

# Swindon Borough Council

## Scrutiny Committee

**Monday, 21 October 2019**

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices

At 6.00 p.m.

### **Conservative Councillors**

Emma Faramarzi (Vice-Chair)  
Matthew Courtliff  
Brian Mattock  
Barbara Parry  
Roger Smith  
Timothy Swinyard  
Vera Tomlinson

### **Labour Councillors**

Robert Wright (Chair)  
Steve Allsopp  
Jim Grant  
Jane Milner-Barry  
Des Moffatt  
Carol Shelley

**Committee Officer:** Vicki Yull, 07980 752043, [CommitteeServices@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:CommitteeServices@swindon.gov.uk)

Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

**Access Arrangements** - The venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you have any special requirements to enable you to attend the meeting, or would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size, please contact the Committee Officer as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

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## **AGENDA**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

### **3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 12)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2019

### **4. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public**

Certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Scrutiny Committee is, therefore, recommended to resolve "That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs

the public interest in disclosing the information".

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph No.</u>
<b>8 Appendix 1 and 2</b>	<b>3</b>

**5. Public Question Time**

See explanatory note below. Please contact the Committee Officer whose details appear at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

**6. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions** (Pages 13 - 14)

**7. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Children's Services** (Pages 15 - 62)

**8. Call-in Request - Cabinet Member Decision** (Pages 63 - 80)

**9. Work Programme 2019/2020** (Pages 81 - 94)

**10. Status of Requests for Action and / or Information** (Pages 95 - 98)

**Date of Despatch:** 11 October 2019

**Public Question Time** - Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above. We will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance" available from the Committee Officer named above or on the Council's Website at:  
<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13338&path=0>.

**The Scrutiny Committee - Terms of Reference**

- To meet at regular intervals to review the policies, process and implications of Cabinet, Cabinet Member and Officer decision making and the way in which Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions are made;
- To consider requests for "Call-in" as defined in the Council's "Call-in" Procedure;
- To refer decisions back to Cabinet (or the decision maker) for reconsideration. It may do this once for any individual decision, after which if there is no agreement the decision will be referred to the full Council for determination;
- To refer Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for investigation without delaying the implementation of the decision concerned;
- To receive a report by the Leader of the Council at its first meeting after each Annual Council Meeting (or at such a meeting as is agreed by the Chair of the Committee and the Leader of the Council) on the service issues for the year

ahead, the Leader of the Council's priorities for the coming year and on the Council's performance in the previous year;

- To oversee the arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny within the Council, including determining (i) where matters fall within the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee which of those Committees will assume responsibility for any particular issue, (ii) a system to ensure that referrals from Committees to the Cabinet, either by way of report or for reconsideration are managed efficiently and do not exceed any limits set out in the Council's Constitution, and (iii) in the event of reports to the Cabinet exceeding any limits in this Constitution or if the volume of such reports creates difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardises the efficient running of Council business, at the request of the Cabinet to make decisions about the priority of referrals made.
- To carry out any investigation into the business and functions of the Council and to call in any Cabinet Member or senior officer of the Council so that they can offer advice, support or answer any question that will assist the Committee in carrying out its functions.
- To carry out an external scrutiny function, particularly in relation to corporate issues and issues falling into the remit of a number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee as they relate to –

- the review, scrutiny and development of policy recommendations;
- the management of performance,
- the monitoring of progress against corporate priorities and
- the formulation of advice for the Cabinet, Council and other partners and stakeholders.

To have specific responsibility (but not limited to)

- Good governance and the operation of Law and Democratic Services
- The Budget Scrutiny function.

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## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Emma Faramarzi (Vice-Chair), Steve Allsopp, Matthew Courtliff, Steph Exell, Jim Grant, Robert Jandy, Brian Mattock, Des Moffatt, Barbara Parry, Carol Shelley, Timothy Swinyard and Caryl Sydney-Smith.

Also in attendance were: Councillors David Renard (Leader of the Council), Oliver Donachie (Cabinet Member for Economy and Place), Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for the Town Centre), Cathy Martyn (Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety), and Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning).

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Jane Milner-Barry, Roger Smith and Vera Tomlinson.

### **21. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. The following declarations were made:

- Councillor Brian Mattock made a personal and prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 5 (Consideration of Cabinet Decisions) as a Director of Swindon Housing Company Ltd.
- Councillor Steve Allsopp made a personal and prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 5 (Consideration of Cabinet Decisions) as a Director of Swindon Housing Company Ltd.
- Councillor Barbara Parry made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 5 (Consideration of Cabinet Decisions) as an employee at The Ridgeway School and Sixth Form College.
- Councillor Bob Wright made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 4 (Public Question Time) as a Trustee of the Community and Libraries Trust in North Swindon.
- Councillor Matthew Courtliff made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 6 (Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session – Cabinet Member for Economy and Place) as an employee at Network Rail.

### **22. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **23. Public Question Time**

Mr Roy Worman, a resident of Haydon Wick, asked a number of questions regarding:

- The future proposals and funding for the MUGA @ Haydon Wick.
- The funding of core library services via S106 contributions.

Councillors David Renard (Leader of the Council) and Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for the Town Centre) responded at the meeting.

## 24.

### Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Committee considered a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 4 September 2019.

#### *Minute 26. Report of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care Services July 2019*

Councillor Renard, assisted by the Corporate Director - Children's Services, responded to questions put by Councillors Allsopp, Grant and the Chair on the following matters:

- The challenges in improving the balance between permanent and temporary staff in Children's Social Care Services (which is currently running at 63% agency staff), especially given the £1.25m overspend on employing temporary workers as identified in the Budget Management report for 2019/2020, and how improvements in the Service can be sustained.
- How Government is addressing the regional and national problems with recruitment to Children's Social Care Services. The Committee noted that a training academy for Social Workers will be launching in Swindon in mid-November 2019.
- The political approach adopted when problems in Children's Social Care Services had been identified, and the benefits of adopting a similar approach should other service areas have issues highlighted in the future.
- How budget pressures are affecting the victims of domestic violence and their children, and the combined Housing and Children's Services Panel tasked with looking at these issues.
- The one-off £8m invested to reshape Children's Services and improvements seen as a result. The Committee noted that a comprehensive three-year plan has been put in place, aligned to the budget plan, designed to reduce demand in high cost services and increase ability in early intervention and prevention services.

Resolved – That Minute 26 of the Cabinet be noted.

#### *Minute 27. Budget Management 2019/20*

Councillors Renard and Oliver Donachie (Cabinet Member for Economy and Place), assisted by the Corporate Director for Communities and Housing and the Corporate Director for Adult Social Services, responded to questions put by Councillors Faramarzi, Grant, Mattock and the Chair on the following matters:

- The success of the zero-based budgeting exercise undertaken in Children's Services, which identified mitigating savings of £694k, and the plans for rolling this exercise out to other service areas.
- The reasons for the shortfall on the saving linked to the LED replacement programme, and the subsequent delay in procurement.
- The forecasted overspend, which is higher than usual for this time of year, and where savings are being identified to mitigate this.
- The reasons for the shortfall on predicted income from parking and enforcement, and future expectations for revenue.
- How mobile cameras are available for temporary placement in areas where traffic problems have been identified.

- Out of Borough placements and the work being done to bring back people, where possible, in to the Borough.
- The Secretary of State having indicated in a letter to the Leader of the Council that more funding will be allocated to Adults and Children's Services at a national level.

Resolved – That Minute 27 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Minute 28. Capital Monitoring Quarter 1 2019-20*

Councillors Renard, Heenan and Cathy Martyn (Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety) responded to questions put by Councillor Grant and the Chair on the following matters:

- Proposals for the use of the combined underspend of £2.051m from the HRA Small Build Schemes and Sussex Place.
- The £1.5m allocated for the Health Hydro as a result of the conditions survey, which resulted in an agreed capital programme of repair works.
- The £339k spent on Aspen House, which included its demolition.
- The breakdown of funding contributions towards the Bus Boulevard project from the Local Enterprise Partnership, Central Government and the Council.

Resolved – That Minute 28 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Minute 29. Strategic Partnerships – Local Industrial Strategy and Great Western Powerhouse*

Resolved – That Minute 29 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Minute 30. Annual Review of Local Ombudsman Complaints*

Resolved – That Minute 30 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Minute 31. Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan*

Councillors Renard, Donachie, Martyn and Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning) responded to questions put by Councillors Grant, Moffatt and the Chair on the following matters:

- The borrowing of funds against the HRA to finance the Queens Drive regeneration, and the Council's plans to build more council houses.
- Plans for the repayment of the amount borrowed against the General Fund to bring forward the New Eastern Villages development.
- The HRA having a sustainable thirty year business plan, with external funding contributions from Homes England.

Resolved – That Minute 31 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Minute 32. Reference from the Health and Wellbeing Board – Swindon Borough Council's Reducing Rough Sleepers Strategy*

Councillor Martyn, assisted by the Head of Housing, responded to questions put by Councillors Grant, Swinyard and the Chair on the following matters:

- The relatively small number of former Armed Forces Personnel who are rough sleeping in Swindon and the review of the Armed Services Covenant being undertaken.
- The process by which those with substance misuse and mental health problems are assisted in obtaining a place at Haven.
- The provisions in place to help reduce the numbers of rough sleepers with substance misuse issues in the town centre.
- The Day Centre for rough sleepers, opened in January 2019.
- Progress on the Housing First initiative, which commenced three years ago. The Committee noted that all the Housing First flats in Carfax Street are now occupied, with additional social and psychological assistance being provided.
- That funding had not been directly received for reducing homelessness in the recent spending round.

Resolved – That Minute 32 of the Cabinet be noted.

#### *Minute 33. Land for the Commercial Housing Programme*

Resolved – That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of Minute 33 of the Cabinet meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019, on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Councillors Allsopp and Mattock left the room during discussion of this item.

Councillor Sumner responded to questions put by Councillors Exell, Faramarzi, Grant, Moffatt, Parry, Swinyard and the Chair on the following matters:

- Concerns expressed regarding a proposed site identified in the report, and the existing green infrastructure that will be lost should the site be developed for housing.
- How environmental impact assessments were not completed for the identified sites prior to Cabinet as this is a matter for the planning application process. Detailed consideration of the perceived social impact from development also forms part of the planning process, along with other issues such as Tree Preservation Orders and sites of special scientific or wildlife interest.
- The criteria used to determine the sites identified in the report, which will be circulated to members of the Committee subsequent to the meeting.
- Opportunities afforded to Ward members to inform decision-making on the list submitted to Cabinet, and prior to the planning process commencing.

Resolved – (1) That Minute 33 of the Cabinet be noted.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

#### **Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Economy and Place**

Councillor Donachie, Cabinet Member for Economy and Place, was in attendance and presented to the Committee a report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:



- Set the strategic vision to allow the economy to prosper.
- Provide the political leadership for business growth in all areas including town centre, investment, R&D and tourism.
- Ensure Swindon has the ability to be part of the next generation of Digital & Smart Cities.
- Ensure that the Council's agreed priorities within the portfolio are delivered.

In overseeing these areas, the Cabinet Member for Economy and Place is responsible for delivering the following Priorities and Pledges of Swindon's Vision:

- 1. Set the ambition for Swindon to compete to at the forefront of digital innovation with a commitment to using technology for positive change.
- 2. Enhance Swindon's reputation as a sustainable energy exemplar, by exploring technology that converts energy from waste, facilitating the move to electrified transport, and delivering opportunities to invest in renewable energy to reduce carbon footprint.
- 3. Refresh and implement the Masterplan for Swindon Town Centre, supporting our vision that Swindon is a vibrant, modern place. We will do this through "g) Working with ambassadors and partners to promote Swindon effectively to improve the town's reputation, increase income from business rates and compete for the best business growth opportunities, inward investment and talent."
- 4. Support businesses by working in partnership to create conditions in which businesses succeed and grow.
- 16. Deliver a programme of work to ensure that residents, visitors and businesses feel that Swindon is a safe place to live, work, visit and do business.

