report as 'Sam and Kyle'. Progress on the action plans for SCR Sam and Kyle have previously been presented to the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3 Sam was born in 2016 and sadly died in 2018 at home. There is an older sibling, Kyle, born in 2012. There was no presumption of non-accidental injuries or harm and Essex Police took no further action in relation to Sam's death. The SCR was agreed by the LSCP to draw out any learning for the partnership.
- 3.4 Sam and Kyle Serious Case Review lists five recommendations for improvements within the partnership, these recommendations form the basis of our action plan. The SCR Sam & Kyle Action Plan is attached in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The five recommendations from the Serious Case Review have been further divided up into sub-sections totalling 18 actionable areas. Good progress has been made on the plan, it identifies agreed areas of focus for actions with timescales for completion or implementation. These are RAG rated. All

recommendations in this plan are completed and RAG rated Blue with exception of 2 actions rated Amber below:

Recommendation 2.1 - "Inter-Agency Reflective Practice sessions three times a year focussing on the learning from specific case/s to be presented and delivered jointly across agencies".

The areas of focus for the reflective practice sessions are agreed; Neglect, Transitions and Transfers and, Unexplained Bruising. These will now be delivered in February, April and June 2022.

Recommendation 2.3 - Create and implement models of Multi-Agency group supervision.

The Practice Standards Group has agreed a model to be piloted in Feb/March 2022, following a round table event with practitioners from partner agencies.

SCR Frankie Action Plan published September 2020.

- 3.6 Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) commissioned Serious Case Reviews (SCR) into the circumstances surrounding the death of a young person referred to in the report as 'Frankie'.
- 3.7 Frankie was born in 2003 and died as a victim of a stabbing in 2018, in London. Frankie was known to various agencies at the time of his death. The review was commissioned to identify any learning in agencies involvement with this child.
- 3.8 Frankie Serious Case Review lists ten recommendations for improvement within the partnership. These recommendations form the basis of our action plan. It is a multi-agency action plan developed through the LSCP. The action plan has been ratified through the LSCP Learning Practice Review Group, Management Executive Board and Statutory Partners. The SCR Frankie Action Plan is attached in Appendix 2.
- 3.9 The ten recommendations from the Serious Case Review have been further divided up into sub-sections totalling 14 actionable areas. Good progress has been made on the plan, it identifies agreed areas of focus for recommendations with timescales for completion or implementation. These are RAG rated. All recommendations in this plan are completed and RAG rated Blue with exception of 1 recommendation rated Amber below:

Recommendation 3.2 - The Thurrock LSCP to lead a review of how all agencies respond to the impact on children when a parent is given a custodial sentence. How is this communicated and coordinated jointly across the multi-agency network?

A plan for a multi-agency Dip Sample Audit of partnership working (where parents/carers have received a custodial sentence) will be ratified through the audit sub-group with a view to it being conducted in spring 2022.

Peer Review Action Plan published August 2020.

- 3.10 The Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) commissioned an Independent Peer Review, which took place in August 2020. The report and recommendations arising from the Peer Review were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 1st December 2020. Subsequent reports have been presented on 2nd February 2021, and 13th July 2021, to the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Peer Review Action Plan is attached in Appendix 3.
- 3.11 The Thurrock LSCP Peer Review lists 26 recommendations for Partnership development, these recommendations form the basis of our action plan. It is a multi-agency action plan developed through the LSCP. A meeting was held with the Statutory Partners to identify actions required to address the recommendations. The action plan has been ratified through the LSCP Management Executive Board and Statutory Partners.
- 3.12 Good progress has been made on the plan, it identifies agreed areas of focus for recommendations with timescales for completion or implementation. These are RAG rated. All recommendations in this plan are completed and RAG rated Blue and Green.

LCSPR Leo Action Plan published February 2021.

- 3.13 Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) commissioned a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) into the circumstances surrounding the death of a child referred to in the report as 'Leo'.
- 3.14 Leo was nine years old when he died in 2018 from Bacterial Meningitis. At the time of his death Leo was known to various agencies. The review was commissioned to identify any learning in agencies involvement with this child.
- 3.15 LCSPR Leo lists twelve recommendations for service improvement which form the basis of the action plan and this is attached in Appendix 4.
- 3.16 The twelve recommendations from the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review have been further divided up into sub-sections totalling 14 actionable areas. Good progress is being made on the plan, it identifies agreed areas of focus for recommendations with timescales for completion or implementation.

Eleven out of the fourteen actions are complete and are now Green. The remaining three actions are Amber and work is ongoing to progress them within timescales to completion.

Recommendation 1.1 and 1.2 - *Whilst the family were discussed in meetings professionals were not always 'think wider family approach'. When making assessments SW's must consider all members of the family or household to assess their impact on the family and household as a whole.*

The first recommendation focuses on the importance of involving all significant people linked to the family when completing assessments. The LSCP is working in partnership with SET colleagues to promote a Think Family model across Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET). A podcast and video has already been devised and a conference is planned for March 2022. The LSCP is working with partners on the essential elements of a pictorial display of a family's relationships.

Recommendation 11.2 – *Partners who have provided information as part of CSC assessment should be routinely made aware of the outcome of the assessment; this was not evident in this case.*

This action relates to whether partners are made aware of the outcome of Children's Social Care assessments. Outcomes from referrals are sent as a matter of routine and where possible generic email addresses are included in the outcome responses. Conclusions from assessments are discussed with the relevant network. A survey to review the information sharing and collaboration between Children's Social Care and schools will be undertaken in January 2022.

LHR Shae and Ashely Action Plan published May 2021.

- 3.17 Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) commissioned a Local Health Review (LHR) into the circumstances surrounding the serious injuries concerning two children referred to in the report as 'Shae and Ashley'. At the time of commissioning the review, it was agreed that only the learning was to be identified in these cases and shared for service improvement.
- 3.18 Shae and Ashley are from two different families and their cases are not related other than the similarities of the circumstances surrounding their injuries and the involvement of local health agencies in theirs and their families' care.
- 3.19 The learning from LHR Shae and Ashley lists ten recommendations for improvements across the partnership, which have been further divided into sub-sections totalling 14 actionable areas. These actions form the basis of the action plan that is to be agreed and ratified through the LSCP Learning Practice Review Group, Management Executive Board and Statutory Partners in the next cycle of meetings.

4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 None

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To provide members with an update on the range of work carried out by Thurrock LSCP including the progress made across case review action plans and the Peer Review Action Plan. The action plans are multi-agency documents that are monitored through the LSCP governance structure.

6. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 7.1 There is no impact.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Corporate Finance

There are no substantial financial implications arising from the action plan which have not been accounted for in the LSCP budgets and delivery plan.

The LSCP is funded by the three statutory partners and small contributions from other members of the partnership.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018 dissolved the requirement for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB). The three Strategic Partners, determined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, comprise Thurrock Council, Essex Police and Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Thurrock's new arrangements as the LSCP, came into effect on the 7th May 2019.

The statutory criteria for a serious child safeguarding case is set out in Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) with statutory guidance in Working Together 2018. The commission and oversight of the review of these cases, (a local child safeguarding practice review formerly Serious Case Review) and the auditing and monitoring of the 'programme of action' following the findings of the review continues to be the role of the LSCP.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**

Team Manager Community Development

Supporting our children and young people who are disadvantaged is a key strategic priority for Thurrock Council. The Partnership promotes practice to achieve equality, inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy. All Partners are signed up to these principles.

8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

No implications identified.

9. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright).

Sam & Kyle Serious Case Review
Frankie Serious Case Review
Leo Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review

LSCP Peer Review

Available via the LSCP Website

10. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Sam & Kyle Serious Case Review Action Plan
- Appendix 2 – Frankie Serious Case Review Action Plan
- Appendix 3 – Thurrock LSCP Peer Review Action Plan
- Appendix 4 – Leo Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Action Plan

Report Author:

Priscilla Bruce-Annan

Business Manager

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership

SCR Sam and Kyle Action Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Progress/Comments	RAG Rating
1.1 Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should review within the next six months its procedure for the escalation of concerns and for resolving differences of view between professional and agencies. This should especially consider where there are challenges to the thresholds applied to cases which involve a number of agencies, and where there are persistent concerns about either neglect and/or parental engagement.	Escalation Policy finalised in July 2020 to be reviewed in the light of the recommendation and recirculated across the Partnership.	The Escalation Policy has been circulated to all organisations, who acknowledged receipt and provided comments on how this has been taken forward within their organisations.	B
1.2 Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should review within the next six months its procedure for the escalation of concerns and for resolving differences of view between professional and agencies. This should especially consider where there are challenges to the thresholds applied to cases which involve a number of agencies, and where there are persistent concerns about either neglect and/or parental engagement.	Individual agencies to report on how the escalation policy is implemented and identify good practice and areas of learning.	Feedback from agencies on implementation, good practice and areas of learning.	B
1.3 Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should review within the next six months its procedure for the escalation of concerns and for resolving differences of view between professional and agencies. This should especially consider where there are challenges to the thresholds applied to cases which involve a number of agencies, and where there are persistent concerns about either neglect and/or parental engagement.	Terms of Reference for Practice Standards Multi-Agency Meeting to be agreed at the next Learning and Practice Review Group meeting. The Practice Standards Meeting will address issues of concern and learning points can be raised across agencies to improve inter-agency communication. When the Terms of Reference are agreed the Practice Standards Meetings can be established in December.	Scoping meeting of the Practice Standards Group (PSG) held 18.11.20. Terms of Reference were finalised and signed off in March 2021. A schedule of meetings to take place quarterly is scheduled and a core agenda set.	B
2.1 Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should develop a series of practice workshops to be run between agencies to explore and build on better co-operation and understanding of handling complex or persistent cases. Case studies should be used - such as this Review - and the development of joint or group supervision approaches should be explored. This should be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen understanding between services and encourage wider joint working and sharing of relevant information about concerns.	Inter-Agency Reflective Practice sessions three times a year focussing on the learning from specific case/s to be presented and delivered jointly across agencies.	The topics for the three inter-agency reflective sessions are agreed as Neglect, Transition & Transfers and Unexplained Bruising. The series of events was due to start in autumn 2021, but due to the high volume of training opportunities already in place including the Signs of Safety Conference 'Building Better Connections', focussing on Extra-familial Harm, the series of events will now take place in February, April and June 2022.	A

2.2	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should develop a series of practice workshops to be run between agencies to explore and build on better co-operation and understanding of handling complex or persistent cases. Case studies should be used - such as this Review - and the development of joint or group supervision approaches should be explored. This should be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen understanding between services and encourage wider joint working and sharing of relevant information about concerns.	Arrange debriefing after a particular case where there is learning so that can be shared etc. To be agreed between at least two agencies - learning points reported to the LSCP.	A podcast has been recorded and published on the TLSCP website exploring and reflecting on the learning from SCR Sam and Kyle and 2 other recently published reviews. It is accompanied by a summary briefing on a page drawing out the learning. This has been shared with Partners and wider agencies with suggestions for further sharing. An interactive, reflective event with the author/reviewer is planned for autumn 2021.	B
2.3	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should develop a series of practice workshops to be run between agencies to explore and build on better co-operation and understanding of handling complex or persistent cases. Case studies should be used - such as this Review - and the development of joint or group supervision approaches should be explored. This should be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen understanding between services and encourage wider joint working and sharing of relevant information about concerns.	Create and implement models of Multi-Agency group supervision.	A range of models have been discussed and scoped at a multi-agency round table event hosted by the Practice Standards Group. An agreed model of multi-agency discussions around 'Complex Cases' is to be piloted in January, February and March 2022. A format, structure and guidance notes have been written for the a trial. Following the trial period the process will be evaluated for effectiveness with a view to embedding the process in practice. The original target date set did not take into account the time required to devise and ratify the Terms of Reference for the Practice Standards Group.	A
3.1	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should, using the principles within the Signs of Safety approach, review interagency procedures for establishing agreement with families of written care plans involving all those working with a child, with shared, clear and practical objectives that can be monitored - especially in persistent cases of poor parenting and neglect.	Review guidance within the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Procedures and re-circulate to Partner agencies.	Relevant sections of the SET Procedures have been reviewed and discussions are in place to produce a joint SET 'Think Family Approach' podcast, which will be available in September 2021. Interagency procedures are being considered within the SET procedures working group. A joint SET Think Family podcast and supporting resources has been published and available to access via all 3 Board/Partnership websites.	B
3.2	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should, using the principles within the Signs of Safety approach, review interagency procedures for establishing agreement with families of written care plans involving all those working with a child, with shared, clear and practical objectives that can be monitored - especially in persistent cases of poor parenting and neglect.	Multi-Agency Signs of Safety training is scheduled before end December 2020 and will focus on the co-production of plans with children, young people and their families.	Multi-agency partners working with Domestic Violence, Child Exploitation/ Missing and Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub have received Signs of Safety training, which covered the co-production of plans.	B