The Committee noted that the Cabinet Member for Economy and Place has delegated responsibility for:

- Representing the Council on the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Strategic Asset Management of employment / business land.
- Country Parks (securing sustainable uses) – excluding Lydiard.
- Enforcement and Regulatory Services.
- Envirocrime.
- Renewable energy.
- To lead on the implementation of PSPOs, in collaboration with Cabinet colleagues.
- Tourism.
- Client for PPS.

Councillors Donachie and Renard, with assistance from the Corporate Director for Communities and Housing, the Head of Strategic Growth, and the Inward Investment Officer, responded to questions put by Councillors Allsopp, Courtliff, Faramarzi, Mattock, Moffatt and the Chair on the following matters:

- Enforcement of the Town Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in conjunction with the Police, and forthcoming changes to the way in which envirocrime, enforcement and regulatory programmes operate.
- Raising awareness of and changing attitudes towards the PSPO using signs erected in the town centre and other deterrents such as floor demarcation.
- How the Town Centre Enforcement and Behaviour Change Initiative, going live on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019, will be monitored, reported on and maintained.

- The use of body cameras and other equipment to stop speeding cyclists in the town centre. The Committee noted that around 80% of people challenged will comply and dismount, with a specialist response required for the other 20% involving police co-ordination.
- The enhanced enforcement of parking deterrents having led to a doubling of tickets issued, with this number expected to decrease as behaviour is changed.
- Proposals for the Institute of Technology going forward, including when it is expected to be built.
- How the Council is helping the current occupants at the Carriage Works to grow and occupy larger spaces within the complex.
- That a business case for funding the M4 underpass has been submitted, and a response is expected shortly.
- The favourable economy of scale that membership of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) attracts.
- The expected opportunities and benefits from producing a Local Industrial Strategy for Swindon and Wiltshire.
- Development plans for the Cultural Quarter in Swindon using local growth funding from the LEP.
- The opportunities available to help improve the broadband speeds in Swindon, and the Fast and Ultrafast vouchers that members of the public can apply for.
- The development plans for the Kimmersfield site.
- The proposed activities aimed at attracting 'digitech' employees to Swindon through the Switch on to Swindon project.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Donachie be thanked for attending the meeting to present his performance report, and for his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That the thanks and ongoing support of the Committee be recorded for the ambassadors and businesses involved in Switch on to Swindon.

## **25. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Economy and Place**

Councillor Donachie, Cabinet Member for Economy and Place, was in attendance and presented to the Committee a report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Set the strategic vision to allow the economy to prosper.
- Provide the political leadership for business growth in all areas including town centre, investment, R&D and tourism.
- Ensure Swindon has the ability to be part of the next generation of Digital & Smart Cities.
- Ensure that the Council's agreed priorities within the portfolio are delivered.

In overseeing these areas, the Cabinet Member for Economy and Place is responsible for delivering the following Priorities and Pledges of Swindon's Vision:

- 1. Set the ambition for Swindon to compete to at the forefront of digital innovation with a commitment to using technology for positive change.
- 2. Enhance Swindon's reputation as a sustainable energy exemplar, by exploring technology that converts energy from waste, facilitating the move to electrified transport, and delivering opportunities to invest in renewable energy to reduce carbon footprint.

- 3. Refresh and implement the Masterplan for Swindon Town Centre, supporting our vision that Swindon is a vibrant, modern place. We will do this through “g) Working with ambassadors and partners to promote Swindon effectively to improve the town’s reputation, increase income from business rates and compete for the best business growth opportunities, inward investment and talent.”
- 4. Support businesses by working in partnership to create conditions in which businesses succeed and grow.
- 16. Deliver a programme of work to ensure that residents, visitors and businesses feel that Swindon is a safe place to live, work, visit and do business.

The Committee noted that the Cabinet Member for Economy and Place has delegated responsibility for:

- Representing the Council on the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Strategic Asset Management of employment / business land.
- Country Parks (securing sustainable uses) – excluding Lydiard.
- Enforcement and Regulatory Services.
- Envirocrime.
- Renewable energy.
- To lead on the implementation of PSPOs, in collaboration with Cabinet colleagues.
- Tourism.
- Client for PPS.

Councillors Donachie and Renard, with assistance from the Corporate Director for Communities and Housing, the Head of Strategic Growth, and the Inward Investment Officer, responded to questions put by Councillors Allsopp, Courtliff, Faramarzi, Mattock, Moffatt and the Chair on the following matters:

- Enforcement of the Town Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in conjunction with the Police, and forthcoming changes to the way in which envirocrime, enforcement and regulatory programmes operate.
- Raising awareness of and changing attitudes towards the PSPO using signs erected in the town centre and other deterrents such as floor demarcation.
- How the Town Centre Enforcement and Behaviour Change Initiative, going live on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019, will be monitored, reported on and maintained.
- The use of body cameras and other equipment to stop speeding cyclists in the town centre. The Committee noted that around 80% of people challenged will comply and dismount, with a specialist response required for the other 20% involving police co-ordination.
- The enhanced enforcement of parking deterrents having led to a doubling of tickets issued, with this number expecting to decrease as behaviour is changed.
- Proposals for the Institute of Technology going forward, including when it is expected to be built.
- How the Council is helping the current occupants at the Carriage Works to grow and occupy larger spaces within the complex.
- That a business case for funding the M4 underpass has been submitted, and a response is expected shortly.
- The favourable economy of scale that membership of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) attracts.

- The expected opportunities and benefits from producing a Local Industrial Strategy for Swindon and Wiltshire.
- Development plans for the Cultural Quarter in Swindon using local growth funding from the LEP.
- The opportunities available to help improve the broadband speeds in Swindon, and the Fast and Ultrafast vouchers that members of the public can apply for.
- The development plans for the Kimmersfield site.
- The proposed activities aimed at attracting 'digitech' employees to Swindon through the Switch on to Swindon project.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Donachie be thanked for attending the meeting to present his performance report, and for his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That the thanks and ongoing support of the Committee be recorded for the ambassadors and businesses involved in Switch on to Swindon.

## **26. Work Programme 2019/2020**

The Committee considered and noted a report of the Chief Legal Officer setting out the topics for inclusion in the 2019/2020 Scrutiny Work Programme, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019, and updated during the course of the Municipal Year.

Resolved – That, should the report of the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Education and Skills, due at the next meeting of this Committee, duplicate his report to the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it be removed from this Committee's Work Programme.

## **27. Status of Requests for Action and / or Information**

The Committee received an updated report advising on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information.

Resolved – That the report on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information be noted.

## Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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Author: Chief Legal Officer

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

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### **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 To allow the Scrutiny Committee to consider the decisions arising from the meeting of the Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference include the review of the Cabinet decision making process and the way in which Cabinet decisions are made. As part of the Scrutiny function the Scrutiny Committee is able:
  - 1.2.1 To refer decisions back to Cabinet for reconsideration. It may do this once for any individual decision, after which, if there is no agreement, the decision will be referred to the full Council for determination.
  - 1.2.2 To refer Cabinet decisions to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Review the process of Cabinet decision-making and the decisions made.

### **3. Detail**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is invited to review the decisions of the Cabinet to be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The minutes of the meeting will be forwarded to Members as soon as they become available.

### **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 None.

### **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 This report has no financial or procurement implications. Such implications are set out in the original reports previously circulated to all Councillors with the Cabinet Agenda.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, [VYull@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:VYull@swindon.gov.uk).

# Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

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## Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been fully taken into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with convention rights.

## All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None.

## Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the Work Programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

## Risk Management

- 5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 None.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Draft minutes of the meeting of Cabinet to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (to follow).

## **Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services**

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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Author(s):	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Corporate Director, Children’s Services (DCS)
Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

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### **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 A key purpose of the Scrutiny function is to hold the Cabinet to account and ensure that Council priorities and performance are being delivered. The Scrutiny Committee partly fulfils this requirement through the use of question and answer sessions with the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Question and Answer session is to ensure that the Cabinet Member provides the Scrutiny Committee with performance information relative to their portfolio responsibilities. It also requires the Cabinet Member to provide budget information for their portfolio responsibilities and provides an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to ask questions on the portfolio responsibilities.
- 1.3 Children’s Services early prevention and social care is central to the delivery of the Council’s priority to protect vulnerable children and young people. The service also contributes significantly to the delivery of the Council pledges 20, 21 and 22 which focus on increasing the capacity of local foster provision, safeguarding children and young people and the provision of effective early help intervention including through working within the Troubled Families Programme. Children Services has a clear Service Improvement plan to embed and sustain improvement priorities with clear objectives and outcomes.
- 1.4 This report sets out success, challenges, and future direction of the Portfolio for the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Take note of and scrutinise the report by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Early Help, Social Care and Community Health Services; to put appropriate questions to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and to decide if any further action is required.

### **3. Detail**

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, is Councillor Mary Martin. Overall, Children services has a budget of £46.58m with the largest proportion allocated to statutory social care services. This includes the children looked after

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Jo Ash, 01793 465849, [jash@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jash@swindon.gov.uk).

# **Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services**

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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placement budget which is £13.940m. The Leader of the Council has assigned the following responsibilities to the Cabinet Member:

- 3.2 Children and Families Early Help and support services including: Young Person Substance Misuse team, Targeted Mental Health, Education Welfare, Educational Psychology, Youth Engagement, Services for Disabled Children, SEND and the Troubled Families programme. These services have a net budget of £3.42m.
- 3.3 Children’s Social Work Services including the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), fostering and adoption services and the Corporate Parenting Board, Opal Team (Child sexual exploitation service). This service has a net budget of £35.54m. This includes the placement budget which is the most challenging financial pressure on the services. In 18/19 the service has an overspend of £4.5m relating to external placements. In 19/20 to date the placement budget is forecasted to be within budget.
- 3.4 Community Health Services including Health Visitors, School Nurses and Family Nurse Partnership, Paediatric Therapy Services, Speech and Language and Portage and Public Health services for children. This service has a budget of £7.9 m.
- 3.5 Youth Offending Team. This service has a net budget of £0.283m.
- 3.6 The SEND service within the local authority has a net budget of £0.610m to manage the SEND assessments and plans process. A further £31.437m is funded by the dedicated schools grant (consisting of High needs block £31.085m and DSG reserves £0.352m) for the provision of SEND support for Swindon pupils requiring varying levels of special educational needs support.
- 3.7 Swindon Safeguarding Partnership (shared responsibility with Lead Member for Adult Social Care). The partnership has a budget of £0.053m
- 3.8 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services is responsible for delivery for the following pledges:
  - 3.8.1 Pledge 20. Increase the number of foster carers in Swindon so that every 'child looked after' who should be, is placed in their home borough.
  - 3.8.2 Pledge 21. Ensure that there is a partnership approach to early prevention and intervention across Swindon so that more children and families are supported early, including through the Troubled Families Programme, to prevent escalation to statutory social care.
  - 3.8.3 Pledge 22: Ensure that Swindon's vulnerable children and young people are safeguarded and protected

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Jo Ash, 01793 465849, [jash@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jash@swindon.gov.uk).



# Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

## 3.9 What have we done well?

Top achievements	Progress to date & Next Steps	Impact/outcomes
Children in Need of Help and Protection judged by OFSTED to be good	<p><b>Progress:</b> Practice change and process improvements have led to the reduction of the number of children requiring a child protection plan. Child Protection (CP), Children In Need (CIN) and Looked After Children (LAC) visits are timely and quality has improved. Significant improvements from the implementation of the Early Help Hub in MASH.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Assessments and planning for CIN/CP are smarter, consistently timely and regularly monitored by manager to prevent undue delay.</p>	Improved Services and better outcomes for Swindon children and families who are in need of help and protection
Leadership and Management judged by OFSTED to be good	<p><b>Progress:</b> Strong management oversight and good pace to improvement. Improved use of data and quality assurance to performance manage and hold managers and staff to account.</p> <p><b>Next steps:</b> Embed consistent, high quality management supervision.</p>	Strong and effective leadership of the service to bring about effective service improvement and better outcomes for children and young people and families.
Performance Management Framework embedded	<p><b>Progress:</b> Effective QAPIB Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Board process in place with Partners well engaged.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> A comprehensive performance framework across the Children Services Directorate/</p>	Strong managerial oversight of performance and quality of service to deliver an accountability culture where performance management and quality assurance drive improvement.
Improvements in MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)	<p><b>Progress:</b> All actions identified in 2018 MASH focussed inspection visit have been addressed to Improve timeliness of response and Increase partnership working</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Embed the revised Threshold for access to services across the Safeguarding Partnership.</p>	Referrers to MASH receive a timely and effective response in relation to safeguarding children and all children and young people are safeguarded and protected and receive the right help at the right time.
Reduced	<b>Progress:</b> Caseloads reduced from an	Better staff morale

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caseloads for social workers	average of 29 in March 2018 to 18 in July 19 and this has been maintained.	Improved recruitment and retention of experienced social workers. Less change of social worker for Children and Families. Children supported effectively to help improve outcomes
Re-modelling of Early Help Offer	<b>Progress:</b> Implementation of Early Help Hub July 18 Re-design completed with the creation of FISS (Family Intervention Support Service). Edge of Care services and Adolescents at risk service  <b>Next steps:</b> Implementation of one single assessment across the service	Improved access to Early Help offer via MASH. Increased cases stepped across to Early Help from Social Care enabling families to get appropriate support post statutory intervention
Troubled Families Programme	<b>Progress:</b> Increase in the number of families achieving successful outcomes  <b>Next steps:</b> Ensure that a further 300 families are worked with to meet the target for Swindon by March 2020.	Families are receiving help and support when they need it and outcomes are good.
Family Group Conferencing	<b>Progress:</b> Enhanced model of Family Group Conferencing introduced September 2019 with greater capacity to work with more families  <b>Next steps:</b> Family Group Conferencing model is being expanded to support more families earlier to achieve better and sustainable outcomes	Less families requiring escalation to statutory services and are supported early
Reduction in the number of children becoming looked after	<b>Progress:</b> Less Children are needing to become looked after because there are alternative support approaches for young people and more effective and intensive work with families  <b>Next steps:</b> further reduce the number of children becoming looked after through alternative support approaches and more effective early support.	More children can remain safely at home in their family and fewer children need to come into the care of the Local Authority.
Supporting Young Parents through the Family Nurse Partnership Programme	<b>Progress:</b> More young parents are being supported and smoking levels reduced through pregnancy.  <b>Next Steps:</b> smoking cessation is	Young parents receive a high level of parenting support and targeted Health visiting resources to support them. Smoking in pregnancy has significantly reduced.

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	sustained at 12 months post birth	
Supporting Swindon Young Carers	<p><b>Progress:</b> Positive experiences for young carers are evident in feedback.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Young Carers continue to have opportunities for networking and support with other young carers</p>	Young Carers are supported and have opportunities to have respite and meet other Young Carers for support
Seeking to Reduce CSE	<p><b>Progress:</b> Effective multi agency working Missing Co-Ordinator ensuring return home interviews are completed. MARAC panel is in place.</p> <p><b>Next steps:</b> Continue to work with partners to ensure young people at risk of exploitation are identified and supported</p>	Young People in Swindon have awareness of the signs of grooming and are engaged with professionals to reduce risk

## Overall Effectiveness of Children’s Social Care Services graded as Good

- 3.10 The overall effectiveness of Children’s Social Care Services in Swindon is judged to be good. OFSTED recognised the effectiveness of elected members, corporate managers and senior leaders in prioritising resource for children’s services, implementing strong Governance arrangements and driving rapid improvement. The Director of Children Services and the Senior Leadership Team have taken systematic, swift and decisive action to implement significant service improvements. The quality of leadership is noted in the OFSTED inspection report as a key strength and includes high visibility, well-targeted actions, an accurate knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement and creating the right conditions for good social work practice to flourish. This has contributed to the rapid pace of improvement both in terms of practice and workforce development.

## Children In Need of Help and Protection Judged to be Good

- 3.11 Children In need of help and protection are judged to be good: Children’s Social Care has made good progress in 2018 and 2019 to date. This is reflected in a reduction of the number of children in need, on child protection plans and needing to become looked after. The number of children on a child protection plan has reduced significantly from 448 in August 18 to 246 in August 19. The overall social care referral and assessment rate within service continues to be at a higher level than comparators, but thresholds have been more consistently applied. This has meant that families are stepped across to early help services when they do not need a statutory intervention. In addition, caseloads have been reduced across the service to an average of 18. This has enabled social workers to have more focus on children in need, which in turn leads to more sustainable outcomes for children.

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## **Leadership and Management Judged to be Good:**

- 3.12 The impact of leaders on social work practice is judged to be good and was identified as a key strength. OFSTED noted the strong support of corporate managers and elected members and that leaders and managers know the service’s strengths and areas for improvement and have worked decisively to address weaknesses. Governance and quality assurance arrangements are strong and have ensured the right framework is in place to support the pace of change required and provide managers with the tools to monitor progress. The use of data to manage performance has improved as has the quality and frequency of staff supervision.
- 3.13 The Council’s significant additional financial investment has reduced caseloads which has helped with social worker stability, although it is recognised that the recruitment of permanent social workers still remains a challenge. The investment has enabled good progress to be made quickly and sustained. OFSTED recognised the strength of partnership working and the impact of this on improved outcomes for children and young people. The workforce recruitment and retention strategy sets out a revised set approaches to manage a workforce with a high proportion of agency staff and attract permanent workers to Swindon.

## **Performance Management Framework**

- 3.14 The DCS established the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Board (QAPIB) in November 2017 to provide monitoring and challenge and to drive improvement through effective performance management. The development of management information, particularly case tracking with live data, has improved the direct oversight and understanding that senior and frontline managers have of performance strengths and areas for improvement. This approach has developed a supportive performance and accountability culture, with Social Workers and Team Managers being accountable for the operational performance in their teams and Service leaders providing support and challenge through monthly team clinics performance clinics and the QAPIB. A most significant improvement has been the implementation of exception reporting where performance is not met with reasons and contingency plans to ensure that children are safe.
- 3.15 Managers have a firm ‘grip’ of operational performance. A supervision toolkit has been implemented and recent audit shows that this is now being consistently used by managers during staff supervision. It provides an oversight of case status and identifies where case workers need additional support and training. We know that staff supervision is taking place because we have undertaken a supervision data capture exercise. At the end of March 2019, the compliance with child protection case supervision was 94%. The analysis indicates that we

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have more work to do both in relation to recording compliance and the quality of supervision in some cases.

- 3.16 A revised Quality Assurance Framework was introduced in March 2018. This included a revised approach to audit which incorporates an external ‘audit the auditors’ approach. Since March 2018 there has been a forward programme of audits and a methodology for sharing learning, including mentoring and coaching for social workers where audits identify weaker practice. The framework includes auditing being done alongside the practitioner, with feedback sought from families. At times it has been a challenge to implement the framework consistently when there have been higher priority operational demands for Service Managers and staffing capacity has fluctuated. Nevertheless, we now have regular quality of practice analysis to inform our self-assessment. Our overall audit profile over the last 6 months finds practice to be assessed as good in over 80% of cases.
- 3.17 Findings from audits are shared throughout the service, used to support learning and practice improvement and commissions quality assurance activity in relation to specific areas of practice that are identified as a Key Line of Enquiry.

## **Reduced Caseloads for Social Workers**

- 3.18 The average number of caseloads for Social Workers was 29 in March 18. Service re-design, greater staffing stability and investment in the service has resulted in a reduction to an average of 18 cases per worker at the end of July 19. The impact of reduced caseloads is significant and means that social workers are able to give a more concentrated focus on direct work with children.
- 3.19 With reduced caseloads there has been a focus on accurate case recording which has been strengthened by the introduction of local compliance measures which track which children have visits, assessments and reviews recorded well. Team trackers for managers have enabled them to performance manage case recording improvement and staff understand which data is reflected in key performance indicators. The improvements during 18/19 have been notable and progress is monitored via monthly team performance clinics.

## **Re-modelling of Early Help Offer**

- 3.20 The Early Help Offer has been re-modelled with the creation of the Family Intervention Support Service (FISS). This includes Edge of Care Services and services for adolescents at risk. The pathways for referral to Early Help have been simplified and there are an increasing number of appropriate families referred to Early Help via the Early Help Hub. Families are referred more quickly and directly from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The number of referrals to the Early Help hub has been steadily increasing and the service now

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receives an average of 171 referrals per month. Multi agency locality working is being strengthened and a model of Team Around the School Support is being implemented.

## **Troubled Families**

- 3.21 The Government’s Troubled Families Programme launched in 2012 and is now in phase two with recent Government confirmation of extension until 2021. It aims to transform the way that the Local Authority and its partners work with families with complex and debilitating needs to ensure more effective, early intervention and better, sustainable, outcomes.. Swindon has made good progress during 18/19 and 19/20 to date. This was recognised by an external review of performance during September 19. The integration of Troubled Families programme into the overall Early Help offer has helped to make the programme more utilised and sustainable and understood by front line staff which in turn has helped increase the number of eligible families and their engagement.

## **Family Group Conferencing (FGC)**

- 3.22 A Family Group Conference is a process led by family members to plan and make decisions for a child or children who are at risk. Children and young people are normally involved in their own Family Group Conference, often with support from an advocate. It is a voluntary process and families cannot be forced to have a Family Group Conference. The specialist team are dedicated to empower and enable families to stay together, and to come up with solutions on how to do this, when it is safe and appropriate to do. There has been significant investment in the FGC team as it has grown and developed; staffing has increased from 1.5 Coordinators to 3 Coordinators during 2018/2019. The Service is currently recruiting 3 additional FGC Coordinators which will take the total to 6.

## **Services for disabled children**

- 3.23 The Disabled Children’s team continues to provide responsive and flexible services for Disabled Children living in Swindon, both at a statutory and non-statutory level. The Disabled Children’s Team is supporting 224 children and their families (as at September 2019). The Aiming High Short Break Service is currently supporting 391 children to access social and leisure activities whilst also providing parents and carers with the opportunity to take a break from their caring responsibilities.
- 3.24 The paediatric therapy service (delivered by physiotherapists and occupational therapists) is delivering a range of therapy and care to 1061 children and young people who have complex on-going needs. So far in 2019/20 80.8% of referrals had been seen within 18 weeks which is an improvement from 68.6% in 2018/19. Reducing the waiting time for health occupational therapy remains a key focus

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for the service. Of the 192 completed episodes of care in the service so far in 2019/20, 91.6% had a successful clinical outcome. The social care occupational therapy service has received additional funding this year for staff and specialist equipment. This has resulted in a reduced waiting time. In 2019/20 100% of referrals have been seen within 3 months which is a notable improvement from 50.8% in 2018/19.

- 3.25 The paediatric speech and language therapy service is working with 2082 children and young people (as at August 2019). In 2019/20 to date 67.4% of referrals have been seen within 18 weeks which is an improvement from 61.2% in 2018/19. The service has continued to achieve the 13 week waiting time for children referred for specialist Speech and Language assessment as part of the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Pathway. The focus of reducing waiting times is now within the clinic service and a waiting time initiative has been adopted to reduce the longest waiting times to 18 weeks. Of the 240 completed episodes of care in the service so far in 2019/20, 73% had a successful clinical outcome, no intervention was required in 7.9%, and 4.6% had moved away.
- 3.26 The Swindon Portage and Special Tots service offers effective early intervention for pre-school children with SEND. It delivers a range of services including home teaching by 3 part time Portage teachers on a weekly basis during term time for 15 children who have a significant delay across more than 2 areas of development. It also offers advice and information for parents around benefits and services; and a Special Tots pre-school group for 32 children with Special educational needs/disabilities. Of the current 47 children receiving a service 17% are under statutory assessment for an EHCP and 4% have an EHCP in place.

## **Reducing the number of children becoming looked after**

- 3.27 The number of children becoming looked after has reduced with 131 during 18/19 compared with 187 in 17/18. This reduction has continued in 19/20 to date with 40 starting to be looked after between April and August 2019. If the rate continues approximately 100 will become looked after during 19/20. The overall number of Children Looked After has stabilised as a result. This is due to improved permanency planning for younger children and working differently with adolescents at risk to prevent them needing to be looked after wherever appropriate. The reduction has made limited impact financially, because of the challenges with placement providers and increased costs for complex placements. Budgetary pressure for placements remains a priority focus. It is also important to note that as permanency for children looked after is increased the costs of supporting parents who are adopters or special guardians also increases.