3.3	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should, using the principles within the Signs of Safety approach, review interagency procedures for establishing agreement with families of written care plans involving all those working with a child, with shared, clear and practical objectives that can be monitored - especially in persistent cases of poor parenting and neglect.	Complete audit of plans via the Audit Group - to ascertain if the plans are Multi-Agency and have been created with families.	3 Children in Need cases where Neglect is a major factor have been audited and discussed at the Audit Group meeting on 11th February 2021. Feedback has been shared with the Learning Practice Review Group (LPRG). The outcome is that plans are multi-agency and created with family input and on-going discussion.	B
3.4	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should, using the principles within the Signs of Safety approach, review interagency procedures for establishing agreement with families of written care plans involving all those working with a child, with shared, clear and practical objectives that can be monitored - especially in persistent cases of poor parenting and neglect.	LSCP to work with key safeguarding leads to establish how the practice of shared written care plans can be embedded by all agencies working with Thurrock Children	Findings from the audit to be shared with Practice Standards Group to embed into practice across agencies. This is on the agenda for the next meeting.	B
4.1	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should consider auditing the operation of the Prevention and Support Service programme to establish the extent to which the positive evaluation in the 2019 Ofsted report has been sustained and strengthened.	Children's Social Care Quality Assurance Team to complete a dip sample within the next 2 months of the Prevention and Support Service (PASS) cases.	Children's Social Care conducted a dip sample audit where the outcomes were discussed at round table discussion with CSC managers. This was conducted throughout November and December 2020. Subsequent audits and round table discussions have been scheduled involving key partner agencies, on a quarterly basis. This includes gathering feedback from children and their families. Linked to action 4.2 (below).	B

4.2	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership should consider auditing the operation of the Prevention and Support Service programme to establish the extent to which the positive evaluation in the 2019 Ofsted report has been sustained and strengthened.	2. Whole day multi agency case review session to focus on PASS cases involving key practitioners - to be planned for March 2021 - this will be led by the LSCP.	A multi-agency panel was convened to review one PASS case, held on 17.03.2021. The outcome of the audit was positive. The aim of the audit is to improve the quality of partnership working and sharing of information between the PASS Service and partner agencies, ensuring that all professionals involved work together effectively and they have a shared goal, which is to improve the outcomes for the children and families they work with. The process consists of - 6 cases being audited by the PASS Service Manager, PASS Team Managers, Quality Assurance Manager. The cases are from across the 3 localities and from PASS Plus. - Service user feedback gathered by Participation and Engagement Officer - Feedback gathered from all key agencies involved, using a bespoke audit tool which was agreed by the LSCP - Meeting between all 6 Auditors, discussing the audit findings and key learning - Multi-Agency Audit Meeting between PASS Service and the professionals involved with one of the cases audited.	B
5.1	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership is recommended to encourage the continued development of the Signs of Safety approach, and the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 for use across agencies and professional groups.	Signs of Safety Conference (SoS) on 21st October 2020.	Completed.	B
5.2	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership is recommended to encourage the continued development of the Signs of Safety approach, and the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 for use across agencies and professional groups.	Multi-Agency Signs of Safety training for MARAC, MASH + Child Exploitation/Missing in place Autumn 2020	Completed.	B
5.3	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership is recommended to encourage the continued development of the Signs of Safety approach, and the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 for use across agencies and professional groups.	Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) training in place commencing Autumn 2020,	Completed.	B

5.4	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership is recommended to encourage the continued development of the Signs of Safety approach, and the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 for use across agencies and professional groups.	Graded Care Profile 2 trainers to offer desk side assistance on specific cases in relation to neglect.	Desk side and virtual assistance offered across partnership agencies.	B
5.5	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership is recommended to encourage the continued development of the Signs of Safety approach, and the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 for use across agencies and professional groups.	Dedicated Signs of Safety and Graded Care Profile 2 training to be led by Signs of Safety Consultant to be in place by Jan 2021.	Held on 15th March 2021.	B
5.6	Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership is recommended to encourage the continued development of the Signs of Safety approach, and the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 for use across agencies and professional groups.	All agencies to view Graded Care Profile 2 training as a priority for relevant staff.	Presentation delivered to Management Executive Board on 20th December 2020, to initiate the re-launch of Graded Care Profile in Thurrock.	B

The following index indicates how the rating is decided:

Blue	Action complete and embedded where required.
Green	Action on track and progressing to plan.
Amber	Action commenced, some delay will recover to completion.
Red	Action experiencing threatening problems and issues, behind schedule and not expected to recover.

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SCR Frankie - Action Plan

Learning Points	Actions	Updates	RAG Rating
<p>1 The current notification process under the SET Child Death Review arrangements (Section 9.7.17) should be reviewed to ensure timely notification of child deaths are received by the relevant persons when a Thurrock child dies outside of the area.</p>	<p>1. Processes to be clarified on how relevant agencies are informed when a child/young person dies - especially outside of office working hours 2. When a child/young person dies outside of Thurrock area - how is this information shared to ensure that agencies are informed</p>	<p>1. This is currently being looked at across SET and work is ongoing in relation to this. In addition to the process set out in the SET CDR Procedure (2019) paragraph 18, each organisation should follow their own child death procedure and notify the Child Health Information Service (CHIS) who are the initial and main route for informing agencies of the death of a child/young person. A multi-agency working group is currently reviewing and strengthening the pathways for notifications and a flowchart is being prepared for sharing across SET agencies within the next few weeks. 2. TLSCP Business Manager to ask the question and feedback. A review is ongoing at SET level. When a child who is resident in Thurrock, dies outside of the Thurrock area it would be expected that the Child Death Overview Panel in the area in which the child died would make contact with the SET CDR Manager, as set out in paragraph 9.4 of the SET CDR Procedure. Meeting set up with MT Education Strategic Lead (06.04.21 rearranged to 21.04.21) to understand what happens within Thurrock when the notification is received. What is understood at the moment: The Child Death notification goes to MT directly in the first instance so that where necessary a check of the school can be done and where necessary implement Critical Incident support from the Educational Psychology Service. This is to ensure that the person who is providing the support is able to talk directly with the Headteacher concerned rather than them being contacted by a number of staff across education. There are a number of occasions where MT or a senior member of the educational psychology service would attend the initial Child Death review meeting where appropriate. A piece of work is currently been undertaken in CSC to formalise a process/protocol around</p>	<p align="center">B</p>
<p>2 Essex Police should remind staff decision makers regarding the correct threshold for disposal in juvenile cases and the YOS referral process.</p>	<p>Process within YOS to be recirculated out to front line officers</p>	<p>What is the correct threshold for disposal in juvenile cases? What is the YOS referral process? 25.03.21 - Email sent the YOS Team Manager requesting guidance on this action. Response received from YOS Team Manager providing information on how this action has progressed. To be taken the MACE in April for them to review. Presented at MACE meeting on the 13th April and it was agreed that this recommendation has been met. Procedures have been implemented by YOS and will be monitored.</p>	<p align="center">B</p>

3.1	The Thurrock LSCP to lead a review of how all agencies respond to the impact on children when a parent is given a custodial sentence.	Task and Finish Group to look at this, to include reps from NPS and CRC, CSC, NELFT and Housing Areas to be covered:- What steps are taken when a parent is given a custodial sentence What support is put in place when this happens (eg, financial implications, housing, contact with school and emotional support - children).	25.03.21 - Invitation has sent out for a Task and Finish Group meeting which is to be held on the 21st April 2021 - this did not go ahead. Multi-agency Task and Finish Group to be convened by mid June to discuss and initiate review. Meeting held on 22.07.21 attended by Probation, NELFT, CSC Early Help and CLA. Written input was also provided from Housing and Thurrock CCG all provided full updates on what is provided within thier organisation. An update from Education is yet to be received. 02.09.21 - Response received from Education and all responses have been combined and is available from LSCP Business Team. This question has also been added to the Section 11 Safeguarding Audit. Data will be collected in the ext cycle.	B
3.2	The Thurrock LSCP to lead a review of how all agencies respond to the impact on children when a parent is given a custodial sentence.	How is this communicated and coordinated jointly across the multi-agency network?	A plan for a multi-agency Dip Sample audit of partnership working (where parents/carers have received a custodial sentence) will be ratified through the audit sub-group with a view to it being conducted in spring 2022.	A
4.1	Thurrock CSC to ensure that Child in Need procedures includes a notification process to other relevant agencies when a child becomes the subject of a CIN Plan.	CSC to clarify what the process is in relation to notification.	CSC response: Key partner agencies such as GP, Schools and Health are invited to the first CIN meeting. They are also invited to review meetings and the final CIN meeting. Key agencies are sent a letter when the CIN plan ends and the aim is to have a final CIN meeting involving relevant agencies before the CIN plan ends. The Police are not invited to CIN meetings unless they have a particular role with a family. Monitoring of this will be carried ot via the LSCP Annual Audit schedule.	B

4.2	Thurrock CSC to ensure that Child in Need procedures includes a notification process to other relevant agencies when a child becomes the subject of a CIN Plan.	As part of this the email addresses for agencies should be reviewed twice yearly - especially in relation to Primary Care.	5th May 21 - This was discussed at the MACE meeting on the 13th April. Further queries to be made as to whether areas can introduce generic email inboxes to assist with this. 24th August 21 - Distribution lists are being shared on a twice a year basis and this has been added to the forward plan to ensure that this is requested timely.	B
5	The Thurrock LSCP to lead the opportunity for local agencies to consider and find ways to understand how to incorporate the concept of contextual safeguarding in the assessment of risk to children in the future.	Each agency should review their assessment processes to see if it captures contextual safeguarding questions - to be overseen by MACE.	Agencies have indicated that Contextual Safeguarding is incorporated into their assessment processes. This has been discussed within the MACE Group.	B
6	The Thurrock LSCP to engage with the education system to review the current process when permanent exclusion is being considered, to ensure that consideration is given to reducing the potential for creating additional vulnerability and safeguarding risks to children at risk of exclusion.	Work to be undertaken to ensure that permanent exclusion is the last resort - regular updates to be provided to MACE on the ongoing work as a standing agenda item.	This is part of the Youth Justice Plan 21-24 - guidance has been written for schools. YOS provide packages of support to schools to support with children at risk of exclusion. LA protocols are in place to reduce vulnerability factors and safeguard C&YP from serious youth violence (this is shared with schools). Funding has been secured to provide outreach support to schools commencing autumn term 2021. Regular updates will be provided at MACE meetings and this will be evaluated at the end of the 2021/22 school year.	G
7	The Thurrock LSCP to co-ordinate a review of local interventions currently available to support parents when identified safeguarding risks are outside the home. What do young people and their parents tell us about this?	Awaiting information from recommendation 5 and then develop further. - Seek views from families and children and young people - What services are available for parents to be signposted to (including voluntary and charities).	Thurrock Gangs and CCE Lead within YOS provides parental support and guidance around gangs and exploitation. This can take a range of forms from individual to general awareness. This work is supported with an information leaflet (attached), that also signposts to national support websites/numbers. Plans are in the pipeline to deliver group parent/drop in sessions once face-to-face events resume and the feasibility of an app/24hr support line for sharing concerns (early stages) to be developed over the next few months. There is also guided signposting to the following websites as support mechanisms: https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/ https://parentinfo.org/article/if-your-child-is-in-a-gang https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/ https://www.barnardos.org.uk/ https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/ The Crew Project - run by INSPIRE Your Future a 6 week mentoring programme for 11- 18 year olds who maybe affiliated with gang culture.	B

8	Thurrock LSCP to review data about families being moved into the area by other local authorities as part of their own gang disruption activities, and consider the role of the LSCP in liaising with the relevant LSCPs about how agencies can work better together to meet the needs of these families and manage risk.	SET Strategic Partners to take this forward as this is a national issue - notifications to be made when a child/young person is being moved into another area, along with safeguarding concerns.	A local strategy with Housing, Education, Community Safety and the Youth Offending Service (YOS) are working together to identify families transferred into Thurrock as part of their home LAs gang disruption activities. Funding from the V&VU has been used to design a welcome pack to engage those families and share vital contact information e.g. Local Area Coordinator, Education, faith organisations, housing, health etc. This has also been raised at Director level, Eastern Region and at National Forums. There is currently a London protocol written by the Met Police being agreed (Name?) which may have an impact outside London. This will also be agreed via the Thematic Review of Youth Violence and Gang Related Crime. This has now been escalated nationally. Thurrock CCG - As part of the recent local drowning - a multiagency audit will be looking at case transfer.	B
9	Thurrock LSCP to review how partner agencies respond to and provide support to those families and children affected by gang association. Could Thurrock LSCP, Adult Safeguarding Board and Community Safety Partnership build on the current work to develop a violence and vulnerability framework?	LSCP through MACE to look at what agencies are providing for families who are affected by gang affiliation	TLSCP, TSAB and CSP met with reps from Housing, YOS, Placements Essex Police and Education to discuss this recommendation. There is alot of work being done in this area with a whole system approach Annual Public Health Report and Action Plans, CSP - Violence and Vulnerability Report, PFCC -Safer Essex V&V Framework and Overview, June 2018 document, Operation Raptor (focus on serious youth crime and gangs, Local Action Groups, Housing - Vulnerable Families Project, SAB - Training and awareness sessions, Placements Team - pre-placement assessments, training and awareness for foster carers. Operational GRV Board linked to Brighter Futures Strategy. Inteventions and support by the YOS Outreach Worker as per recommendation 7. H&WBB Priority 6.	B
10.1	Thurrock LSCP to review how well Partner agencies currently share intelligence related to gang association and affiliation.	Report to be requested from Operational Gang Related Violence Group on a meeting cycle basis - to include identified Contextual Safeguarding concerns	Contextual Safeguarding Report is presented as a standing agenda item at all MACE. Reports from the Operational Gang Related Violence Group (GRVG) are presented at MACE meetings annually.	B