## **Family Nurse Partnership**

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- 3.28 The Public Health ring fenced grant funds over £3.8m of children’s Public Health including Health Visiting, School Nursing, Family Nurse Partnership and Baby Steps to ensure the best start in life for Swindon’s children and young people.
- 3.29 The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) has been established in the UK for 12 years, commencing in Swindon 9 years ago. The programme is available to all young women under 18 with their first babies, care leavers under 25 having first babies and first time pregnant 20 year old and under where vulnerabilities are identified. Between January and December 2018, the local team worked with 159 families and delivered 1637 visits. The service recruited 45 new families onto the FNP programme during the year with only 3 families declining to engage with the programme.
- 3.30 Whilst FNP is a holistic ante natal and infancy programme with intensive home visiting the service is focusing on smoking as a strategic priority for 2019. Smoking at 36 weeks gestation in Swindon FNP is 22.6% (2018). This has decreased from 37.2% (2017). A young parent’s group has been established for any Swindon parent under 25. The group is supported by the FNP Nurses enabling them to support more families and encourage the development of peer support. Attendance at these groups is growing with positive feedback from members. Following discussion at the FNP board, all FNP children are now awarded two year funding for nursery provision.
- 3.31 Smoking at 12 months remains a challenge (59.5%) and is higher than the programme average (39%). A range of actions have been agreed at the FNP Board to reduce this smoking rate, including:
- Work to help clients understand childhood trauma and develop healthier coping strategies other than smoking
  - Expand on Motivational interviewing skills to help clients move from desire to quit to commitment
  - Nurses to expand on reasons to stay smoke free as their child grows.

## **Baby Steps**

- 3.32 The Baby Steps programme has been delivered by Swindon Borough Council since Oct 2014. There is a dedicated team who deliver a targeted programme for vulnerable parents-to-be from their 3rd trimester (6-9 months) of pregnancy through to approximately 3 months following birth: It is an antenatal and postnatal group programme that provides the Universal Partnership Plus (targeted) antenatal intervention within the Swindon Healthy Child Programme 0-5. The service works hard to deal with challenges including engagement with complex and vulnerable parents and supporting them to attend the group programme.

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Swindon data demonstrates increased year on year engagement of parents into the programme (18-19: 62%, 19-20: 77%). The group which completed in quarter 1 of 19/20 demonstrated a completion rate of 72%. This is attributed to the respectful support, in depth knowledge and evidence that facilitators build by regular and close contact over time with parents.

- 3.33 Swindon has a breastfeeding strategy and delivery plan, involving a range of partners. The strategy which aims to increase breastfeeding and improve advice given to all parents on all infant feeding, including developing a loving and caring relationship between parents and their child. A number of initiatives are being implemented to improve the prevalence of breastfeeding including the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative for which Swindon has achieved full accreditation; the “Breast Mates” network of breastfeeding peer support groups; Breastfeeding Welcome signs displayed in 31 venues across Swindon including coffee shops, GP practices, the Great Western hospital (all departments), Early Year’s venues and churches.

## **Supporting Children at risk of exploitation (CSE) and/or Criminal Exploitation (CEE)**

- 3.34 The continued strengthening of the Council and Partner’s response to child exploitation has led to embedded services. There has been a notable increase in the number of referrals where children and young people may be criminally exploited with 106 children being identified in 2018/2019 compared to 23 in 2017/18. This is partly due to the awareness raising both locally and nationally, with more families and professionals are seeking help. The attachment of a police officer in the Opal team has been a great strength. Systems have been implemented to enable child criminal exploitation to be readily reportable for activity monitoring. The new Safeguarding Partnership has a multi-agency plan in place to tackle CSE. The multi-agency risk panel discusses the most high risk children and works to a model that identifies Victims, Offenders, Locations and Themes (VOLT). This information is shared through a newsletter to all agencies.
- 3.35 There has been a revised delivery plan in place for the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership. This includes how we strengthen the approach to adolescents at risk using contextual safeguarding approaches. These approaches respond to children and young people’s experience of harm outside of the family home. In order to work this way social workers identify other professionals who can influence extra-familial contexts and support young people.
- 3.36 There were 70 referrals for children potentially at risk of CSE in 2018/2019, up from 40 in 2017/2018. The service is currently working with 23 children who are identified as being at risk of CSE. The gender split is 91% female and 9% male. Fourteen to fifteen year olds form 71% of the cohort.

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- 3.37 The children’s services Missing Children Co-ordinator has been in post since May 2018. Since this time we have seen a marked improvement in the Council’s response to missing children from both Home and Care. There has been a reduction in missing children. In August 19 the number was 32 of children with a missing episode which is the lowest number since the data scorecard started. A further positive reduction has been the children who have had more than one missing episode this has reduced to 20% (7) in August 2019 compared to 45% (20) in August 18. This improvement is linked to return home interviews being completed and the reasons for the child going missing being identified at an early stage so support can be put in place.
- 3.38 The Councils Child Exploitation Delivery Group is now chaired by the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications. The Group monitor progress against the Criminal Exploitation strategy. The ‘Report It Don’t Ignore It’ awareness raising campaign has now come to an end and further activities have taken place or are planned linked to key national days e.g. CSE awareness day March 18 2020 and the recent Save a Friend linked to Knife Crime. The Opal Team continue to provide training and targeted sessions to continue to improve the response to CE.

## **Young Carers**

- 3.39 The Young Carers Service is part of Swindon Carers Centre and offers advice, support and activities to young carers aged 5 – 17 and young adult carers aged 18 – 24 who are transitioning from Children’s to Adult services. 694 young carers have been supported during 18/19. The contract for the Young Carers service requires Swindon Carers Centre to complete a holistic assessment of need for each child referred to the service and has undertaken 142 assessments during 18/19. The assessment explores the impact of the caring role on health and wellbeing and opportunities to access education and leisure activities. At the end of the assessment a support plan is developed. Families may be supported through the Team around the Child process by a member of staff from Swindon Carer Centre who will assume the role of Lead Professional if appropriate. Young Carer Support Practitioners take an active part in Child In Need and Child Protection cases to work as part of the multi-agency professional team to support families. Following consultation with Swindon Carers Centre has developed a specific outcomes framework for young carers. An impact scale is completed during initial assessment, review assessment and/or the start of each intervention to provide a baseline score relating to five outcomes. These scales are completed again at the end of each intervention to demonstrate progress. Analysis of the outcome measurements alongside individual feedback and case studies help to evaluate the effectiveness of the service. The overall outcomes are positive:

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Outcomes for Young Carers	
Voice heard	98%
Be Healthy	96%
Make friends	97%
Be emotionally supported	94%
Enjoy, learn and develop	100%

- 3.40 Young carers held their first AGM in 18/19 and presented to peers, health and social care professionals and parents. Annual reviews for each young carer include feedback from parents and carers which shape how services are delivered. There are currently 68 schools, colleges and education settings across Swindon actively taking part in the Young Carers in School Award. Outcomes of the award include a 100% increase in referrals from schools and colleges to the Young Carers service, an increased number of young carers reporting they know who to go to for advice and support, in the attendance and attainment of young carers identified within their settings. Through surveying the schools, there are now 2000 Young Carers in total being supported by Young Carers Leads in schools.

What will the service be doing differently?

## Family Safeguarding

- 3.41 The Local Authority has been successful in the Family Safeguarding bid. It is one of 15 areas nationally to benefit from significant government funding to help tackle challenges when they arise at home, boosting family resilience and creating stable homes where children can thrive. The family safeguarding approach will consist of mental health practitioners, domestic abuse workers who will work with Adults and Children’s social workers to work together improve child protection, working with whole families so that all of their needs are met. The programme offers wrap-around support for families. Evaluation of this project which has been successful in Hertfordshire resulted in a 39% reduction in the number of day children spent in care, a reduction in cases allocated to the safeguarding team, a 53% drop in hospital admissions for adults in the family and a 66% reduction in contact with the police.

## Creation of Edge of Care Service

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- 3.42 The Edge of Care team will work intensively with families where there is a risk of the child or young person entering care or custody. The service will also support children currently in care and their families, where there is an identified plan for the child to return home. The specialist team are dedicated to supporting families to stay together when it is safe and appropriate to do so. The Edge of Care service will work with children and young people aged 10-18 years and their families. The service is voluntary and will work hard to engage children, young people and their parents. The Edge of Care Family Intervention workers hold a caseload of children, young people and families alongside their allocated Social Worker. Home visits will be undertaken with families at a frequency their needs. The Family Intervention Workers will work intensively and flexibly with families open to the service over a 3 to 6 month period to co-ordinate and deliver targeted support which will address whole family difficulties, prevent escalation and result in better outcomes for each child and young person. The support plans will be reviewed with the family and multi-agency network on a monthly basis. The team is made up of passionate and dedicated multi-agency practitioners who will practice using a restorative, relational approach, ensuring that families are fully supported to make the changes needed to care for their children and to prevent their entry into the care system.

## **Delivery of services from Pre-Birth to five years**

- 3.43 The Local Government Association (LGA) carried out an Early Years Peer Review in September 2019, funded by the Department for Education. The review focused on four key lines of enquiry:
- Is early years operating in accordance with the vision of ‘One Children’s Service, consistently good every day and onwards to outstanding’
  - Is there the capacity and quality in the workforce and in existing provision to be good or outstanding
  - Maximising the gains from early identification and timely response - to SEND and to early communication difficulties
  - Ensuring the right functionality and expertise is available to make best use of data
- 3.44 The full report to be issued by the LGA is not yet available, but initial feedback highlighted the need for a co-produced, overarching pre-birth to five strategy with a focus towards prevention and universal services and Swindon is progressing this work to provide a more joined up and collaborative approach going forwards.
- 3.45 Follow up work to deliver the recommendations of the report will be supported by the Early Intervention Foundation, with a ‘light touch’ follow up by the LGA within

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12 months to assess how well SBC are doing in making the identified improvements.

## **Alternative Support solutions to becoming looked after.**

- 3.46 The service is proactively working with young people to find alternative solutions to prevent them needing to become looked after. Children’s needs are best served in their own families if this can be safely supported. Adolescent entrants to the system tend to experience a larger number of placements, a more disrupted experience of care and poorer outcomes in education. Working with adolescents differently and with the support of services such as Edge of Care and Family Group Conferencing will provide opportunities for young people to remain supported as Children in Need without the need for becoming looked after.

## **Children Looked After Local Provision**

- 3.47 The Children looked after pillar of the service improvement plan has a key focus on local placement provision for Children Looked After. The aim is to work to procure appropriate accommodation and effectively manage placements, particularly to improve the sufficiency of placements to meet the needs of older children as well as those children with complex needs.
- 3.48 The embedding of a strengthened Placement team will ensure better and timely matches with in house foster carers. A new fostering recruitment portal is in place to enable potential foster carers to apply in a more straightforward way and ensure the service responds quickly to enquiries. The improvement of timely and quality reviews for foster carers will help carers feel valued and develop their skills so their placement offer can be more comprehensive and compatible for a wider range of children requiring placements in future.

## **Workforce development**

- 3.49 The services recognises successful permanent recruitment coupled with a strengthened practice management model and structure is key to driving greater individual ownership, responsibility and accountability. This will provide better staffing stability and effective leadership at a practice level so the foundation for the service will be consistently good. Although the service has been successful in recruiting newly qualified social workers, they are inexperienced and do not have the skill level to deal with the complexities that the children and families present. There are plans to undertake an international recruitment exercise for experienced social workers from those countries with similar practices to us and with a successful history of recruitment.
- 3.50 A renewed focus on practice and development across social care workforce is underway. A new service manager and full time Principal social worker have

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been recruited. This brings additional capacity to focus on recruitment and retention and quality of social work practice. The work will include enhancing the voice of social work and using it to inform service planning. A new professional social work academy will be launched in November 2019 across children and adults. This will enhance the opportunities for professional progression and enhance the offer to social worker staff for professional development. There is a key focus on improving working relationships with open universities and the Local Authority as well as expanding the pathways into social work through work based training and apprenticeships.