10.2	Thurrock LSCP to review how well Partner agencies currently share intelligence related to gang association and affiliation.	Request feedback from agencies involved within the Operational GRV to see how effective the information sharing is- what is working well, what is not working so well - what difference has it made.	YOS Senior Leader attended the June 2021 meeting and presented report from the Operation Gang Related Violence Group (GRV) and presented an annual report to the LSCP. This will form part of the LSCP Forward Plan of annual reports.	B
10.3	Thurrock LSCP to review how well Partner agencies currently share intelligence related to gang association and affiliation.	Have a six monthly dip sample of families requesting their feedback.	Initial meeting to discuss this action with YOS completed. Further discussions to be held. In January this year a young person feedback was undertaken in relation to children who were open to YOS and Children's Social Care. Additionally the Violence and Vulnerabilities Board have undertaken a Youth Participation Project which includes the voice of some Thurrock Children. JR to attend MACE Sub-Group in June to update in relation to this action. JR attended MACE in June and presented report. This is also captured in the GRV annual report and the 6 monthly dip sample is added to the LSCP forward plan.	B

Blue
Green
Amber
Red

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Peer Review Action Plan

Category		Recommendation	Specific Actions	Response	RAG Rating
Governance & Business Support Structures	1	Consider deputies on Strategic Group to bring strategic /operational leads together	Strategic Partners to identify deputies who can attend the Strategic Group alongside them.	Deputies are now core members of Strategic Group. The Terms of Reference for the group have been revised to reflect this.	B
Governance & Business Support Structures	2	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) steering group subgroup - governance through LSCP	The MASH Steering Group to become one of the LSCP Sub-Groups	The MASH Strategic Group is now a Sub-group of the LSCP and reports directly to the Strategic Group. This is reflected in the revised LSCP Constitution September 2021 and represented in the Partnership structure chart.	B
Shared Priorities/Engagement	3	Shared and agreed priorities across Partnerships in Thurrock	Produce a Priorities Outcome Booklet which shows the priorities for the LSCP, Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Health and Well Being Board (H&WBB) - updates can be provided and the report can be shared with the different partnerships.	Meetings between all Board/Partnerships managers have taken place to discuss priorities and to scope and design the document. This action was delayed pending the outcome of the HWBB priority refresh process. It has been agreed that the document will be published with the current priorities of all boards as a dynamic document updated and re-published with priority updates.	G
Shared Priorities/Engagement	4	Protocol to reduce duplication and streamline processes across partnership groups e.g. Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)/Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LSPRs)/Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs).	Develop a protocol across the partnerships in Thurrock	A draft protocol and flowchart has been developed and is being considered by all boards for agreement and adoption. Partners are asked to consider the draft protocol (attached to meeting paperwork) for agreement, sign off and adoption.	B
Shared Priorities/Engagement	5	Develop wider role of SET	To be agreed.	There are many SET groups with a growing amount of joint work being delivered. Currently in place; SET Procedures Group, SET Working Group, various SET Task and Finish Groups, SET DAB, SET CE Group, SET Awareness Campaigns and SET Business Managers Group and the SET Strategic Partners Group (set up in response to dealing with issues around COVID-19). SET Independent Chairs are proposing a quarterly meeting to focus on joint work. Discussions around a joint Retentions policy have started.	B
Learning and Improvement	6	Consider different models to involve frontline staff/schools e.g. learning hubs	Consultation to be undertaken with front line staff and then the learning hub developed following the results from this	An annual schedule of consultation of frontline staff/practitioners has been devised. A consultation will take place 4 times a year every year on various areas. The area for 2021/22 Quarter 1 is Learning & Development and the LSCP Website. In conjunction with this The Learning Hub is being developed and will form part of the newly refreshed TLSCP website in the autumn term.	B
Learning and Improvement	7	Revise Learning and Improvement Framework	The Learning and Practice Review Group to revise the Learning and Improvement Framework	The TLSCP Learning & Improvement Framework has been devised, taken through our governance structure for comment and has been approved and signed off by Strategic Partners. Work from the framework has begun and is on-going. The framework will be revised and refreshed on an annual basis to ensure it is relevant and current.	B

Quality Assurance and Data	8	Agree a multiagency dataset based on priority areas, plus regular reporting on safeguarding proxy indicators with analysis.	Look at collating a small selection of data across the Partnership - this can then be built on and developed further	A pilot Data Set has been designed and agreed by a multi-agency Task and Finish group. The Data SET has been through the governance structure for comment and has been approved and signed off by the Strategic Partners. Multi-agency data will be collected and analysed on a quarterly basis to inform current work with children, young people and families and inform future partnership decision making. The pilot Data Set will be reviewed at the end of the first year and annually for improvement.	B
Quality Assurance and Data	9	Develop different audit models - consider different types e.g. questionnaires following implementation of new policies/processes, deep dives, quality conversations, single agency safeguarding audits, scrutiny topics	This can be started by - Undertaking surveys in different areas, the first one could be around the Threshold Document. - Ask agencies to provide information in relation to single agency audits within specific areas and produce a booklet of the learning which can be shared with staff. - Have deep dive audits twice a year, to involve front line staff	An annual audit schedule identifying a range of audit models/tools has been devised. Audit areas include the Threshold Document, the SET Bruising Policy, Learning from Reviews and the Escalation Policy. for 2021/22. A new schedule will be planned each year. The plan is to develop and incorporate this into the Learning and Improvement Framework for 2022.	B
Quality Assurance and Data	10	Review process Section11/Section175 - online, strategic and operational/alternating	In relation to Section157/175s - a front line survey be undertaken with education staff. In relation to the submission of the 157/175 - a consultation to be held with Senior Members of the Schools as to any changes they wish to make to update the audit request	The Section 11 Audit has been reviewed, refreshed and will be requested by SET. This is a joint activity by SET (linking to Recommendation 5). A schedule is in place to send out requests to all partners/agencies across SET with the same deadline. This is a coordinated approach to reduce duplication and increase efficiency for all. Requests will be sent out in June 2021 (delayed to include data collection on Peer on Peer Abuse). Section 157/175s Audit requests will be sent late September 2021 with a deadline for return end of November 2021. Analysis of returns will be carried out and a consultation of Senior Leaders and Frontline staff is planned.	B
Quality Assurance and Data	11	Agree an audit schedule - re-audit some areas on annual basis for evidence of impact on priority areas	- Prepare an audit schedule for agreement by the Strategic Partners. - Following each audit, look at showing the outcomes from these audits. At the end of the audit cycle, the outcomes than be reviewed.	An Audit Schedule for 2021/22 has been devised, taken through the governance structure for comment and has been agreed and signed off by Strategic Partners. A new annual Audit Schedule to include re-audits will be agreed and undertaken each year.	B
Shared Priorities/Engagement	12	Ensure children and young people, families and practitioners involved in audits.	Audit Group to agree a way that this can be taken forward.	Various methods/tools are used to ensure children, young people, families and practitioners are involved in audits (linked to Recommendation 11). The Young Peoples Participation Officer is involved in the current audit process to ensure the inclusion of children, young people and families. New and innovative methods are to be used on an ongoing basis.	B
Finance	13	Agree budget needed including contingency for Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR)	Strategic Partners to discuss and agree budget.	Strategic Partners agreed the budget at their January 2021 meeting.	B
Finance	14	Consider bid to schools forum for contribution towards partnership	Strategic Partners to discuss and agree a way forward.	Strategic Partners met in December 2020 to consider a bid to Schools Forum. Further discussions have taken place at Strategic Group meetings. Strategic Partners have taken a decision to submit a bid to Schools Forum for a contribution towards the Partnership in summer 2021.	B

Finance	15	Health and Police gradually increase their contribution over next two years to ensure equity of funding	Strategic Partners to discuss and agree a plan around this.	Strategic Partners met in December 2020 to discuss contribution increase over the next 2 years, where Partners will equally contribute 33.3% towards the LSCP budget by 2022/23. Request letters to all three agencies were sent in January 2021. Follow-up request letters were sent in March 2021. Thurrock CCG have responded positively and have been invoiced. Essex Police have positively responded and an invoice is to be sent.	B
Governance & Business Support Structures	16	Review functions of business unit	Business Manager to review the current roles within the team against future work expectation/delivery plan. Bench mark activity with similar sized LSCPs in the Eastern Region and produce a Review of the Business Team Report.	The LSCP Business Team functions have been reviewed and a refreshed team structure has been discussed with HR to progress changes. The proposed structure is 1x Business Manager, 1x Project Officer, 1x Business Support Officer, 0.6 Training Coordinator and 1x Business Administration Apprentice. Recruitment of the apprentice is in process. The current Training Administrator has left her post. Strategic Partners have agreed recruitment to this post and the process has started.	B
Learning and Improvement	17	Training - consider developing across SET sharing costs	Initial discussions with SET Business Managers January 2021. Consider joint training to be delivered across SET February 2021 Prepare and share proposal for joint training with Strategic Partners March 2021.	SET have further developed delivering joint training. These include Violence and Vulnerability webinars, CYP First Training packages and a CE E-learning Tool Kit package has been developed and is on offer. Training has been agreed and is planned on Contextual Safeguarding, CE and Gang Related Violence (GRV). A podcast is due to be available in the autumn term with new joint training resources launched on an ongoing regular basis. (Linked to Recommendation 5).	B
Learning and Improvement	18	Develop more immediate models of practice reviews	The LSCP to explore what is being done in other areas and collate examples of good practice - January 2021. Discuss at Eastern Region meeting February - 2021 Deliver a Practice Review learning event - March 2021	Initial ideas are Learning Events, Learning Review Author Presentations, learning videos, short briefings, podcasts, briefing on a page and review summary booklets. A podcast sharing the learning from the last three SCR/LPRs has been published on the TLSCP website and shared with partners and relevant agencies along with summary booklets for each case. A learning event is on hold to be delivered following the lifting of restrictions. A SET podcast on learning from practice reviews in relation to 'Think Family' is being designed to be available in September 2021 (linked to Recommendation 17).	B
Learning and Improvement	19	Embedded in system/video/induction packs	Explore, collate and consider training topic and suitable trainers - January 2021. Produce an agreed list of videos to be recorded - February 2021. Videos to be created and shared with agencies - March 2021.	The LSCP is currently designing training briefings that will also form part of new starters induction packs across agencies. Discussions have taken place and the Learning Practice Review Group will support to cascade and reassure that training and induction packs are used within induction processes across agencies. The Learning Hub is hosted on the refreshed LSCP website. Podcasts, 7 minute briefings on a page and videos have been made available on the website. More resources are been designed and added.	G
Quality Assurance and Data	20	Monitoring recommendations and agencies actions/ audit outcomes and actions	Initial discussions at Practice Standards Group - February 2021. Develop and finalise draft with monitoring grid - April 2021 Share with PSG for feedback and agree final ready for implementation - May 2021	A Composite Action Matrix has been created to track all agency actions - reviews and audit outcomes. This is to be reviewed and developed further on an ongoing basis. The Composite Matrix is to be monitored by the newly established Practice Standards Group (PSG).	B

Learning and Improvement	21	Explore learning across SET	Links with 17	This is linked closely with recommendations 5 and 17 and will be achieved in line with those recommendations.	B
Shared Priorities/Engagement	22	Use existing structures - school groups, young peoples council to promote engagement with C&YP	Initial meeting with Lead for the Youth Council, Children in Care Council, Inspire and Youth Participation Officer to scope ideas February 2021.	The LSCP is collaborating with the Youth Council, Children in Care Council, Inspire Hub and CSC Participation Officer to deliver a number of summer and autumn engagements events to Young People. The LSCP worked jointly with the CSC Engagement & Participation Officer at the Summer Grangewaters Activity Day to engage and consult with C&YP. The LSCP Business Manager will attend the September 2021 Youth Cabinet meeting to deliver a presentation on 'What the LSCP is and does?' with a Q&A session to follow. A programme of engagement events and consultation activities will be planned with the new Youth Cabinet once the new Youth Worker has been assigned to work with the Youth Cabinet. The LSCP is to attend school groups to engage and consult with C&YP on issues of safeguarding. The first to the Olive Academy with Collet Hunnisett.	B
Shared Priorities/Engagement	23	Questionnaire - 'you said, we did'	Initial meeting with Lead for the Youth Council, Children in Care Council, Inspire and Youth Participation Officer to scope ideas February 2021. Thurrock Brighter Futures Annual School Survey.	The summer and autumn engagement events will ascertain wishes and feelings which will be taken forward by the Practice Standards Group. Recommendations 22 & 23 are closely linked. The LSCP BM to attend C&YP coffee mornings at schools (first The Olive) in the autumn term to talk about the work of the LSCP and to engage and consult with C&YP. The LSCP has worked with Public Health, HWBB and CSP to review the questions in the annual Brighter Futures School Survey 2021. Children and Young People across year groups 4 to 10 are surveyed. The survey includes questions on safety and issues of Safeguarding in addition to Health and Well Being. The four survey themes are My Experiences, My School, My Life and My Feelings. The final published report from the survey will be presented to the Strategic Group and MEB.	B
Shared Priorities/Engagement	24	Recruit community voice as lay member	Explore and gather information on where and how this has been done well in Eastern Region/other areas - February 2021 Produce literature/JD on expectations and benefits of being a Lay/Community Member - March 2021 Launch recruitment project for Lay/Community Member - March 2021. Lay Member recruited and in post April 2021.	A role description and information leaflet on the expectations has been devised and published on the TLSCP website. This has also been shared with the Community Engagement and Governors Services Team and is now published as a volunteering opportunity via the local authority volunteer programme https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/volunteering-vacancies/current-volunteer-opportunities . This continues to be an aspiration and we continue with efforts to recruit a lay member for the Partnership, although it is not no longer a statutory requirement.	B

Shared Priorities/ Engagement	25	Specific work on faith group/community outreach	Start with a basic survey in libraries and Community Hubs. Do a survey with the Faith Forum - possibly linked with Adults	Essex Police are are engaging with community groups including Enpower Initiative, Leaders Unlocked and various vulnerable, women's and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups about the work of the partnership. Essex Police also attend and share information on the partnership at the Daily Bread initiative that works to support the community with a Food Bank service. Meetings are taking place with existing faith and community groups with a view to developing outreach work. As restrictions ease and COVID recovery is underway outreach work will continue and develop. The LSCP has worked with the Community Safety Partnership, Essex Police and agencies and distributed information about the LSCP during the 16 Days of Action. Community Forum secretaries have been contacted with a view to adding the LSCP to their agenda and to plan joint community events.	G
Governance & Business Support Structures	26	Thurrock LSCP to consider the appointment of an Independent Chair and Scrutineer	Strategic Partners have initial discussions.	The post of Independent Chair Scutineer has been recruited to and the post holder started in mid September 2021.	B

The following index indicates how the rating is decided:

Blue	Action complete.
Green	Action on track and progressing to plan.
Amber	Action commenced, some delay will recover to completion.
Red	Action experiencing threatening problems and issues, behind schedule and not expected to recover.

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LPR Leo

Learning Point	Actions	Progress/Comment	RAG
<p>1.1 Whilst the family were discussed in meetings professionals were not always "think wider family approach". When making assessments SW's must consider all members of the family or household to assess their impact on the family and household as a whole.</p>	<p>Genograms to be prepared with families at the start of involvement. No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) status should be included within the genogram - this is applicable to all agencies who are working with the family. Seek assurance that all relevant agencies are invited to meetings such as CIN meetings, e.g. Mental Health Services and Adults Social Care were appropriate. Agencies should think wider family approach. Link with the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) to explore how we can ensure that Adults Social Care are involved in cases where relevant. Ensure that all relevant agencies are involved in the case at the outset. Professionals completing an initial assessment with a family should explore who lives in the household and prepare a genogram. Thurrock LSCP to devise a genogram template showing the minimum standard expected (who lives in the house, significant people in the lives of the family and which other agencies are involved with the family). A family portal, where agencies can input information about the family and young people to be considered. A small group to be convened tasked with designing a genogram template.</p>	<p>A small multi-agency Task and Finish Group including the Safeguarding Adults Board is taking forward proposals for a model for a genogram. There is awareness training on Think Family planned for November 2021. The completion date will coincide with the Think Family Conference in March 2022.</p>	A
<p>1.2 Whilst the family were discussed in meetings professionals were not always "think wider family approach". When making assessments SW's must consider all members of the family or household to assess their impact on the family and household as a whole.</p>	<p>Practitioners to start asking the question of involvement of other agencies and who lives in the family home. Think Family approach.</p>	<p>The Think Family approach is being developed across Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET). A podcast and accompanying resources have been shared across the partnership. A SET Think Family Conference is being planned for March 2022.</p>	A
<p>2 Health were not included in the CIN process. All relevant professionals need to be involved within multi-agency meetings to ensure effective multi-agency plans are in place.</p>	<p>Children's Social Care are logging the involvement of GPs and Health professionals. If there are cases when professionals are not being invited, this should be raised as a concern. A similar recommendation has been made in SCR Frankie. A dip sample to be considered/undertaken within FST and Assessment Service to assess that all relevant notifications have been made and invitations sent. Encourage attendees at meetings to raise the issue if there are agencies not present at meetings that they think should be there. To explore if Children's Social Care can access the details of the parents on the Adults Social Care recording system. This will enable them to see if the parents are open and ensure that they are included.</p>	<p>Over the past 12 months there has been significant collaboration between Thurrock CCG and Children's Social Care to enhance information sharing and communication. A presentation has been delivered by Thurrock CCG to Children's and Adults Social Care 'Get to know your Health Service'. This will be updated and delivered twice a year.</p>	G
<p>3 It is important to recognise and acknowledge that when families are living in poverty this is not easily remedied. Focus needs to remain on the cause and impact of the poverty on the children. Professionals, having fully explored the family finances and exhausted access to all the funds and services available across the partnership, locally and through charities, must escalate cases to senior managers for further consideration if the children's lives continue to be impacted.</p>	<p>Map the process of what should be done when a family is living in poverty, including those who have No Recourse to Public Funds. Detailing what organisations and support networks are available for families with this status. There is an officer within the MASH Team from the Home Office who provides advice and guidance to practitioners on NRPF. This is to be shared across Adults and Children's Services. Create a pathway to show what steps should be taken when a family is identified with No Recourse to Public Funds. Adults and Children's Services to identify the relevant guidance within their services. This is to be shared with frontline practitioners and the partnership. Any practitioner who feels that every option has been exhausted should escalate the case to Senior Leaders. This is also the case when a family is experiencing poverty. What do agencies do now? What is done when all options have been exhausted?</p>	<p>No Recourses to Public Funds (NRPF) training and awareness sessions are being delivered. A mapped process of what to do when a family is living in poverty is being devised to be shared across Children's and Adult's Services. This will include a list of charitable organisations and support services available to No Recourse families and how practitioners can escalate the situation within their organisation.</p>	G

4	In cases of neglect more frequent and effective use of both GCP2 and the Clutter Score would have assisted in measuring the neglect. The use of specialist assessment tools by CSC and partners in their work with families where neglect is a concern will assist in quantifying need and measuring any perceived improvements/deteriorations. This is important to ensure consistency in assessments when there are changes in the practitioners working in the family.	This is tasked to the Neglect sub-group.	This action has been added to the work of Neglect sub-group. Graded Care Profile training and awareness sessions are being delivered and practitioners are completing GCP2 assessments where neglect is identified. This data is captured in the LSCP quarterly dataset returns.	G
5	(IC24) Clinicians must make full use of the health advisors information. They cannot assume a caller will restate all their concerns again. When a decision is made to downgrade the category of a call, steps must be taken to ensure the actions required of a parent have been carried out, and there has been an improvement in the child's condition. Clinicians need to be sure that the advice given has been understood.	YA is meeting with Manager within 111 service. They have prepared a separate action plan following this report. The meeting is to go through their action plan. Once this has been agreed, this can be shared by YA.	Thurrock CCG has provided an update in relation to conversations with IC24. Full details are available from the LSCP Business Team	G
6	Whenever a professional advises a family to take a child to A&E they must ensure that the family understands the instruction, and consider whether the family has the means and ability to carry the advice out. The professional should make enquiries to ensure the required action has been taken.	No formal process in place across agencies. IC24 are looking at this - it is part of their action plan which YA will feedback on. - Request from reps on the LPRG to see what is in place for this within the agencies. - Look at other areas to see if there is a pathway/policy - checking on the means and their understanding of the instructions. - Guidance note to include about what A&E services are available - contact numbers etc.	Thurrock CCG has provided an update in relation to conversations with IC24. Full details are available from the LSCP Business Team	G
7	Communication and information sharing between health services proved problematic in this case. These are not issues that are unique to Thurrock or unknown. Until such times as the information technology systems within health are integrated, a process needs to be in place to ensure that in circumstances where a health professional directs a parent to take their child to hospital they contact the A&E department and make the department aware of the reasons why they have directed them to A&E.	As above.	Thurrock CCG has provided an update in relation to conversations with IC24. Full details are available from the LSCP Business Team	G
8	As partner agencies receive information from a service they should routinely check that the unique "identity set" information is correct and inform partners if they identify errors.	Links in with the genogram - to be checked at the point of asking the questions to prepare this etc. This can be started in advance of the preparation of the genogram.	Agencies to include the step of routinely checking the information they receive is correct and communicate errors.	G
9	There might be internal barriers to the effective sharing of reports between GP practices and allocated SW's	CCG, GPs and CSC have devised a template for information sharing - piloted in October 2020. Audit being undertaken by CSC and GPs in July. Thurrock CCG and Thurrock Children's Services to feed back outcome of audit.		G
10	When either an adult or a child is recognised as assuming a caring role, the full extent of that role and its impact should be clearly articulated within assessments, and shared with partners to inform plans. Professionals must spend time ensuring adults understand what is required of them when making plans to address both health and social issues. Where there are concerns regarding an adult's level of understanding this should lead to further assessment and, where appropriate, a change in the plan.	The Partnership to seek assurance from agencies that they have shared the expectation in these circumstances with front line staff. Agencies to be reminded of the recommendation and the expectation for both child and adult.	Thurrock LSCP to seek assurance from agencies that they have shared the expectations. Agencies confirm that they have re-shared the expectations from this recommendation with their frontline practitioners and within their wider organisation.	G

11.1	Partners who have provided information as part of CSC assessment should be routinely made aware of the outcome of the assessment; this was not evident in this case.	Process currently in place where referrers get feedback. The process to be re-iterated within Children's Social Care, however, when referrals are being made a generic email address (where viable, ie, within NELFT and BTUH Safeguarding Team) to be included that the response can be sent back too. All agencies to supply to Children's Social Care generic emails that are currently available. Children's Social Care to discuss within their service how this can be incorporated.	When generic email addresses are provided a response is sent to the referrer and the generic address for the agency.	G
11.2	Partners who have provided information as part of CSC assessment should be routinely made aware of the outcome of the assessment; this was not evident in this case.	Undertake a survey with schools to see what responses are being received back - Business Team to add this topic to the Consultation Survey.	A survey is scheduled to be undertaken in January 2022.	A
12	There is evidence that CSC, were considering previous referrals regarding the children in this family, in their decision making. What was missing was a full picture of the whole family and consideration of whether there had been any safeguarding concerns for fathers, now adult, children.	This back to recommendation 1.	Podcast being prepared across SET which looks at the Think Family Approach. The Think Family Podcast and resources has been completed, pubised and shared with practitioners and carers via Board/Partnership websites.	G

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8 February 2022		ITEM: 8
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Home to School Transport		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Sarah Williams, Strategic Lead, Education Support Service		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Learning, Inclusion and Skills		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

The Council has a statutory duty to make such travel arrangements to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children aged 5-16 and in certain circumstances, for young people of sixth form age and young people with Education Health Care (EHC) plans up to age 25. The Council currently transports 1,161 students travelling via 174 contracted routes and a small number of alternative travel arrangements via bus, train or offer of fuel reimbursement on a daily basis.

There are several categories of transport under each of the duties above and officers have undertaken a review of all transport arrangements to ensure they are delivered sustainably, effectively and in accordance with the Council's statutory duty.

The review has introduced cost saving measures such as the decommissioning of transport along routes previously deemed unsafe where the Council have identified safe alternatives, and the consideration of the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets. The Council have also introduced measures such as the launch of the Travel Training programme, and the development of a behaviour management support service as well as looking to train current Transport Passenger Assistants to support pupils with very complex needs. These services develop independence and improve the travel experience of children with complex medical and/or behavioural needs.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **That Members review and comment upon the work undertaken related to Home to School Transport and Post 16 SEND Transport in relation to the areas outlined within this report.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Home to School Transport and Post 16 Transport have undergone a full service review, which has led to a range of transformational activities aimed at increasing the levels of independence for children and young people, ensuring travel arrangements are sustainable in accordance with Department for Education guidance 2014 and the goals set out at the COP 26 summit 2021.
- 2.2 There are a number of projects being progressed following the review of Children's Transport. These projects include unsafe routes, post 16 transport, new transport IT module and travel training.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Issue: Unsafe routes

In line with the Education Act, Home to School transport is currently provided to all secondary school students that live on a route where no footway links currently exist between their home and the school. Such routes have historically been referred to as 'Unsafe routes'.

Option: Identify safe routes/decommission contracted vehicles

Officers have undertaken a review of all transport to St Clere's School along a route considered for many years to be an 'Unsafe route'. However, a number of safe alternative routes are being investigated/reviewed including an existing public transport route. Therefore, the Council having sought external legal advice believe that the route to St Clere's School can be declared safe once alternative routes have been identified. As a result, the buses currently travelling along the route deemed unsafe could be decommissioned.

Analysis of Option:

There is currently six buses transporting St Clere's students to and from East Tilbury and Linford. The issues of safety, capacity, timing and other factors impacting students travel along the route have been considered in depth supported by a professional risk assessment and discussions with C2C, the Head teacher of St Clere's School and Ward councillors. The Council are confident that the alternative routes of the train and the bus will provide suitable provision for the children travelling to St Clere's School. Legal advice was sought on the issue and the guidance was that the option of other means of transport would be a safe route to school meaning the local authority does not have to pay for buses to transport children to this school.

It is to be noted that children travelling on council-led transport under any criteria other than the unsafe route criteria will continue to access free home to school transport in accordance with Thurrock Council policy.

3.2 Post 16 SEND Transport

Issue: Implementation of a personal transport budget

Thurrock has a duty under section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to make available services to encourage, enable or assist effective participation of SEND young persons and adults in education and training. It is the Council's prerogative to award transport to post 16 SEND students. However, the guidance within the Department for Education's Post-16 Transport and Travel Support to Education and Training stipulates that where the local authority makes such arrangements, any transport provided must be free of charge. Where the local authority decides not to provide transport arrangements in a particular case, they still have discretion to pay all or part of the reasonable travelling expenses for the student.