## **Adolescents with Mental Health issues**

- 3.51 The single point of access for agencies referring to Mental Health services is operated by the Borough who work with CAMHS and voluntary sector to deliver. The legacy operating model is not as effective as it should be. In order to address this a digitalised process is being introduced for professionals referring. The system will also provide parents with an on line booking system which will be more reliable and efficient as well as improving the user experience of referral to mental health services. The system will enable parents to better track the progress of the referral and self-select an appointment. This will reduce the number of appointments missed.
- 3.52 Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has been selected to implement proposals for new mental health support teams in schools, as set out in the recent Children and Young People Mental Health Green Paper. The CCG has been awarded £2.3 million to deliver on this until 2020/21. Swindon Trailblazer will be expanding access to mental health support for children and young people in 40 schools in Swindon by January 2020. Three teams from Barnardo’s will be working with children and young people who have mild to moderate mental health needs. This means support will be provided earlier before issues become more serious or a crisis occurs. The support provided will include one to one and group work with children and young people, work with parents and carers, and developing peer mentoring and volunteering opportunities. Barnardo’s will work closely with children and young people and their families to make sure that everyone has a voice. Barnardo’s will work in partnership with other mental health providers, education, the voluntary sector, wider Swindon services and the local communities.
- 3.53 Routine information sharing agreements will be developed across mental health service providers to ensure there is an awareness of children accessing mental health services who are also open to social care and key information on this vulnerable group of children.



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What are the challenges facing the portfolio:

Top Priorities	Progress & Next Steps	Impact/outcomes
Stability of Workforce	<p><b>Progress:</b> Average duration of an agency worker increased from 3 to 8 months between February and June 19. Recruitment and Retention Initiatives are beginning to have impact.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> further conversion of temporary to permanent staff. More manager posts permanently recruited to. More social worker posts permanently recruited to.</p>	Stable workforce with high retention rates and low turnover helping to make sure children have one social worker during their care.
Further strengthening services and outcomes for Children Looked After	<p><b>Progress:</b> Improved permanency tracking and increase in adoptions in 19/20.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Delivery of actions outlined in the Children Services Improvement plan</p>	Improved permanency tracking and planning and more children are placed with families where they can thrive and achieve potential.
Stability and Permanence for Children Looked After, including placement provision	<p><b>Progress:</b> Use of Permanency tracker to monitor progress for children looked after and prevent delays in finding permanency solutions Dedicated Commissioner posts recruited to strengthen the local authority position in the commissioning of external placements Placement matching processes strengthened. Placements team has increased specialist capacity.</p> <p><b>Next steps:</b> Build consistent sufficiency of local placements to meet the needs of older children as well as those children with complex needs. Review of in house foster carers, data cleansing exercise, new scorecard developed. Continue work with ATV to provide permanency for Children Looked</p>	<p>More children looked after are placed locally (within 20 miles), placements are more stable and break down less frequently and the number of high cost residential placements are reduced.</p> <p>More children looked after achieving permanency</p>

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	After.	
The timeliness and quality of preparation of care leavers for independent living	<p><b>Progress:</b> Improved pathway planning format and effective engagement of young people in the pathway planning process</p> <p><b>Next steps:</b> Pathway plans are reviewed consistently and signed off by young person.</p>	Care Leavers receive a good and well supported transition into adulthood
Health histories are routinely available for care leavers in a timely way.	<p><b>Progress:</b> Health Passport developed as a good practice example, but not routinely provided for care leavers</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Ensure care leavers have access to health histories are routinely available for care leavers in a timely way.</p>	Care Leavers receive a good and well supported transition into adulthood
Improve the Quality of Planning for Children in receipt of social care services	<p><b>Progress:</b> Routine audits monitor the progress of quality of plans for children Quality of plans improved but still some inconsistencies.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Staff Training and Practice standards embedded to ensure plan are time bound with clear actions and contingency planning, underpinned by strong management oversight</p>	Effective plans improve outcomes for children in a timely way.
Universal Delivery of the Healthy Child Programme	<p><b>Progress:</b> Focus on new birth visits and 2-2.5 year checks. Other aspects of the programme prioritised based on vulnerability factors.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Recruitment and Retention actions to increase Health Visiting capacity.</p>	Every under 5 in Swindon receives all services outlined in the Healthy Child Programme.
Youth Offending	<p><b>Progress:</b> Positive direction of travel in relation to key performance indicators.</p>	Young people who have offended are supported and rehabilitated within communities and don't re-

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	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> Quality Assurance processes will be strengthened to Improve quality of case work.</p> <p>Improved use of management information</p>	offend in future.
SEND	<p><b>Progress:</b> Quality Assurance Framework is operational with a thematic analysis of results and actions in progress.</p> <p>Core Standards are being rolled out across the local area.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Focus on Quality Assurance and performance reporting.</p> <p>Actively promote partnership, participation and coproduction.</p> <p>Further develop ways of gaining views on the level of children/young people and families satisfaction with the local area developments and improvements.</p> <p>Review the offer provided by support services across education, health and care to ensure that they deliver on the strategic priorities and support and enhance developments.</p>	Children and Young people receive a timely and high quality Education. Health and Care Plans to meet their needs

## Stability of Workforce

- 3.54 The service now has an almost complete establishment of permanent senior managers, who are committed to continue to deliver improvements through strong leadership and partnership working. This marks the end of a significant period of senior management instability and temporary staff.
- 3.55 The service has a current establishment of 123 qualified social worker posts. The agency profile is a significant challenge because it represents just over 60% of our case-holding workforce. It is positive the stability of the agency workforce improves month on month, currently at an average of just over 8 months based on data at the end of June 19. This is partly due to the impact of an improved

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financial offer introduced in late 2018 which includes enhanced pay rates, travel and accommodation payments and access to the full development and training programme. A slight dip has been experienced in the latest data for August in terms of duration of agency worker and this will be monitored monthly to check it is not a consistent trend. Most of the agency workers are experienced social workers and this provides stability for children and families. The service is acutely aware of the impact of the turn-over of staff on changes of social worker for children and managers work to mitigate the impact of this wherever possible.

- 3.56 Led by the Director of HR, the Council’s recruitment and organisational development teams are working with senior staff in children’s services to deliver strategies and incentives that will recruit and retain a permanent workforce. The Council has invested in dedicated children’s service recruitment posts and the whole offer and reward package has been reviewed, including a financial ‘golden hello’, an enhanced relocation package and flexible working. The Council has introduced a new website, with a bespoke social work recruitment site and has implemented an enhanced national recruitment campaign which includes a bespoke advertorial and targeted Email, Face Book, and LinkedIn campaigns.

## **Further strengthening services and outcomes for children looked after**

- 3.57 The service has a clear focus on achieving permanence for children and acknowledges that there are aspects of historical drift and delay. A permanency tracker has been implemented that gives senior managers oversight of the progress of all cases. A full range of permanence options are well considered including special guardianship, return home and adoption. Health outcomes for children looked after are positive and a dedicated children looked after Health service ensures children and young people receive regular health checks and work hard to engage young people in the process of attending appointments. Education is actively promoted for Children Looked After and Swindon Virtual School provides effective support for the progress and attainment of children in care. 93% of children looked after had an updated PEP at the end of the Spring term 2019. This is an improvement from 85% in Autumn 18. Personal education plans (PEPs) have a clear focus on raising achievement.

## **Stability and Permanence for Children Looked After, including placement provision**

- 3.58 Placement stability remains a challenge. There are signs of improvement in short term stability based on the year to date performance in 19/20. Long term stability is impacted by a number of factors which means that shifting performance is linked to the increase of capacity and skills of in house foster carers and preventing placement breakdowns through better oversight of placements and provision of foster carer support. The use of independent foster care placements has reduced but continues to be the highest proportion of placements. The

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market management of providers of both fostering and residential placements is a key priority. This includes two dedicated commissioner posts to support the significant commissioning work needed on placements and accommodation. Enhanced contract management has been put in place for key providers.

- 3.59 The increasing challenges and complexities of Swindon’s CLA population means the service needs to increase the number of in house foster carers. Fourteen percent of CLA have more than 3 placements in a 12 month period and long term stability for children looked after is below national average. Swindon places a third of CLA more than 20 miles from home which is higher than national. Progress in response to these challenges during 2018 has been made with the better management of providers and improved placement searching procedures and processes. The family intervention service (FISS) has been established and this includes Edge of Care services and increased Family Group Conferencing to prevent children from requiring Local Authority care.
- 3.60 The challenges faced reflect the national position in relation to placement supply and demand. The revised sufficiency strategy and a revised Children Looked After and Care Leaver strategy were both endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Board in September 2018. Swindon is now working to join a consortium to enable access to the market of providers of care. The sufficiency strategy details the key developments to address the volume and type of placement demands. It is recognised that, as an organisation, a higher level of agility is required in order to respond to these challenges going forward. A dedicated LAC commissioner has been recruited and will deliver market engagement and improved provider management.
- 3.61 To improve the long term stability of placements is a priority for Swindon. There has been a small improvement in the last quarter of 2018/19, but too many children experience placement instability and too many children in care are placed more than 20 miles from home with 33.8% of children looked after placed more than 20 miles from Swindon at the end of March 19, compared with 15% nationally. In 2018, a detailed analysis of sufficiency was undertaken to inform the new sufficiency strategy to ensure the needs of children, including children looked after, are fully understood and the Local Authority has the right mix and volume of foster placements to meet needs and reduce the number of children placed out of Borough. New staff have been recruited permanently and a foster carer recruitment campaign was launched in early 2018, the impact of which are reflected in an increase in foster carers. This has resulted in 11 new foster carers with a further 14 in assessment. The fostering service has additional management capacity to drive changes and an improvement plan with corporate project management support. The new digital foster care recruitment process is now live which streamlines the recruitment process and is more engaging for

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potential foster carers. A skills audit was undertaken during May 19 and findings from that are being used to strengthen skills within the existing foster carer pool.

3.62 Short term stability of placements is in line with the national average at 10%. We are increasingly providing foster carers with support to manage complex and challenging needs, rather than change the placement. Actions to improve placement stability overall are fundamental objectives within the improvement plan and include:

- Increase the choice of placement options to meet the individual needs of our children
- Recruit, develop and retain a strong pool of local foster carers who are fully supported to care for our children
- Improve the permanence and resilience of placements for our children

3.63 Swindon transferred Adoption Services to Adopt Thames Valley (ATV) in 2018 in order to maximise adopter capacity and improve matching quality for children placed for adoption. The length of time between a child coming into care and being placed for adoption has significantly reduced in Swindon from 569 days in 2017/18 to 488 in 2018/19. This is a significant improvement - three years ago Swindon was one of the lowest performing authorities for this measure. The length of time from placement order to being matched has decreased from 237 days in 2017/18 to 218 in 2018/19 and is in line with national average (220). We know that length of time from placement order to matching was impacted by the transfer of Adopter services to Adoption Thames Valley in 2018 at the same time as an increase of children were identified as adoption being in their best interest. This raised capacity issues in terms of availability of suitable adopters. In order to address this, Swindon has subsequently increased investment to improve the numbers of children finding permanent homes and accelerate the process. At the end of August 2019, there were 42 children on placement orders, which is a reduction from 48 in March 19 but still high comparatively. These cases have been reviewed with ATV in order to progress with matching these children with adoptive families to achieve permanence. Fifteen were adopted during 2018/19 which represents 10.4% of children ceasing care; slightly below the national average of 13%. There has been an increase in 19/20 with 16.1% of children ceasing care being adopted between April and August 19. The use of Special Guardianships is consistently higher than national average with 15% having this as a permanency route, compared with 11% nationally.

## **Voice of the Child**

3.64 The voices of children and young people are central to the service’s outcome focussed practice model. The Practice Standards, guidance, and workforce

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development make it clear that for every child worked with, the child’s voice should be captured and recorded, whether in records of visits, assessments, reviews or plans. Quality assurance activity demonstrates that over time staff are improving recorded practice in relation to capturing and responding to the child’s perspective and there are examples of very good practice.