Option: Allocation of a personal transport budget

Post 16 SEND transport does not fall within the Council's statutory transport duty, however many students meet the discretionary criteria to support post 16 travel for learning. Thurrock students with SEND who have been assessed as high need or have had their application for Discretionary Transport approved will be allocated a personal travel budget, which will cover their travel expenses. We are looking to introduce this once we have identified suitable payment systems to support young people's travel. Students assessed as not eligible will not be provided with free transport.

Analysis of the option:

The needs of a post 16 student with SEND must be assessed in the first instance and the Preparing for Adulthood Team will carry out this assessment. Where the local authority identifies that a young person would benefit from travel assistance transport is free of charge. In all other cases, it is within the local authority's discretionary power to determine whether a parent/student is to pay the full cost of their transport.

In Thurrock, the Preparing for Adulthood team (PFA team) carries out the assessment of post 16 SEND students for transport assistance. Students who are assessed as being able to travel independently will be advised of appropriate travel routes to and from their post 16 facility. The PFA team will also refer students who may require support to travel independently on to the Travel Training programme.

The Council's Discretionary Transport policy outlines a number of circumstances including medical conditions of the student/parent, bullying or residence in temporary accommodation, which the Council will consider following an online application by a parent/student highlighting the exceptional nature of their circumstances. In Thurrock, the Children's Transport team reviews applications for Discretionary Transport. This is overseen by our SEN eligibility officer.

3.3 Travel Training Programme

Issue: Launch of the Travel Training Programme

When the Council makes free travel arrangements for a child or assesses a young person as being able to travel independently if supported with training, it will offer travel training so that children can gain confidence and life skills.

Option: Continue with the current post 16 SEND offer and commence from year 9 in 2022

The Council has highlighted the importance of having sustainable travel options and support for the use of public transport will help to reduce vehicle emissions, reduce congestion and reduce the Council's transport costs. The Preparing for Adulthood Team assesses all young people for Travel Training from year 11, once transport is agreed. Officers are of the view that it would be beneficial to consider the assessment of young people for travel training from year 9 starting September 2022 at the point when transport is agreed, to support younger students to travel independently by the time they access a post 16 facility.

Analysis of the Option:

The Council's travel training programme commenced in August 2021. 19 young people were identified and assessed at their annual review in year 11. Four of those young people, their parents and their Preparing for Adulthood caseworkers agreed to commence the travel training as it would be in the young person's best interests in preparing them for independence. One of the 11 young people on the course has completed the training and travels independently, this is a major benefit for this young person and subsequently transport is no longer provided. Upon completion of the programme and final assessment, the Council will withdraw all travel assistance.

3.4 Additional Issues for consideration:

3.4.1 The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets

When the Council makes travel arrangements for a child or young person it will choose the most suitable and sustainable option that also promotes good health and independence. The Council currently offers a range of travel solutions including mileage allowance, a pass for public transport, a place on a specially contracted bus, a personal walking assistant or introduction to a "walking bus" arrangement.

An introduction of a personal travel budget or direct payment whereby an amount per mile could be granted to the parent/student costed, within a value for money context (not costing more than services provided directly). The personal budget can be made as a direct payment. The aim of Direct

Payments is to increase parents/student's independence and choice by giving them control over the way they travel to their place of education.

3.4.2 Behaviour Management Support Service

The majority of special schools are placed outside of the borough and students are placed in the schools that best meet their needs. The long journey to school in a vehicle with other students is often a challenge leading to behavioural/emotional issues. These behaviours often lead to an individual taxi being requested to enable the student to travel in isolation and avoid the triggers of emotional meltdown or even violent outbursts. This transport is sometimes a duplication of vehicles and funds as a joint vehicle is already running the same route.

As part of our overall review, we are exploring the option to recruit a behaviour specialist. The benefits of recruiting a Behaviour Specialist to spend a set period of time with each child/young person offering strategies to manage their behaviour and develop emotional strength during travel. The role has been adopted in other local authorities. The main duties/responsibilities of the role include designing, implementing and measuring behavioural interventions for children and young people demonstrating high levels of challenging behaviour to enable them to travel safely, independently and with other students on joint transport.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The recommendation asks that members review and comment on the various projects presented within this report to support the work aimed at supporting children and young people to travel independently, ensure sustainable and effective travel and reduce spend across the Children's Transport budgets.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Unsafe routes: a travel awareness survey of St Clere's School students and their parents between 9 and 31 December 2021. The survey was carried out to help officers understand the level of awareness held by parents and students around alternative methods of travelling to and from St Clere's School, and to gain insight into their perceptions and understanding of how safe those methods may be.
- 5.2 The survey was not a formal consultation. It was carried out strictly for information to support the modelling of the unsafe route project. There are no policy changes proposed and therefore it is not a requirement under the Education Act 1996 and Transport Act 1985 that we consult with the public.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 This report impacts on the following corporate priorities:

- People: a place where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay;
- Place: a heritage rich Borough which is ambitious for its future;
- Prosperity: a Borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by:

David May

Strategic Lead Finance

The Council has a statutory duty to transport the pupils involved and to identify ways in which this is delivered in a sustainable and cost effective way. The review has formed part of the overall work of the Council around identifying efficiencies.

The introduction of a personal travel budget would be an appropriate option for parents/students to enable them to make arrangements to attend their place of education. This option has already been adopted by other local authorities.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by:

Lindsey Marks

Deputy Head of Law

Section 508B Education Act 1996 imposes a mandatory duty on the council duty to ensure that eligible children's attendance at school is facilitated by the making of sets out the Council's duties relating to school transport and makes it clear that free transport only has to be provided for "eligible children" and these include disabled children and those from low income families entitled to benefits. Section 508C Education Act 1996 gives local authorities discretionary powers under to make arrangements for those children not covered by Section 508B Education Act 1996. A local authority has discretion to provide transport for children who are outside of the statutory eligibility criteria and where such transport is provided to make a charge for it. There is no requirement for these discretionary arrangements to be provided free of charge such suitable home to school travel arrangements as the local authority considers necessary.

Section 68 Education Act 1996 requires the council to make available services to encourage, enable or assist effective participation of SEND young people and adults in education and training. The council also has a duty to provide safe and stress-free transport.

Section 30 Children and Family Act 2014 requires the council to publish as part of the local offer information about the arrangements for travel to and from schools and post-16 institutions and places. The Post-16 Transport and Travel Support to Education and Training Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, published in January 2019 provides the council with statutory guidance about the arrangements for travel to and from schools and post-16 institutions and places. The Government's 0-25 SEND Code of Practice published by the Government requires the council to publish a transport policy statement each year setting out the travel arrangements they will make to support young people aged 16 to 19 and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged up to 25, to access further education. This should include any arrangements for free or subsidised transport.

Section 508B (4) (b) Education Act 1996 provides that the council cannot offer direct payments without parental consent.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager Community Development

Supporting our children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities is a key strategic priority for Thurrock Council. The service will fulfil its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy with practice to achieve equality, inclusion and diversity at its core. Information gathered through the analysis of options set out in this report will support a Community Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA).

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

None.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- None

Report Author:

Sarah Williams

Strategic Lead, Education Support Service
Children's Services

8 February 2022	ITEM: 9
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Education & Skills – Operating Model	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non Key
Report of: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director, Education and Skills	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director, Education and Skills	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report sets out the operating model for Education & Skills. A full review of all services delivered has been undertaken to ensure we can meet our statutory duties to support children, young people and adults into learning pathways.

The review was undertaken in 2020/21 and provided the background to the report that went to Children’s O&S in October 2021 outlining the budget reductions and a high level overview of the new operating model. At the request of O&S, this report will give a more detailed view of the new operating models within the five distinct areas that make up the Education & Skills services which forms part of the overall Children’s Services department.

The remit of Education and Skills it outlined below:-

Education – Over the past five years, the Council has seen a significant change in how education is delivered in Thurrock with all bar one faith secondary school being part of a multi academy trust or becoming a standalone academy. This has meant that the LA has a statutory duty around the educational attainment of children and young people and not the buildings and overall management of the estates. The Council still retains a number of statutory duties which are outlined in this report. The Council also has the statutory duty around the education outcomes of vulnerable children which includes; looked after children, SEND children and young people, and those who are in the criminal justice system.

Skills – The Council has remained committed over a number of years to skills development for both young people and adults. This has enabled the skills teams to secure significant external funding to support access to high quality skills programmes that will focus on enabling residents to gain good quality employment

opportunities. With the new Free Port bid and other large infrastructure projects, we are working to ensure that we can provide opportunities for both residents and employers to gain the high quality skilled employees they will be looking for.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 O&S to scrutinise the operating model outlined in the report and offer support and challenge.

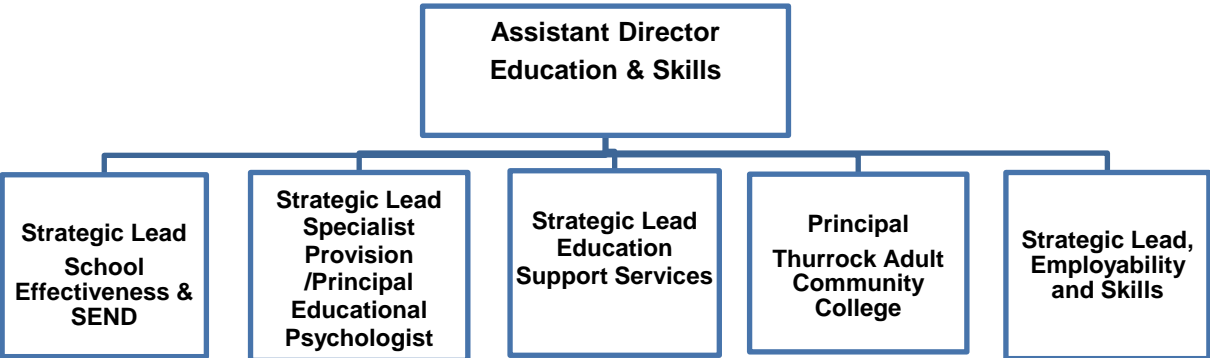
2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Thurrock has a unique landscape with the delivery of Education & Skills with the exception of one secondary school being either standalone or part of multi academy trusts. This in turn has led to a realignment of the funding to support school improvement, which is now given directly to schools from the Education Skills Funding Agency.

2.2 The Education and Skills review considered the Council’s statutory duties that we have in supporting schools. The global pandemic and the changing landscape around Thurrock schools, colleges and adult learning pathways, has provided an opportunity to review all the current services that the LA provides to educational providers. This has enabled us to consider how we can ensure we are meeting our statutory duties and holding educational providers to account for the learning opportunities and the outcomes for children, young people and adults across Thurrock.

2.3 As a result of the review many of the service areas have adopted new operating models which has enabled Education & Skills to reduce the budget by £1m, as set out in the October Children’s Overview & Scrutiny report.

2.4 The current management structure for Education & Skills is shown below:



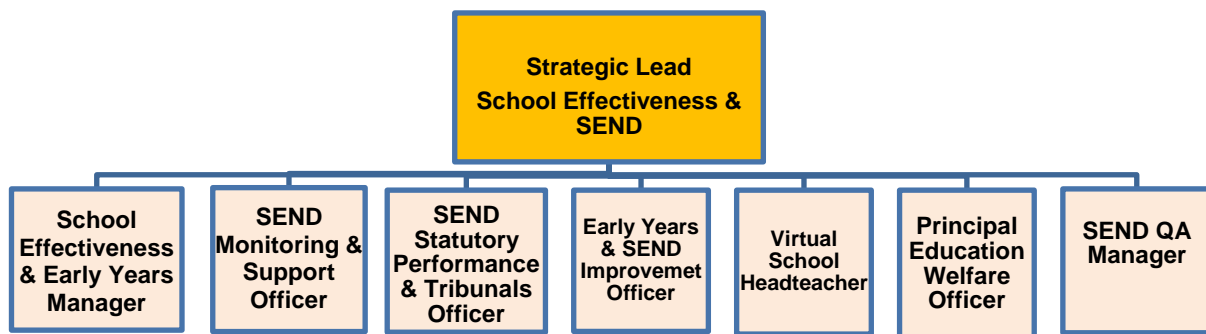
2.5 Education & Skills is delivered under five very distinct areas:-

- Early Years, School Effectiveness & SEND
- Learner Support Services

- Education Support Services
- Employability & Skills
- Adult Education

The report will set out the new operating models under the five management areas.

3. Early Years, School Effectiveness & SEND



3.1 The Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND has undertaken a full review of all work within this area and outlined below is the new operating model.

New Operating Model

3.2 The new operating model has given us the opportunity to realign a range of duties, which has resulted in a reduction of staff. This work will continue as we look, where possible, to ensure that we take the opportunity to automate repetitive tasks to further enhance our operating model using digital efficiency solutions.

3.3 The team are working closely with PQBI (data team) to identify where repetitive data tasks can be become part of the regular data collections. The team have identified where duplication of effort/ activity is taking place across the whole area e.g. data is collected through the Synergy Portal and also requested for a different reason through the survey portal. Information for new settings is collected by the Childcare Sufficiency Officer as well as the Nursery Funding Officer, and the new Settings Lead – all of these will give opportunities to use digital solutions related to the operating models we are continuing to develop.

3.4 The Thurrock Teaching Hub, which is commissioned by central government, has meant that we have seen a reduction in the need to offer training opportunities to schools. As a result, we have removed the training support officer from the overall structure.