- 3.65 Performance data shows that participation of children in their reviews is consistently above 97%. Participation methods include advocacy, texting or conversations with their social worker prior to review. The IRO writes the record of the CLA minutes to the child to ensure it is completely child focussed and meaningful. This has received positive feedback during a recent external review. The reviewing forms are worded to address the child/young person directly to get their input and views and this helps to ensure that their voice is central to plans and decision making. Feedback from CLA reviews reflects that children showed their aspirations and talked about the future and examples of career aspirations were evident with many aspiring to higher education.
- 3.66 Advocacy services are commissioned for children and young people in need of protection, children in care and children with disabilities. This is currently provided by Coram Voice who worked with 129 young people during 2018/19. The annual Coram Voice report included positive feedback from a sample of those children and young people who engaged in the service, but there is work to do on strengthening the referral process to ensure young people can readily access the service and that it is consistently offered. The scope of the service and offer is currently being improved.
- 3.67 During 2018, the independent reviewing officers were successful in implementing a challenge group for children in care. The success of this group led to the service bringing the child in care council within the Borough after previously being commissioned out. Up to forty children, including many from Out of Borough and some with complex needs and disabilities, attend the meetings. A number of their suggested improvements have been implemented.
- 3.68 A Child in Care Council (CICC) meets on a monthly basis, usually attended by up to 12 members. The group is supported by a Participation Officer who is working to broaden the number and representation of children and young people involved in the work of the CICC.
- 3.69 The Participation Officer has been working with local businesses to encourage them to support young people in care in the Swindon area. This led to a local car sales firm applying to set up a charity to support sponsorship of activities for children and young people in the care of Swindon Council. They held their last CICC meeting at a car showroom which meant that the young people were able to sit in high specification cars and have their meeting in the boardroom! Several other businesses in Swindon have made contributions to our events and service

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development, and this has provided an incentive for children and young people to get involved.

- 3.70 The Corporate Parenting Board has recently refreshed their pledges to children in care and care leavers and have sought the views and contributions of the CICC as part of this process. A review of the pledges will be undertaken annually with children and young people.
- 3.71 There is an annual Child in Care Awards ceremony, which as well as being an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of children and young people, is a way of involving them in planning and organising the event. In April this year two events were held; 12-18yr olds were celebrated in an Oscar-themed ceremony at a local hotel; and 4-11yr olds in a soft-play centre. The Children In Care Council and their carers determined the theme, venue, food and award categories for these celebratory events. The occasions were a success with very positive feedback from foster carers and children and young people.
- 3.72 Members of the CICC are regularly consulted on issues that affect them. For example, they have recently advised on or co-created:
- Children Looked after Health Passport, which is being shared nationally by the office of the Children’s Commissioner as an example of good practice. This was also recognised as good practice by Ofsted in the February 2019 focussed visit on care leavers.
- The Internet Safety Strategy
  - Educational assessments
  - A family agreement and what that looks like
- 3.73 A Care Leavers Participation Group (CLPG) is also held on a monthly basis led by the Team Manager of the Leaving Care Team. Feedback was provided by young people at a recent meeting to ascertain what they got out of the group. The collective response was that it is an opportunity to meet with the Care Leavers Team Manager and senior staff, including the DCS, on a regular basis, in order to share views and to have regular updates in terms of service developments and improvements. In addition, the young people are involved fully in any service consultations. They have been actively involved in the design of a new pathway plan format and process and were fully consulted in the development of the care leaver Local Offer.
- 3.74 Children and young people have been involved in decision-making about recruitment to key roles including the Director of Children’s Social Work, IRO and Participation Officer. The service commissions participation and engagement for

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children with special needs and disabilities from STEP. The impact of this work is positive.

- 3.75 Work continues to strengthen the voice and influence of children and young people in our service delivery. A Participation Strategy and a Plan of work have been developed which includes plans to develop a focus group for UASC, many of whom are placed further away from Swindon.
- 3.76 The service is in the process of developing and implementing the role of Young Inspectors; setting up a mentoring scheme where care leavers mentor younger children who are preparing for independence; extending our Customer Survey work to include children and young people; training and learning for foster carers and social workers; and ensuring that participation work with children and young people across the Council and wider system is more strategic and joined up, and have recently appointed a Swindon Care Leaver to a Business Support NVQ Level 3 apprentice. The Apprentice will be working on projects specifically to support children and young people to be involved in the development of services.

## **The timeliness and quality of preparation of care leavers for independent living**

- 3.77 Pathway planning is key to assist care leavers in transition to adulthood. The pathway planning process has been strengthened and a new pathway plan format was introduced in May 2019 which was co-produced with care leavers. Managers are monitoring the quality of care leaver contacts and addressing any performance issues with workers during supervision. The transfer process from the children in care team has also been reviewed and strengthened to ensure that care leavers transition experience is positive. There is a specific project for care leavers to ensure they have opportunities and are actively encouraged to engage in education, employment and training opportunities.
- 3.78 The leaving care service consistently tracks and works with the young people who need suitable accommodation. Improvements are required in relation to consistent processes and assessments in relation to determining the suitability and safety of accommodation. OFSTED (March 19) recommended that Swindon Care Leavers would benefit from a greater range of bespoke housing options and this is being addressed. The Housing and Children Social care and Accommodation Panel now meets fortnightly. This panel provides clear pathways for young people and to makes decisions related to accommodation following case referrals from Children Social Care and Housing teams.

## **Health Histories for Care Leavers**

- 3.79 Health Histories for Care Leavers need to be consistently available for young people leaving care. Health passports are a good example practice of health

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histories, but care leavers need to have access routinely to their comprehensive health histories.

## **Strengthening the quality of plans for children in receipt of social care services**

- 3.80 The service has developed robust quality assurance processes for the auditing of plans for children in receipt of social care services. The findings have shown that quality of plans needs to improve to be consistently good. This was confirmed by OFSTED during the July 2019 ILACS inspection. Actions to address this are outlined in the Quality of Practice Improvement pillar of the Service improvement plan. This includes specific workforce planning on how to develop SMART plans with clear actions with timescales to address need. The auditing of cases is monthly and plans are a key focus in the audit programme. Team managers are regularly case sampling and reviewing plans with workers during supervision. Progress of work around quality of planning is reviewed monthly at the Quality and Performance Improvement Board.

## **Delivery of the Healthy Child Programme**

- 3.81 The Health Visiting Service has seen an increase in delivery of new birth visits from 95% in Q1 18/19 to 97% in Q1 19/20. Breastfeeding data at 6-8 weeks has improved with a rise to 52.1% in Q1 2019/20 compared to the National data 47.3%. Swindon has been reaccruited by UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative, and is currently working towards the gold award.
- 3.82 Recruitment and retention of Health Visitors remains a challenge, and the service is prioritising new birth, 6-8 week, and 2-2.5 year contacts and prioritising interventions and support to families who need help the most. A proactive response has been made to recruitment challenges recruiting Early Years Family Practitioners and Staff Nurses to support the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme.
- 3.83 The 0-19 transformation agenda is moving forward with the Health Visitor and School Nursing teams amalgamating across two sites at Reuben George and The Meadow in October 2019.

## **Youth Offending Service**

- 3.84 Swindon has a higher rate of first time entrants with 613.9 per 10,000 population in 2017 compared with 295.1 nationally. The First Time Entrants count has fallen by nearly 350 FTE's/100,000 from its peak of 805 / 100,000 in 2015. Swindon remains above both the national and south west average. The service management structure is being reviewed and quality assurance processes are being strengthened to provide stronger management oversight of operational performance. This includes having the specialist services of On-Trak and U-Turn

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working more closely with services under the Family Intervention Support Service (FISS) umbrella. This will allow young people who do come to the attention of the criminal justice system to draw on a broader range of services. Much of the work currently underway is to provide assurance young people are receiving the best service possible. Essex’s Youth Offending Team (YOT) was deemed to be Outstanding through inspection and they are currently working with the service as partners, to improve the service delivery. The YOT Management Board has asked the service to prioritise a focus on quality. It is anticipated the improvement work currently underway will ensure Swindon is best placed for a positive inspection outcome.

## **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)**

- 3.85 The number of children and young people with identified SEND in Swindon has remained consistently above national figures. 3.9% of Swindon’s school population has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) compared to 3.1% nationally. There has been a 50% increase in children and young people accessing an EHCP since the implementation of the SEND Reforms of 2014. 13.2% of Swindon school population receive SEND support which is 1.3% above the national average. The number of EHCP’s is forecast to increase as the population grows significantly by 2028. A number of activities governed through the Written Statement of Action are seeking to stabilise the percentage for SEND whilst ensuring that outcomes are good for children and young people. The increase in the number of assessments requested has inevitably impacted on performance with Completion of assessments within 20 weeks decreasing to 52.3% over the last 12 month period. Cumulatively there has been 378 requests for statutory needs assessments in the last 12 months and of these, 58 have been refused.
- 3.86 These challenges are being addressed through the implementation of Core Standards whereby early years settings, schools and colleges came together and developed a Swindon wide set of guidance of what is normally available for children and young people for universal and graduated response needs, improvements made to the collection and use of performance data which in turn will strengthen quality and performance monitoring processes. These activities will drive up the quality of EHCP’s and we expect to see the completion within 20 weeks increase over the next 18-24 months to national levels.
- 3.87 The challenges faced in relation to a deficit position of the High Needs Budget reflect the national position of 122 local authorities of 157 being in a deficit position. The pressures on the High Needs Budget are closely related to the growth in demand for Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) since the implementation of the SEND Reforms of 2014.

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3.88 Nationally, the educational outcomes of children and young people with identified SEND are not as good as their non-SEND peers and the situation in Swindon is broadly the same. Persistent absence and exclusions are of particular concern, especially for children and young people with EHCPs. They are above national benchmarks and above for children with no SEND. Swindon SEND Families Voice (SSFV) are our strategic Parent Carer Group and represent the important views of parents/carers who have children and young people with SEND alongside the commissioned service through STEP to facilitate engagement with children and young people with SEND. This partnership supports and enables opportunities for joint working and co-production. Since SSFVs creation in March 2018 their reach has increased by 600%. Both forums have been instrumental in co-producing the newly launched Local Offer.

## Priorities for the Next 18 months

- Maintain a Stable Workforce. The service recognises successful permanent recruitment coupled with a strengthened practice management model is key to providing staff stability.
- Develop the in house foster care capacity and skills in order to place children more locally.
- Improve plans for children receiving social care support to include clear, specific and time bound actions as well as contingency arrangements
- Improve the Sufficiency of local placements to meet the needs of older children, as well as those children with complex needs
- The timeliness and quality of preparation of care leavers for independent living including health histories and ensuring they are routinely available for care leavers
- Replace the legacy case management and document management systems. The implementation of the ICT system is in flight with the infrastructure and testing system now in place. There are currently multiple design and configuration workshops being delivered and a dedicated Practice Lead has been assigned to the project to ensure the solution meets social worker requirements from the frontline perspective.
- Complete activity to respond to the SEND written statement of action

## **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 The Committee can choose not to operate a Cabinet Portfolio Question and Answer session system.

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## **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications arising from this report. Any expenditure arising as a result of an item on the Committee’s work programme will be met by the Overview and Scrutiny Support budget, subject to the approval of the Committee.
- 5.2 The main financial challenge facing the service is the high level of agency workers. For the Social work based teams there were 59% agency staff to 41% permanent staff as at the end of August. There is a Workforce Taskforce in place to support the permanent recruitment of staff.
- 5.3 The Finance Business Partner for Children Services was consulted in relation to financial information provided within this report.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.4 There are no legal and human rights implications associated with this report.
- 5.5 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) requires every Local Authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to account, undertake policy development and review, monitor, and improve performance.

### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.6 There are no other direct implications arising from this report. Any further implications will be identified when a topic is reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee and in any recommendation made by the Scrutiny Committee.

### Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.7 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage as this report proposes no changes to services. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the work programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

### Risk Management

- 5.8 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Jo Ash, 01793 465849, [jash@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jash@swindon.gov.uk).

# **Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services**

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The author has consulted, where appropriate, with Corporate Directors, Directors, Heads of Service, other officers, and relevant partners on the purpose, content, and recommendations of the report.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1: OFSTED Inspection of Children Services.
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Cabinet report Inspection of Children Services.

# Swindon

## Inspection of children's social care services

**Inspection dates: 1 July 2019 to 12 July 2019**

**Lead inspector: Emmy Tomsett**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Good

The determined and well-focused leadership of the director of children's services (DCS), supported by corporate managers and elected members, has delivered significant improvement in children's services in Swindon.

The DCS and his leadership team have taken swift and decisive action to improve services for children and young people in Swindon. Following the inspection of 2014, services declined, and the focused visit undertaken in 2018 found that services had deteriorated to a point where several areas for priority action were identified. The quality of leadership in Swindon is a key strength and has ensured the delivery of swift and well-targeted improvements across all areas of children's services. The DCS and his team have been systematic and relentless in their efforts to drive developments in Swindon and acknowledge that evident improvements have been made from a low base.

The DCS and senior leaders are highly visible and dedicated in their commitment to improving experiences for children. The quality of services has significantly improved within the last 12 months. Services to respond to children in need of help and

protection are now good. Arrangements to facilitate the delivery of consistently good services for children in care are firmly in place. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of these more recent changes. While there is a determination to ensure that children achieve permanence in a timely way, the legacy of poor practice has had a negative impact on the experience of some children. A culture of learning and challenge has been fostered in Swindon by the now permanent senior leadership team, which has a tangible presence in all areas of the service. Increased financial investment has been well targeted, and this, along with persistence by leaders, has ensured that children's needs have been well considered and addressed. Senior leaders' oversight and commitment to the workforce have ensured that staff have had a clear understanding of the areas for improvement.

## **What needs to improve**

- the extent to which plans for children, across the service, include clear, specific and timebound actions as well as contingency arrangements
- sufficiency of local placements to meet the needs of older children, as well as those children with complex needs
- the timeliness and quality of preparation of care leavers for independent living
- health histories, so that they are routinely available for all care leavers in a timely way.

## **The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: good**

1. The Swindon local authority early help offer has been strengthened to ensure that more children and families receive support through the newly created early help hub. Intervention by the hub is well targeted and is monitored effectively. Increased preventative services have reduced the number of children and families needing statutory support. Referrals to the early help hub are responded to in a timely and purposeful manner. Responses to children's needs are proportionate and delivered through well-coordinated plans by an increasing range of partners. There is a wide range of accessible multi-agency support services, including a single point of referral for mental health services, which undertake joint assessments to decide on levels of risk. Early help assessments are mostly of good quality, and the views of children are clearly represented. However, the quality of written plans is inconsistent and not all plans are sufficiently linked to the identified risks. The local authority has strengthened guidance for workers in order to improve consistency.
2. All areas for priority action from the focused visit in May 2018 have been addressed. Children and families receive a prompt and proportionate response to initial contacts made to the 'front door'. Thresholds are well understood and are

appropriately applied by the professionals in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). The interface between the out-of-hours team and day teams is effective. Partnership working is a strength, with evidence of increased professional curiosity, timely background checks and information being shared effectively. For those children in need of statutory help, the response to referrals is now consistently thorough, and timely. Risks to children from domestic abuse are well understood, and there is an appropriate range of tools used to assess risks. Managers provide a detailed analysis of historical information, and actual and potential risks, and this is accompanied by coherent directives on next steps for social workers. Parental consent is considered appropriately, and when it is overridden, there is a clear, recorded rationale. Young people who present as homeless receive a swift response through well-coordinated joint assessments from housing and social care services.

3. Children are seen quickly by social workers, and as frequently as necessary, so that the risks and needs for the whole family can be thoroughly assessed. Children are seen alone and in appropriate venues to maximise the opportunity to build a trusting relationship and to enable social workers to understand the child's world. Social workers routinely undertake direct work with children to understand their world.
4. Child protection enquiries are effective and timely. Strategy meetings are held when risks are identified, and result in well-targeted action plans and proportionate decisions to best protect children. These are based on careful analysis of relevant historical information and information from partners, and appropriately consider the relevance to the presenting concerns. Child protection conferences are now timely, and appropriate partners attend these meetings.
5. Assessments are timely and comprehensive and completed with minimum delay. Risks and needs of children are carefully identified and lead to appropriate support for children and families. Social workers make good use of research to explain to parents why things need to change, pointing out the impact for their children if certain behaviours continue. Where risks are judged to be high and children are at risk of imminent harm, appropriate and immediate action is taken to safeguard and protect them.
6. The accessible and responsive family group conferencing service identifies members of the wider family to offer support to, or to be assessed as alternative temporary or permanent carers for, children. Increasing use of assessment tools with families, such as the 'graded care profile' to identify and understand the impact of neglect and the outcome and relationship-based approach, is increasing workers' confidence in analysing risk to children.
7. The quality of child in need and child protection plans is inconsistent. While planning for children is effective and well targeted, the actual written plan is not easily accessible or sufficiently clear. This weakness is further compounded by an electronic recording system that is difficult to navigate. As a result, social

workers are currently translating plans for parents to ensure that they fully understand the content. Senior leaders have undertaken significant activity to improve plans. However, this has not yet led to a consistent improvement for all children's plans. Plans are reviewed in a timely manner, and contingency planning is well embedded. The child's voice is well represented in both assessments and plans.

8. The focus on securing permanence for children has improved. The scrutiny and oversight of children subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) are now ensuring that children do not experience drift and delay in securing permanence. A PLO tracker has been established and is well used by the newly appointed PLO coordinator in order to increase the management oversight of individual children's cases.
9. Disabled children in need of help and protection receive an effective and timely response to their needs from the point of referral. The quality of social work practice is of a consistently high standard. Children with the most complex needs receive a timely response to the right help, and families are supported to care for their children.
10. The local authority identifies and responds appropriately to private fostering arrangements. Assessments identify the risks well and are clearly informed by the parents' and children's views. Plans are reviewed and assessments are updated as required.
11. Responses to individual children identified as being at risk of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, are mostly timely and effective. Young people are well supported by the Opal team (the dedicated child exploitation team), which provides well-targeted preventative intervention and individual direct work with young people to reduce risk. Action plans mitigate risks and engage young people so that they can develop self-protection skills. Sexual exploitation risk assessment tools are completed to a high standard. Strategic arrangements to gather local intelligence contribute to local mapping, create a robust profile of the area and have significantly improved partnership working.
12. Arrangements to identify and support children who go missing have improved significantly. The appointment of a coordinator for missing children has led to improvements in the timeliness and quality of return home interviews. Strengthened arrangements have led to a significant reduction in the number of episodes of children going missing from home.
13. The number of children who are educated at home in Swindon has increased in the last 12 months. While these individual arrangements are monitored by the education welfare service, there is insufficient evidence of a strategic analysis and consequent action by leaders to understand this pattern locally. Senior leaders have strengthened these monitoring arrangements. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work.



14. Arrangements to manage allegations against adults who work with children are timely, comprehensive and effective. Thresholds are well understood and consistently applied. Allegations management meetings are well attended and recorded. Multi-agency meetings ensure that information is shared effectively, and this results in well-coordinated and timebound action plans that protect children and ensure that investigations are thorough and purposeful. A newly implemented comprehensive tracking tool monitors the progress of individual investigations and prevents children from experiencing unnecessary delays.

### **The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers: requires improvement to be good**

15. The DCS has ensured that there is now a much sharper focus on the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers. However, improvement has been from a low base. A shortage of foster carers with the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience means that placement choice is limited, resulting in too many children in care living in placements out of area. Placement stability is a challenge. While there is renewed determination to ensure that children achieve permanence in a timely way, there are significant legacy issues. Some children have waited too long to be adopted.
16. Decisions to look after children are now mostly timely. While historically there has been evidence of drift and delay in children coming into care, there is now a clear focus on achieving permanence for children, and permanence plans are now in place for most children. The implementation of a permanence tracker is beginning to ensure that senior leaders can track individual children's progress. A full range of permanence options are well considered, including special guardianship orders, return home and adoption. The number of young people enjoying staying put arrangements has increased but remains low in proportion to the number of children in care.
17. Social workers see children regularly, including those children who live outside Swindon. Visits are purposeful and there is a clear focus on the lived experiences of children in care, and on their wishes and feelings. Social workers routinely undertake direct work with children that is helping children to make sense of their experiences and care histories. Children benefit from good-quality advocacy support. Arrangements for children to see their family are well considered and managed in a way that makes it possible for children to continue to see and spend time with those who matter most to them.
18. The quality of assessments of children, as well as assessments of together and apart and of viability, is good. Assessments routinely include a comprehensive analysis of risk and protective factors and a good consideration of the impact of historical events, particularly in cases where neglect is a feature. The quality of children's plans is inconsistent, but most plans are sufficiently detailed, with an increasing recent focus on permanence, and on children's progress in their

placement. Plans are reviewed regularly, but further work is required to ensure that they are routinely specific and measurable.

19. The role of the independent reviewing officers (IROs) has been strengthened, and their quality assurance function is now ensuring effective scrutiny and greater oversight of arrangements for children in care. Review timeliness has improved, and most children contribute to their reviews. Reviews are comprehensive and written directly to the child, making them easy for children to understand. IROs are making increased use of the dispute resolution process to challenge drift and delay.
20. Good attention is now paid to the health of children in care and most have up-to-date annual health assessments, dental checks and immunisations. The experience of those children who live more than 50 miles from Swindon is improving. Social workers are responsive to children's emotional well-being and mental health. The establishment of a multi-disciplinary strengths and difficulties panel and an increased focus on trauma mean that strengths and difficulties questionnaires are starting to be better used to understand children's needs.
21. The virtual school is effective in ensuring that children in care are well supported and make good progress in school. While children in care make less progress than their peers, the gap is reducing. The virtual school systematically monitors and evaluates the quality of personal education plans (PEPs), and, as a result, the quality of plans is improving. All PEPs have a clear focus on academic progress. The virtual school has been working with schools to reduce the number of children in care who are excluded from school. Work is in progress to improve school attendance of children in care in Swindon, which is lower than that of children in care in other local authorities.
22. Children are encouraged to develop hobbies and interests and take part in a range of social and leisure activities. The children in care team makes a conscious effort to celebrate children's birthdays and achievements. There are established groups for children in care and care leavers. However, attendance at these groups is limited. Senior leaders continue to ensure that all looked after children have an opportunity to attend, contribute and influence decision-making and changes to the service they receive.
23. Senior leaders recognise that Swindon has a shortage of foster carers with the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience, and that this has resulted in limited placement choice. A high number of children in care currently live in placements out of area. Placement stability in Swindon has been a challenge, and some children have moved because they have been living in placements that have not met their needs. Leaders have taken effective action to strengthen the recruitment, training and selection of foster carers.
24. Adoption arrangements have been recently strengthened, although this is not yet consistently benefiting children. While still working through Swindon's backlog of

children with placement orders, the regional adoption agency (Adoption Thames Valley) is starting to deliver well for Swindon children whose plan for permanence is adoption. Swindon children have been waiting longer than the national average to be adopted. This particularly applies to children living with long-term foster carers who want to adopt them. There is still evidence of delay, for example in some children being placed with adopters and in some children's existing foster placements being confirmed as permanence plans. The quality and timeliness of adoption support are improving.

25. The development of the dedicated care leavers team, coupled with increased staffing, has reduced personal advisers' (PAs) caseloads and improved the quality and impact of management oversight. The local authority is in touch with most care leavers. While services for young people have significantly improved, these are not yet of consistently good quality.
26. Children are swiftly allocated a PA, who works jointly with the allocated social worker to ensure that young people are now able to establish meaningful and sustained relationships with their PA. Young people, including those living out of area, are seen at least every four weeks and more frequently if required. The 'local offer' for care leavers is well-written and easy to understand. It clearly outlines what care leavers should expect and the services available to them and includes comprehensive information on health support services.
27. The quality of pathway plans, while improved since the focused visit, is variable. Pathway plans are not sufficiently specific or timebound, and when risks are identified, they do not fully reflect responses that are taking place to address risk and vulnerability. There is also little evidence of pathways plans being genuinely co-produced with young people. Care leavers spoken with report the length of the pathway planning templates as a barrier to meaningful involvement. A health passport has been developed in consultation with children in care, and although the situation is improving, too many care leavers do not have access to a comprehensive summary of their health histories.
28. While young people are prepared for independence, Swindon does not currently have a systematic process to ensure that young people are helped to develop their skills in preparation for adulthood. Building on an already strong and well-developed strategic and operational relationship with the housing department, senior leaders have introduced a housing and children's social care accommodation panel to strengthen their response to young people, including care leavers, who are at risk of becoming homeless. Most care leavers have access to a range of good-quality accommodation.