3.5 **Council run Nurseries**

As outlined in O&S meetings, the direct provision of nurseries is not a statutory duty on the council. We are in the process of commissioning out the nurseries with a new provider being sought from end of the current academic year.

4. Special Educational Needs

New Operating Model

4.1 The Special Educational Needs service has had considerable investment from the LA to ensure that we meet our statutory duty and address the areas of weakness identified in our Ofsted inspection of March 2019.

4.2 Thurrock now maintains in excess of 1800 EHCPs with an age range up to 25, all of which must be reviewed every year. The operating model we are looking to implement outlines that case workers should have on average a caseload of no more than 150 cases. We have continued to work to ensure that we have met the areas of weakness identified in our Ofsted inspection of March 2019. Children's Overview & Scrutiny have received regular updates of the progress. In December 2021 our SEND Ofsted re-visit took place, a verbal update of the visit will be provided in the February O&S meeting, pending the publication of the report expected in February 2022.

4.3 Education Welfare Service

Parents and carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children receive full-time education. The Education Welfare Service works to ensure that every child gets a full time education that meets their needs.

The service can use various legal powers when a child is missing school:

- An Education Supervision Order
- A School Attendance Order
- A fine (known as a penalty notice)
- Prosecution - the court may also give a parenting order

4.4 Elective Home Education (EHE):-

The operating model for EHE has been adapted as a result of Covid 19. The service has seen a considerable increase in the number of children recorded as EHE, this is also reflected nationally. Thurrock has responded to the additional demand on the Education Welfare Service by the recruitment of a full time EHE Officer to carry out assessments and reviews, and expanding the duties of the existing EWOs to include contacting every new EHE case to ensure that the provision being delivered is suitable to the child's age, ability and meets any special educational needs. This ensures we are meeting our statutory duty around EHE children and young people the model is proving to be very successful.

- At the end of academic year 2019/20 there were 242 EHE cases.

- By the end of the first term 2020/21 there had been an additional 152 new cases totalling 394 cases.
- At the start of this academic year 2021/22 we had 321 cases.
- There are currently 356 active cases.
- 82 Cases have been closed since September 2021 with 58 of these being returned to school.

4.5 Virtual School

The Council has a statutory duty to provide a virtual school for all our looked after children. The virtual school reports to the corporate parenting committee on a regular basis around the educational attainment of our looked after children and young people.

5. Learner Support Services



The new operating model for this area has included the further embedding of our mental health services for schools with the new mental health teams for schools. The management of these services is overseen by the School Wellbeing Services Partnership Board and the bringing together of a range of access and inclusions services under one management team. These are outlined below:-

5.1 School Wellbeing Service

The School Wellbeing Service (SWS) is a partnership model between Thurrock Childrens' Services, Thurrock Public Health, Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group and local Schools and Academies. The universal service focuses on prevention by promoting protective factors and reducing factors, in order to strengthen and improve the emotional wellbeing of school aged children and young people, as well as supporting families and school staff. The service works in partnership with schools to enhance staff skills and knowledge whilst integrating and embedding best practice to create mentally healthy environments for Children and Young People (CYP), School staff and the wider community. Offering a holistic approach to support schools with emotional wellbeing, this is jointly funded.

5.2 Access and Inclusion service

The new operating model has seen us bring together the work of the Access and Inclusion service. The Access and Inclusion Service fulfils the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to the support for pupils who are at risk of either fixed or permanent exclusion from school. This includes the provision of advice to parents and to the statutory panels hearing cases of appeals against the decision to exclude a pupil. These duties further include ensuring that the Local Authority is meeting its statutory duties to ensure 6th day provision for permanently excluded pupils, and the arrangements for pupils who are educated at Alternative Provision or who are educated other than at school.

The new model has integrated the work of the Fair Access and Inclusion duties of the Local Authority to ensure that there is an agreed Fair Access protocol in place and the operation of this protocol is delivered through the Inclusion Panels. The Access and Inclusion Service also manages the Managed Moves process which enables children at risk of permanent exclusion to move to another school under agreed arrangements to have a fresh start and avoid being permanently excluded.

5.3 Educational Psychology Service

Educational Psychologists offer a wide range of support and advice to children, young people, families and other professionals in a wide range of settings. They have a statutory role in providing advice or information to local authorities for children and young people who have SEND and are undergoing a statutory EHC needs assessment. This statutory role was extended via the Children and Families Act (2014) to include young people aged 19–25 years. EPs are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and their practice is informed by the HCPC standards of proficiency, conduct, performance and ethics (HCPC, 2008). 'Educational Psychologist' is a protected title.

The work of the Educational Psychology Service fulfils the Statutory Duties of the Local Authority as set out in The Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations set out in the SEND section above.

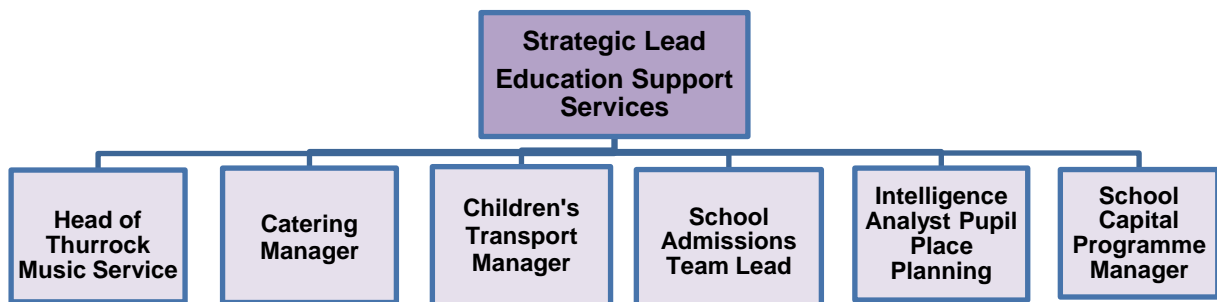
The demands on the service continues to rise year on year. The recent increase in demand, in particular with the rise in the number of children with SEND, has put increased pressure on the service.

5.4 Travellers Service

The Travellers service works to support access to education for children and young people of a Travellers heritage. Children and young people from a Traveller background are at high risk of experiencing direct and indirect discrimination and disadvantage which impacts negatively on their opportunities to access all public services. Children and young people from a Traveller background experience specific difficulties in accessing educational

opportunities for a range of reasons including complexity of family life and travelling arrangements, and access to appropriate sites for work and living. In addition to this there are issues of culture and approaches to work opportunities which can impact on children and young people in benefitting fully from the education offered at school.

6. Education Support Services



- 6.1 The new operating model has brought together all education support services under one Strategic Lead. The Education Support Service is a team of specialists and professionals providing key support services in order to meet statutory duties, objectives and business critical activities, to include planning, resourcing and project management, home to school transport and includes the management of all our traded services.
- 6.2 The school admissions service is a statutory duty and must provide school places to every parent who wishes their child to be educated in a Thurrock School. For Thurrock we have a total of 17,724 primary places and 11,400 secondary places to administer school applications for.
- 6.3 Children's O&S recently received the Pupil Place Planning report and the committee recognised the importance of updating this on a regular basis to ensure we can meet our statutory duties around ensuring all children and young people have a schools place on national offer day.
- 6.4 The capital programme manager supports the Strategic Lead with the delivery of the annual capital programme. The main role is one of overseeing the management for each project on a day to day basis, working with the schools and managing the contract from beginning to end. There is also an element of traded services, whereby academies can purchase project management support to deliver projects that have been agreed and are funded via CIF (condition improvement fund) bids, applied for by the academy though the Department for Education/Education Skills Funding Agency.
- 6.5 The Asset and School Organisation Officer reports to the capital programme manager and undertakes financial support and budget management for the capital programme.

6.6 The Free School Programme

The free school programme includes the following new free schools:

- Treetops 2
- Thames Park Secondary Academy
- Orsett Heath Secondary Academy
- Harrier Reach2 Primary Academy

6.7 Thurrock Music Service

Thurrock Music Service was created in 1988 and has a core staff of three with over 40 music tutors on flexible contracts whereby they get paid for when they work. Thurrock Music Service is mainly grant funded through Arts Council England Grants on behalf of the Department for Education and the remainder of the costs are funded through fee income. In order to qualify for the Arts Council England grants, the music service has some key deliverables. This service is cost neutral to the council and is grant funded.

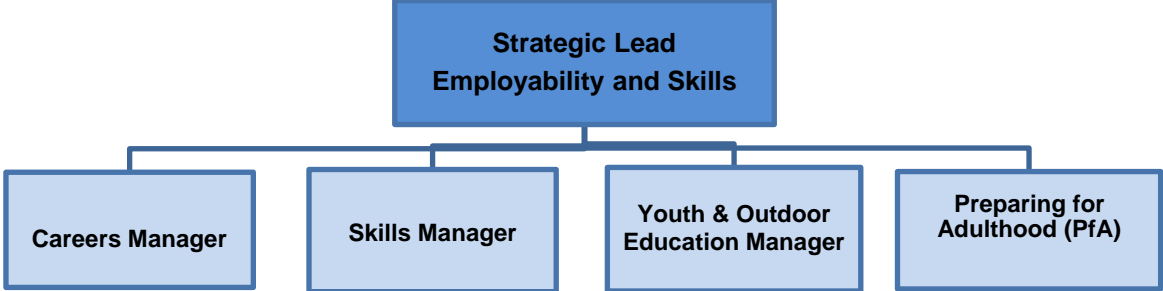
6.8 Thurrock Catering Services

This is a traded service to the school and provides the school meals service. This is a cost neutral to the LA.

6.9 Home to School Transport

The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport. A full report setting out our duties is being presented at the February O&S meeting.

7. Employability & Skills



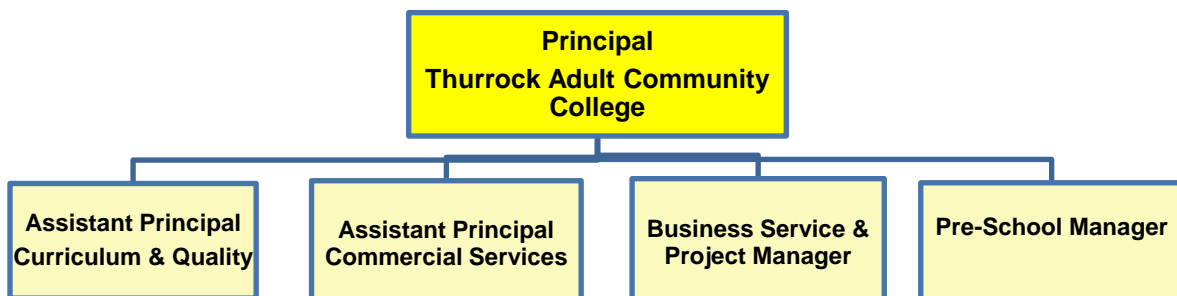
7.1 Skills for both young people and adults has remained a key focus for the Council over the past five years. Much of the work within this area is externally funded either from traded services to schools or grant funded to support young people or adults into work.

7.2 The new operating model has brought together all of these services under one Strategic Lead who has further embedded the work with partners

organisations including the Local Enterprise Partnership and other national bodies.

- 7.3 Inspire Thurrock Careers (ITC) work effectively to deliver CEIAG (Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) to schools in Thurrock under Section 42A and 45A of The Education Act 1997. Additionally, ITC provide impartial CEIAG to schools as a traded service under the duties of The Education Act 2011. Our statutory responsibilities derive from the 2008 Education and Skills Act (ESA 2008) to make available such services as it considers appropriate to encourage, enable or assist the effective participation in education or training and to collect information about young people in their area in order to identify those who are not participating, or who are at risk of not doing so, and to target their resources on those who need them most. In providing this duty, Inspire Thurrock Careers have successfully kept the NEET and Unknown figure 16-18 year old figure at 2.5% (compared with 6.2% nationally and 7% statistical neighbours).
- 7.4 Inspire Skills Team lead on the work of partners to support pathways into employment, e.g. work undertaken with the Local Enterprise Partnership. Ongoing work with the LEP is continuing to gain momentum as we begin the recovery phase after Covid 19; working with Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) further brings the world of work closer to the world of education delivering skills that employers are looking for (team work, flexibility, agility, grit, digital skills) to our young people. Work experience and Career fairs are part of this strand of work.
- 7.5 The Post 16 Preparing for Adulthood Team delivers LA's statutory duties to young people aged 16 to 25 with SEND focussing on the preparing for adulthood agenda and working with training providers to make sure the provision reflects the aims of the YP's EHCP. Impartial Careers advice is at the heart of the service.
- 7.6 Inspire Youth and Outdoor Education Team have reviewed and changed their operating model during 2020/21, which has meant going to a more digital offer as well as meeting face to face with some of our vulnerable young people. We have continued to integrate our offer and the Prince's Trust programme recruits over 50% of its learners from the more vulnerable groups e.g. SEND learners.

8. Thurrock Adult Community College



8.1 The past year has seen significant change in the operating model of the college. Covid has provided significant opportunity to move to a more on line learning offer. This has enabled them to fully review the operating model and, as a result, they have moved from a building in need of significant refurbishment to a more community based approach, offering adult education courses at a number of learning hubs across the LA.

9. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

9.1 A full review of education and skills looked at range of options to ensure we continue to meet our statutory duties. We have looked to mitigate risk by working closely with a range of partners to support educational outcomes across children, young people and adults.

10. Reason for Recommendation

10.1 The service has undertaken a full review to ensure that we are meeting our statutory duties as a council to children, young people and adults learning pathways.

11. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

11.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12. Impact on Corporate Policies, Priorities, Performance and Community Impact

12.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:

Create a great place for learning and opportunity.

13. Implications

13.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

Resources have been identified to ensure that we are meeting our statutory duties as a council to support educational outcomes of children, young people and adults. The funding for this comes from a range of sources, this includes core council funding for our statutory duties, designated schools funding. We also have a range of grants and traded income which support the overall budget position with education and skills.

In addition, the Dedicated Schools Grant has prioritised the work around some of our most vulnerable children and young people including our SEND cohort.

13.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Law

Local authorities have legal duties to identify and assess the special educational needs of children and young people for whom they are responsible. LA's become responsible for a child or young person in their area when they become aware that the child or young person has or may have special educational needs. The Council is subject to various duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to children with special educational needs. These duties are set out in more detail in The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 SI 2014/1530. The regulations set out various timescales for particular steps such as decisions to make and review EHC plans.

The Education and Skills Act 2008 replaced the school leaving age of 16 with an education leaving age of 18 and made a variety of provisions relating to the education or training of young adults.

13.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager, Community Development

Supporting our children young people and adults with learning pathways is a key strategic priority for Thurrock Council. The service continues to promote practice to achieve equality, inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and anti-discriminatory policy, this includes through the completion of Community Equality Impact Assessment/s where required. We have recently redesigned a number of our operating models to ensure that we meet the needs of children, young people and adults particularly as we continue to look at recovery from the global pandemic.

13.4 Other implications - (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

None

14. Appendices

None

Report Author

Michele Lucas – Assistant Director Education and Skills

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8 February 2022	ITEM: 10
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Children’s Social Care Operating Model	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Janet Simon, Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Early Help	
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Assistant Director, Children’s Social Care and Early Help	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director Children’s Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report in October 2021 setting out proposals to deliver budget savings of £1.2m in Children’s Social Care and Early Help. The proposal included the introduction of a revised operating model, Think Family. This report will provide an update following consultation with staff and partner agencies and an overview of the Think Family approach.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **That Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive this report.**
- 1.2 **That Members comment on the contents of this report.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 In October 2021 Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report setting out a number of proposed changes to the structure of Children’s Social Care and its operating model. These proposals enabled children’s social care to contribute budget savings of £1.2m for the financial year 2022/23. The proposals were in line with the requirement to focus on prioritising statutory duties, whilst continuing to protect prevention services to minimise pressure on statutory teams. The report referred to an operating model known as the Think Family approach. There are a number of merits to this approach in terms of improved outcomes for children.
- 2.2 Over the past three months consultation has taken place with the Directorate’s workforce and local partners and a scoping exercise has been undertaken to assess the suitability of the model to meet local need. Whilst

Thurrock Council is facing a significant budget shortfall, the ongoing demand for specialist, high cost statutory interventions for local children has continued to increase. The proposed operating model will help to address this demand and enable children's social care to continue building on the good progress made by the department since the Ofsted judgments in 2019 and Ofsted Focussed visit in 2021.

- 2.3 The Assistant Director and Strategic Lead, Prevention and Youth Offending Service are leading the development of the Think Family approach in Thurrock, with an implementation date of 1 April 2022.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Current Children's Services Structure

Children's social care is currently divided into four key areas of practice each overseen by a Strategic Lead reporting to the Assistant Director, namely:

- Children in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP)
- Children Looked After (CLA)
- Safeguarding & Quality Assurance (including Business Administration)
- Early Help & Prevention and Youth Offending Service

This structure manages demand for prevention and statutory services effectively and the revised operating model does not make significant structural changes which could undermine this.

3.2 The Think Family Approach

Clear parallels can be drawn between the Think Family operating model and the 'whole family' approach which has been used effectively in Thurrock's early help services in recent years. The Think Family approach is used widely by both health and social care services to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and adults, including those with complex needs. It enables practitioners to build strong and effective relationships with parents and children as they assess the needs of each family member, and then co-ordinate appropriate multi-agency interventions and support to ensure needs are met. A key feature of our local model will be to hold Family Network Meetings at an early stage to explore support that can be provided by an extended family and friends and other people within the network to enable a child to remain living safely at home when it is in their best interests, or to quickly identify alternative carers from within the extended network when this is not possible.

- 3.3 Thurrock's Think Family model has been developed following consultation with the Children's Service workforce including from those most directly

affected by the proposals. This has been used to help finalise the structure of our new Think Family Service.

3.4 Consultation processes with service users are embedded in practice across Children's Services, and a comprehensive needs analysis focused on commissioned parenting support was undertaken in 2021. Learning from these processes (and feedback from parents nationally) has also informed the shape of the local model so that it can address some of the key practice issues that have been identified, namely:

- Taking a whole family approach with each family member having their individual needs met
- Parents not having to retell their story to a range of professionals and Feeling that services and interventions lack co-ordination
- Increasing levels of 1:1 tailored support for vulnerable families
- Support for families in their homes during and following attendance on parenting programmes to help them put learning into practice
- Tailored assessments and support for parents with learning disabilities / needs
- Increasing engagement with fathers

3.5 Whilst the Think Family approach will be embedded in social work practice across the department, there will be a dedicated Think Family Team incorporating the following teams:

- Families Together Team – currently working with children on the edge of care or to support children looked after to return home
- Family Group Conferencing Team
- Contact Service - delivered at Oaktree Centre for children looked after

Managers and practitioners from these teams are very experienced and have an extensive and varied skill base. They will not be case holding but will work collaboratively with children and their families for an agreed period of time. They will undertake some complex parenting assessments including for the Court, and will work intensively with parents and children both in group settings and in their own homes. Interventions will be augmented by existing resources from across the department e.g. tailored support for families where domestic abuse is/has been a feature, and from partner agencies.

3.6 Children currently managed across children's social care teams will benefit from the Think Family approach including:

- Children who are at risk of, or have suffered significant harm
- Children looked after or on the edge of care
- Children subject to court proceedings or pre-proceedings arrangements
- Children in need

Practitioners and managers will identify those children most vulnerable to becoming looked after and there will be a focus on assessing and working with families before, or at the pre-proceedings Public Law Outline (PLO) stage to divert as many families away from Court proceedings as possible.

3.7 In addition to the realignment of teams set out in para 3.5 some previously commissioned services will be delivered under the Think Family umbrella:

(i) Parenting assessments have been commissioned from Independent Social Workers (ISW) mostly during care proceedings. This has included assessments for parents with learning difficulties as Courts can require local authorities to use the specialist Parenting Assessment Manual Software (PAMS) specifically designed to assess adults with learning needs. Assessments commissioned from ISWs are expensive and mean that vulnerable adults have to quickly form a new relationship with another professional during what is an anxious and stressful time. To address this practitioners will be trained to use the PAMS application and, as a guiding principle, all parenting assessments will be undertaken in-house unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is recognised as best practice as social workers know their families well.

(ii) A range of evidence based parenting programmes have been commissioned but some parents were referred for programmes as their child's case was closing limiting levels of engagement and impact. Parents and professionals both confirmed parents need support in their homes to help them put learning into practice so this will be addressed using the Think Family approach. Some practitioners are trained or are currently delivering parenting programmes in Thurrock which means we can utilise our existing skill base and tailor parenting programmes to meet local need. Some parents will attend programmes as part of an assessment process and how they use this learning will provide a rich source of information for practitioners in both decision making and care planning.

3.8 Parenting support will be delivered in a variety of ways by the Think Family Service, early help and social care teams and will also have a focus on engaging fathers / male figures in line with recent research (Myths of Invisible Men March 2021). The number of fathers attending commissioned parenting programmes was below 30% so the Think Family approach will ensure more fathers / males are involved in both parenting assessments and interventions. Practitioners will assess and work with families in their home (or community hubs if children are looked after) to ensure they are given the best opportunity to develop and sustain appropriate parenting skills.

3.9 The existing Family Group Conferencing (FGC) model encourages families to develop their own family plan to support vulnerable children and parents. However, it can be time consuming to set up these meetings and there can be delay in allocation. A relatively high number of parents do not engage until

they are required to do so by Court and often that is too late for FGCs to be effective in terms of planning for children. In 2020 over a quarter of families referred for a FGC in Thurrock did not engage.

- 3.10 The revised operating model uses Family Network Meetings instead of FGCs. These will be arranged by either Family Network Meeting facilitators from the Think Family Service or the allocated social worker. These meetings bring together family members and other people identified by the parents and children as significant to them, with a view to the family network agreeing a plan of support that will enable children to either live safely at home or within their extended network. Family Network Meetings are strengths-based and will be held earlier so they can inform care planning for children. They are in line with Signs of Safety (Thurrock's chosen social work practice framework). The model will be rolled out across the Department, with facilitators co-ordinating meetings for families open to the Think Family Service but also supporting practitioners in other teams to set up meetings so they feel confident in their role. Family Network Meeting training will also be provided.
- 3.11 Whilst it is already a requirement for practitioners to create genograms with each family to better understand their extended support networks, there will be a focus on developing three generational genograms and pictorial genograms with children so they are able to identify the people who are important to them. This information will ensure Family Network Meetings include the right people and can play an integral role in care planning.
- 3.12 The Think Family approach has been adopted by other partner agencies particularly Health, and is underpinned by multi-agency partnership working. Existing integrated pathways will therefore continue to support referral and planning processes to ensure the needs of individual family members are met including pre-birth planning and perinatal care. In addition to support for parents, support for extended families is also vital if it enables children to remain living safely within their family networks. Key partners have expressed their support for the new operating model and a willingness to join with the local authority to look at new opportunities for partnership working. A Think Families Partnership Board is planned which will enable new ways of working to develop and evolve, building on the excellent relationships already forged through the Brighter Futures Partnership.
- 3.13 The Think Family approach is in keeping with recent Best Practice Guidance from the President's Public Law Working Group (March 2021) specifically:
- Having an emphasis on using assessment and Family Network Meetings at an early stage to inform planning without the need to enter pre-proceedings Public Law Outline (PLO) arrangements
 - Initiating pre-proceedings PLO arrangements at an early enough stage to be effective in addressing the local authority's concerns and promoting timely permanence planning for children

- A focus on identifying family members and friends quickly (including more effective use of three-generation genograms) and involving them in planning for the child using a strengths-based approach through Family Network Meetings
- The model is child focused and support will be given to their wider network if this enables children to remain living within their family network
- Work is underway to ensure Health and Education partners are part of this new approach to ensure that assessments and family interventions are multi-agency, including pre-birth and for new-born babies
- Social work assessments will be undertaken in-house, either by the Think Family Team or social workers, thereby improving how families experience the assessment process and timeliness of reports

Our local Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) manager has expressed their support of this approach and there will be ongoing liaison with the Judiciary and CAFCASS as the model develops.

- 3.14 The impact of this revised operating model on outcomes for children will be closely scrutinised by senior managers and informed by a Think Family performance dataset. This will include monitoring the effectiveness of the approach in diverting cases from entering the Court system and enabling children to remain living safely within their family networks.

4. Risks

The Council has statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard children and young people within its area and Ofsted uses its national inspection framework to assess how the local authority is discharging these duties and outcomes for children. The revised operating model will enable senior managers to maintain and enhance existing good quality children's services for Thurrock's most vulnerable children whilst delivering agreed budget efficiencies. This will include maintaining appropriate case levels and spans of control that allow managers to have clear management oversight of the quality of practice.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The implementation of the Think Family approach will have a positive impact on vulnerable families receiving a service from Children's Services. Thurrock developed an edge of care service (Families Together) in 2019 to enable more children and young people aged 10 years and over to remain living safely with their birth families. Since April 2019, c30 children have been supported to return home and for children on the edge of care, improved outcomes were seen in 90% of interventions. This included improved family relationships, which enabled children to remain living at home. Practitioners

from Families Together will move to the Think Family Service which means they can work with a much wider cohort of children of any age. Children in care are disproportionately from more deprived areas of the community, so this new approach will continue to challenge the inequalities in outcomes for this vulnerable group.

6. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

A consultation process has been followed to minimise the impact on staff affected by the structural changes.

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 7.1 The revised operating model should not have a negative impact as it does not reduce the duties, performance, policies or priorities and services that will be provided to the community.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

The medium term financial position was set out to Cabinet on 7 July 2021. The proposals for Children's Services to make savings of £1.2 million over the next two years were set out in the report to Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 October 2021. This report does not impact on this savings figure.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal

The Children Act 1989 s17-20 gives local authorities the power to intervene in private matters in order to protect and promote the welfare of children within their governed area. Every local authority is bound by a moral and legal obligation to provide support and assistance to children within their local areas the emphasis on children who are in need of outside protection.

S17 (1) It shall be the general duty of every local authority:

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and

- So far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

The revised operating model takes into account the local authority's statutory duties and ensures that social work practice remains at the highest possible standard.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer

A community equality impact assessment has been completed setting out how the new operating model will mitigate the risk of disproportionate negative impact for protected groups including the workforce. For example, local resources will be used wherever possible to deliver either 1 to 1 or group based interventions to minimise travel for residents and allow them to receive services in their homes and communities.

8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

A full support programme and consultation process has been followed to minimise the impact on staff affected by the structural changes.

9. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

10. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Janet Simon
 Assistant Director
 Children's Social Care and Early Help

8 February 2022	ITEM: 11
Children’s Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Inspire - Head Start Housing: Supporting Care Leavers	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Tiffany Bright – Inspire - Skills Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director, Education and Skills	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

Local Authorities have a duty, as a corporate parent, to ensure continued involvement in supporting young people as they leave care and move into independence until they are 21 years of age (or up to 25 years if specific targeted support is required). Thurrock is committed to ensuring that young people leaving care receive targeted support in high quality accommodation.

Young people in care and leaving care can be highly vulnerable and at risk of experiencing multiple accommodation moves, and/or in the case of young people leaving care at risk of becoming homeless without careful planning for their independence.

Head Start Housing (HSH) was formally launched in December 2018. This is a joint initiative between Children’s Services and Housing. The team comprises 2.5 officers, as part of the Inspire Integrated youth hub. There are 2 FTE Housing Officers, and 0.5 FTE Administration officer.

HSH sources and manages a portfolio of accommodation for young people either in care or in the process of leaving care.

The HSH Strategy is being refreshed, in partnership with Housing, to ensure the Council:

- maximises Thurrock Council’s corporate parent approach, cross directorate
- are ambitious in our housing aspirations for this vulnerable cohort, balanced with what is achievable and affordable and
- compliment the Housing Strategy (also being refreshed in 2022).

Preparing care leavers for adulthood remains a key priority for Thurrock Council. HSH has been created to provide a solution for transitional accommodation for young people leaving care.

The aim of this report is to provide Children's O&S with an overview of progress to date and to make some recommendations for further enhancing the service.

1. Recommendations:

- 1.1 To review the cross directorate working to improve the quality of services to care leavers regarding housing options.**
- 1.2 To support and promote innovative ways to engage children in care and care leavers to prepare for independent living including entry into employment.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 In March 2016, Children's Services and Housing designed a pilot to test Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) for care leavers, either in employment or at risk of losing their job on account of unstable accommodation.
- 2.2 The first property, 4 bedroom house in Chadwell St Mary, accommodated two males and two females. Three were in employment and one was working towards employment. Out of hours support was provided on a one to one basis and in group sessions and the early success led to the modification of a second property.
- 2.3 The second, a three bedroom property also in Chadwell St Mary, accommodated three males. Two were in employment and one had an offer of employment. Out of hours support was provided and this was successful for nearly a year. With a change of tenants we did experience some unacceptable behaviours this was addressed in partnership with Housing and Children's services.
- 2.4 Considerable learning has been applied from the pilot to inform the Head Start Housing Strategy 2018 - 2023. The refreshed version will apply from 2022-2027.
- 2.5 The aim of the refreshed strategy is to enable the voice of young people receiving a service to be heard and, as were required, to reside in HSH transitional accommodation that supports their education, employment or training and networks until they are ready to move on, either into private rental or social housing.
- 2.6 Where care leavers reside in HSH transitional accommodation within Thurrock they can be better supported by more visits from their After Care Personal Advisor and more easily access the range of local services, diverse education and employment opportunities.

- 2.7 HSH sources and manages a portfolio of accommodation for young people who are either in care or in the process of leaving care.
- 2.8 Housing made a commitment to provide six beds on a yearly basis for exclusive use by care leavers by making use of Right to Buy receipts, increasing LA owned housing stock and making a positive contribution to the Housing Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.9 To date, Housing has committed 24 (of 30) beds for exclusive use by care leavers. 12 of these beds were purchased using Transformation funding and Right to Buy receipts.

2.10 **Progress to date**

- 2.10.1 Five care leavers live in the first property located in Grays. A three bedroom property in Aveley should be ready for occupation early 2022 and a four bedroom property in South Ockendon should be ready for occupation July/August.
- 2.10.2 Over the past 12 months, six properties (three out of borough) have been returned to the landlord. Seven beds, in borough, have been procured. Each property provides essential furnishings, the rent covers utility bills, water rates, wifi, cleaning tools, blinds and light shades. This is designed to reduce the CL's outlay from their Setting Up Home Grant, and enable online access to courses/employment.
- 2.10.3 Since April 2021, HSH has provided accommodation for 83 young people leaving care at an average weekly cost is £185 pp p/w. Average occupancy is 95.56%.
- 2.10.4 From April 2021 till January 2022 (9 months), HSH has provided accommodation and support to 22 care leavers with high level needs. A high level needs specification is being written by Commissioning to provide additional support to young people leaving care with high support needs.
- 2.10.5 At present HSH provides accommodation for 81 Care leavers, including 15 young people with high level needs. The team manages a portfolio of 27 properties (including a hostel with nine beds at Clarence Road), ranging in size:

Property size	No. of properties	Additional skills development support from external partner (no. of beds)
1 bedroom/self contained unit	10	14
2 bed	4	2
3 bed	5	6
4 bed	5	16
5 bed	3	0
Average occupancy 2021-22: 89.56%		

2.11 What next

2.11.1 HSH is working with After Care to support the move on and transition to independent accommodation for eight care leavers in the next three months. HSH is also preparing to source appropriate accommodation for 16 young people transitioning from foster care, residential care or other alternative accommodation over the next three months. HSH is working creatively with housing to be able to extend the portfolio of beds.

2.11.2 Aftercare and Headstart Housing is looking to ensure that we can claim the housing benefit linked to universal credit.

2.11.3 Aftercare are working closely with the Home Office to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers with no recourse to public funds whose immigration status has not been approved.

2.11.4 Targeted work to reduce the voids.

2.11.5 Agree and publish final version of the Head Start Strategy 2022 – 2027. Continue exploration of the feasibility of self builds by care leavers as a way of building community, pride and skills. Potential locations are being scoped now. Anticipated timeframe: 2 years.

2.11.6 HSH will continue reviewing systems and processes, making modifications as required to ensure a high quality service is delivered to care leavers.

2.11.7 Continued work, cross directorate, to develop fair joint protocols, standardise templates and consistent terminology for services provided to young people 16+ years, should provide a coherent transfer across services and improve young people's understanding of their entitlements and how to access them.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The increased cost of construction materials, delays as a result of Covid-19 and inflation, has negatively impacted on HSH expenditure this year (now

£185 pp p/w). 2022/23 is forecast to cost £410k for 51 beds (average £154.50 pp p/w) when the purchased properties become available for occupation.

3.2 Targeted interventions, should see:

- improved transition points so that as young people transition from care to become care leavers they are able to live in accommodation that is stable and meets their needs.
- an increase in the number of care leavers who are entitled to the housing element of Universal Credit, contributing to their housing costs
- as outlined above the work being undertaken with the Home Office will hopefully see a reduction in the number of asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds.
- increased move on's, to reduce average length of stay to maximum six months.
- a strategy, devised and implemented, to increase the number of foster carers and placements in borough, so UASC are never placed out of borough.
- Young people who require a service post 18 which cannot be met by children's social care, transfer to Adult Social Care where appropriate so their needs are better met.

3.3 HSH continues to provide suitable high quality accommodation for Thurrock care leavers. There are very few anti-social behaviour complaints by neighbours of HSH tenants. Inspire staff use intelligence to inform decisions in the allocation of provision.

4. **Reasons for Recommendations**

4.1 It is requested that the Committee agree the recommendations and use the reporting mechanisms to support and challenge the work of HSH's services, on behalf of care leavers.

5. **Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 There is no additional information for the committee as part of this report.

6. **Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 This report relates to the council priorities: People, where all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay; and Prosperity, a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.

7. **Implications**

7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead, Finance

This report asks that the Committee notes the forecast overspend directly attributed to the provision of high level needs costs. We recognise the growing demand for accommodation and have proposals being considered by Housing.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, which came into force in October 2001 and gave Local Authorities the statutory duty to provide significantly enhanced leaving care service, with the intention to raise the quality of our support to that of good parents.

"Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. The local authority responsible for their care should make sure that they are provided with the opportunities they need, which will include offering them more than one chance as they grapple with taking on the responsibilities of adulthood." Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations - Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

The duties introduced by the 2000 Act are supported by this statutory guidance. This guidance also sets out in chapter 7 and in Annex C the requirements on the Local Authority in planning accommodation provision for CL. It sets out the need for joint working between Housing and Children's Services and the creation of joint protocols.

There is further government non-statutory good practice advice on 'joint housing protocols for care leavers':-
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-housing-protocols-for-care-leavers/joint-housing-protocols-for-care-leavers-good-practice-advice>
which sets out the Corporate Parenting Principles in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 section 1 which the Council must have regard to when exercising its functions in respect of CL and its duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager, Community Development

Supporting CLs with suitable accommodation is a significant function for Thurrock's most vulnerable young people. Data is collated to understand the profile of young people supported. Decisions are based on each young person's needs, including equality and diversity, SEND and emotional health needs.

The Authority recognises the importance of ensuring that young people who are leaving the care system can and should have access to the offers available locally. They are positively discriminated for priority housing and, by being in borough, can access a full range of offers and services to lead to sustainable employment. We are working cross directorate, in a holistic way, to provide CLs with the best life chances and ensure that they have a voice that is heard and shapes the provision.

A community equality impact assessment will be completed through the process of preparing the Head Start Housing Strategy for 2022/27.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

There are no other implications as a result of this report.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

There are no background papers to this report.

9. Appendices to the report

There are no appendices to this report.

Report Author:

Tiffany Bright
Skills Manager
Children's Services

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**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2021/22**

Dates of Meetings: 13 July 2021, 12 October 2021, 1 December 2021, 8 February 2022.

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
13 July 2021		
Youth Cabinet Verbal Update	Roberta Fontaine	Standing Item
Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board – Update on the LSCP Peer Review Action Plan	Priscilla Bruce-Annan	Standing Item/ Members
SEND Education and Residential Placements	Sue Green	Officers
Supported Accommodation for 18-24 Year Olds	Sue Green	Officers
SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Action Update	Michele Lucas	Members
Thurrock's Education Landscape	Michele Lucas	Chair
Impact of Covid-19 on Education and Children's Social Care	Janet Simon/Michele Lucas	Chair
Children's Social Care Performance – Quarter 4 2020-21	Janet Simon	Chair
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
12 October 2021		

Youth Cabinet Verbal Update	Roberta Fontaine	Standing Item
Report from Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP)	Priscilla Bruce-Annan	Standing Item
2020/21 Annual Complaints and Representations Report – Children's Social Care	Lee Henley	Officers
Children's Services Savings – Education and Skills	Sheila Murphy	Officers
Proposed Budget Reductions for Children's Social Care and Early Help	Sheila Murphy	Officers
Ofsted Focused Visit on children at risk from extra-familial harm 30 June - 1 July 2021	Sheila Murphy	Chair
SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Action Update	Michele Lucas	Members (requested February 2021)
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
11 November 2021 – Extraordinary Meeting at 6pm		
Review of High Risk Notifications provided by Children's Social Care (EXEMPT)	Sheila Murphy	Members (<i>requested February 2021</i>)
Children's Social Care Performance	Janet Simon	Chair
Thurrock Childcare Sufficiency Annual Assessment 2021	Andrea Winstone	Members (requested November 2020)

Low Income Families and Child Poverty update (2021) for the Children and Young People JSNA product (2017)	Jo Broadbent	Chair
Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh 2021-2026	Jo Broadbent	Officers
1 December 2021		
Youth Cabinet Verbal Update	Lucy Boatman	Standing Item
Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board	Priscilla Bruce-Annan	Standing Item
Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy 2022-23	Kelly McMillan	Officer
Pupil Place Plan Update 2021-25	Sarah Williams	Members (<i>requested November 2020</i>)
SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Action Update	Michele Lucas	Members (requested February 2021)
Update on the Progress of the Recommendations in the Annual Public Health Report of Serious Youth Violence and Vulnerability	Jo Broadbent	Members (requested July 2020)
Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Social Care	Janet Simon/Michele Lucas	Chair
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
8 February 2022		
Youth Cabinet Update	Lucy Boatman	Standing Item
Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board – Progress Update on Peer Review and Case Review – Action Plans	Priscilla Bruce-Annan	Standing Item

Inspire – Head Start Housing – Supporting Care Leavers	Michele Lucas	Members (<i>requested February 2021</i>)
Verbal Update: Written Statement of Action – Outcome of Re-Visit	Michele Lucas	Members (requested February 2021)
Children’s Social Care Operating Model	Janet Simon/Michele Lucas	Chair
Education and Skills Operating Model	Janet Simon/Michele Lucas	Chair
Home to School Transport	Michele Lucas	Chair
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
Briefing Notes		
Update on Nurseries Consultation (Agreed by Committee)	Michele Lucas	Agreed at Committee on 12 October 2021
Update on Childcare Sufficiency	Andrea Winston	Requested on 11 November 2021.
Inspire 2020/21 Update	Michele Lucas	Agreed at Committee on 1 December 2021

Motions Update Report

In line with the Scrutiny Review recommendations, O&S Committees will now be able to more closely monitor the progress of motions submitted to Full Council.

Date	From	Motion	Status	Director
22 September 2021	Cllr Polley	This Council welcomes the Conservative Governments lifting of the cap on medical school places and acknowledges the success of our young people achieving record A Level results in what has been a very difficult year.	Many young people will benefit from the additional spaces that have been identified as a result of lifting the cap on medical school places. We continue to work closely with our health colleagues to identify a range of health related roles which recognises the opportunities that a career in health can provide. The Director of Children Services and Assistant Director have continued to work closely with schools recognising the significant challenges that they have faced – all schools and colleges have been thanked for the work undertaken particularly those in exam years. No national data is available however we do recognise that nationally record ‘A’ level results were reported.	Sheila Murphy

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