## **The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: good**

29. Following his appointment, the DCS recognised that the quality of practice in Swindon had declined following the inspection in 2014. Since then, however,

there has been significant improvement, and in the last 12 months, the DCS and his team have taken resolute action to improve the quality of services in Swindon. Decisive and well-targeted action has been taken to address all areas of weakness identified in focused visits in 2018 and 2019. The quality of practice in Swindon has significantly improved from a low base, and recently the pace of improvement has been swift and actions have been well targeted.

30. Governance arrangements have been strengthened, and a new chief executive and lead member have been appointed. Political leaders have ensured that there is corporate commitment across all directorates to the wider children's safeguarding agenda in Swindon. The Swindon strategic improvement pillar plan provides a clear strategic framework for delivering sustainable improvement to the experiences of children across the service. Good use has been made of peer support, partners in practice, external reviews and work with the safeguarding board. A learning culture is now fully embedded and peer challenge and escalation processes support continuous improvement.
31. The quality of leadership and management at all levels in Swindon is a key strength, and the senior leadership team is ambitious, energetic and assured in the oversight and delivery of services to children and their families. The senior management team is now permanent, with increased capacity to strengthen overall delivery of improved experiences for children. Senior leaders have demonstrated a good awareness of weaknesses, as well as strengths, in performance and the quality of practice. Improvements have now been sustained in most areas of practice.
32. There has been a significant increase in the financial investment in children's services. This has been effectively targeted and translated into a range of additional services and management capacity across the service. For example, additional posts include a strategic commissioner to increase the number of foster placements in Swindon, a child exploitation manager, a coordinator for missing children and a pre-proceedings scrutiny officer. Management capacity has been increased in several key areas, including in the MASH, locality teams and the care leavers team.
33. Improvements are notable in several key areas. Supervision and management oversight are now timely and purposeful, and are well documented in most case records. Caseloads have halved, and social workers and managers feel well supported and have access to a comprehensive range of well-targeted training opportunities. Staff morale is high and the DCS and senior leadership team are highly visible to all staff. Staff greatly value the practice week, when senior leaders join them in their daily work activities to gain an understanding of staff experiences and further monitor the quality of practice.
34. While significant improvements have been achieved across the service, a small number of areas for development remain. Services for children looked after, while much improved, require further improvement to be good. Senior leaders

had already identified all areas of weakness identified during this inspection. However, remedial action to address these is at varying stages of implementation, and outcomes are not yet consistently good for children in care in Swindon.

35. Social work stability over recent years has been a significant challenge in Swindon. While the number of agency staff is high at 63%, most of this cohort are long-term locums, and this has ensured that, more recently, children have enjoyed consistency of social worker. The local authority has updated its workforce development strategy, which clearly sets out its revised recruitment and retention strategies.
36. Workforce development has been a key priority for senior leaders, who have now established Swindon Social Work Academy. The academy provides a centralised hub to ensure that the training and development needs of staff are identified and that training is delivered well. Staff development is delivered well, and a revised framework has been implemented to ensure increased support and facilitate career and skills development opportunities for staff. A Swindon social work forum further strengthens the interface between senior leaders and frontline staff, and ensures that leaders are responsive to staff experiences and need. Senior leaders have also introduced a mandatory core training programme, and this includes agency staff.
37. Quality assurance arrangements have been significantly strengthened in Swindon through a revised quality assurance framework. Senior leaders have updated existing audit tools, and have delivered comprehensive training on auditing activity, as well as commissioning external experts to test the quality of ongoing audit activity for effectiveness. Learning from audit activity is routinely shared with all staff, and the impact of this learning is translated well into team practice activities and improvement plans. A monthly quality assurance and improvement board, chaired by the DCS, has been established to monitor improvements across the service and ensure that progress is well embedded and leads to sustained improvements for children and young people. A comprehensive, well-targeted audit programme, including multi-agency audits, has been developed.
38. Performance management arrangements have been refined, and the use of performance information to drive service development is now fully embedded. Data management officers have expanded the suite of information available to managers at all levels, and accurate performance reporting is delivered through weekly trackers as well as service scorecards and monthly performance clinics. This ensures that senior leaders have an accurate understanding of key strengths and weaknesses in practice.
39. Senior leaders have demonstrated a clear focus on gathering the views of children and young people and are using this information to inform strategic and operational planning across the service. Children and young people greatly

enjoy the accessibility of senior managers, including the director, who many children know by name. This level of availability to children has been a key strength seen throughout the inspection. The impact of the corporate parenting board has been limited, and the board lacks ambition for children in care and care leavers. Senior leaders have acted to reinvigorate the impact of the corporate parenting board and strengthen the interface between the board and children in care and care leavers.



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# Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) Findings

**Cabinet**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Author: Cabinet Member for Children's Services  
Corporate Director Children's Services

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

## 1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the key findings from the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) in Swindon, completed in July 2019. The two week inspection undertaken between 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019 by 6 inspectors evaluated the effectiveness and impact of Children's Social Care services which includes the Early Help Offer. The Ofsted report provides the Local Authority with an overall effectiveness judgement of the performance of the whole service. It also provides individual judgement grades for:
- The experience and progress of children who need help and protection
  - The experience and progress of children in care and care leavers
  - The impact of leaders on social work practice
- 1.2 Cabinet members need to be briefed on the findings of the full inspection so that they are aware of the progress and improvement within Children's Social Care and have an overview of the areas that need further improvement so that this can be monitored and scrutinised. The full Ofsted report is included at Appendix 1 and was published in the public domain on the Ofsted web-site on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019.
- 1.3 Children's Services helps deliver the Council's priority to protect vulnerable children and achieve the Council pledges 20, 21 and 22 which focus on increasing the capacity of local foster provision, safeguarding of children and the provision of effective early help interventions through working within the Troubled Families Programme.

## 2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Take note of the judgements and key findings from the OFSTED report across each of the judgements.
- 2.2 Recognise where positive progress and improvement has been made and understand how this has been achieved.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Jo Ash 01793 465849 jash@swindon.gov.uk*.

## Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) Findings

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Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019

- 2.3 Note the areas for continued improvement for future scrutiny and assurance that improvements continue to be made and are embedded and sustained.
- 2.4 Thank all staff in Children's Services and across the Council for their commitment and hard work to achieve a successful inspection outcome.

### 3. Detail

#### Overall Effectiveness of Children's Social Care Services graded as: **Good**

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness in Swindon of Children's Social Care Services in Swindon is judged to be good. The report recognises the effectiveness of elected members, corporate managers and senior leaders in prioritising resource for children's services, implementing strong Governance arrangements and driving rapid improvement. It notes that the Director of Children Services and the Senior Leadership Team have taken systematic, swift and decisive action to implement significant service improvements. The quality of leadership is noted as a key strength and includes high visibility, well-targeted actions, an accurate knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement and creating the right conditions for good social work practice to flourish. This has contributed to the rapid pace of improvement both in terms of practice and workforce development. The report recognises that the quality of practice had declined since the 2014 inspection and that the service is still addressing some legacy issues. It notes that progress continues at pace and plans are already being implemented to address the areas that need to improve further, which are:
  - 3.1.1 The extent to which plans for children, across the services, include clear, specific and time bound actions as well as contingency arrangements
  - 3.1.2 The Sufficiency of local placements to meet the needs of older children, as well as those children with complex needs
  - 3.1.3 The timeliness and quality of preparation of care leavers for independent living
  - 3.1.4 Health histories, so that they are routinely available for care leavers in a timely way
- 3.2 These areas of improvement had already been identified by the DCS and Senior Leadership team and are incorporated into the Strategic Service Improvement Plan. Progress against these areas for improvement will continue to be reported through the existing Governance arrangements, including the External Improvement Board, Cabinet and the Children's overview and scrutiny committee reports.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Jo Ash* 01793 465849 [jash@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jash@swindon.gov.uk).

## Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) Findings

Cabinet

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019

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### The Experiences of children who need help and protection graded as: **Good**

- 3.3 The Experiences of children who need help and protection is judged to be good. Inspectors recognised the work undertaken to strengthen the Early Help Offer and embed good quality work in the newly established Early Help Hub. The report notes that all priority actions from the focussed inspection in April 2018 within MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) function have been addressed. It is pleasing to note that the report confirms that children are seen quickly by social workers and receive an effective and timely response in relation to child protection enquiries and assessment. The assessments are of a good quality and set out the risk for children and young people. Children are visited regularly because caseloads for social workers have been reduced. Ofsted confirmed our self-assessment of child protection plans and endorsed the actions that are being put in place to improve them.
- 3.4 The report notes that vulnerable groups including Disabled Children and Children at risk of sexual exploitation receive an effective and timely service. The use of risk assessment tools with vulnerable children and young people was highlighted as a particular strength. Ofsted recognised the good practice for children who are privately fostered and that arrangements for children who go missing have improved significantly. It noted that senior managers are working to continue to strengthen the oversight of an increasing number of children who are electively home educated.
- 3.5 The overall findings for children in need of help and protection are very positive and reflective of the concentrated service improvements that have been delivered. The pace of change and improved management oversight has enabled the service to progress from a low base line in a relatively short period of time. The embedding of practice improvement has been key and remains so in terms of sustainability and driving even higher standards going forward.

### The experience and progress of Children in Care and Care Leavers graded as: **Requires Improvement to be Good**

- 3.6 Ofsted judged that the experience and progress of children in care and care leavers requires improvement to be good. The report evidences confidence in the strong leadership and sharper focus that is in place to bring about the required improvements. Addressing the legacy issues for children looked after means that permanency for some children takes longer than it should. There was recognition that permanency planning has improved and the Independent Reviewing Service

## Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) Findings

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has been strengthened to monitor the progress of Children Looked After. Ofsted particularly liked the way that the reviews are written directly to the child, making them easy for children to understand. A shortage of foster carers means that placement sufficiency and stability is a challenge. It was noted that the service has appointed additional capacity and has a strategic approach to develop the range and skill of foster carers available locally.

- 3.7 The report notes the strong partnership with health professionals to improve the Health of Children Looked After, particularly those that are placed out of Swindon. The recent work to support children with emotional and mental health issues was endorsed and identified as good practice. The virtual school provides an effective service working with children and schools to help children achieve their learning potential. It notes that children in care are well supported and make good progress in school and that systems are in place to improve the quality of personal education plans. Gaps in progress are reducing and attendance at school is improving for looked after children.
- 3.8 The report reflected the positive step of the establishment of a dedicated Care Leavers team to assist transition to adulthood. It noted that improvements are needed to ensure pathway planning is more consistent and this is underway. Favourable comments are made on the work with the Housing Department to ensure an effective joint approach to young people who may be at risk of homelessness.

The impact of leaders on social work practice within Children and Families graded as: **Good**

- 3.9 The impact of leaders on social work practice is judged to be good and was identified as a key strength. The report notes the strong support of corporate managers and elected members and that leaders and managers know the service's strengths and areas for improvement and have worked decisively to address weaknesses. It is noted that governance and quality assurance arrangements are strong and have ensured the right framework is in place to support the pace of change required and provide managers with the tools to monitor progress. The use of data to manage performance has improved as has the quality and frequency of staff supervision.
- 3.10 The Council's significant additional financial investment has reduced caseloads which has helped with social worker stability, although it is recognised that this still remains a challenge. The investment has enabled good progress to be made quickly and sustained. The report notes the strength of partnership working and the impact of this on improved outcomes for children and young people. It also notes that the workforce recruitment and retention sets out a revised set of

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Jo Ash 01793 465849 jash@swindon.gov.uk*.

## Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) Findings

**Cabinet**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

recruitment and retention strategies to manage a workforce with a high proportion of agency staff and attract permanent workers to Swindon.

### **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 There are no alternative options in relation to this report.

### **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

#### Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no immediate financial implications in relation to this report. The report recognises the positive impact of the investment that Cabinet have made into Children's Services.

#### Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 There are no legal implications in relation to this report.

#### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 There are no other implications in relation to this report.

#### Diversity Impact Assessment

5.4 A diversity Impact Assessment is not required for this report as a briefing of an external inspection.

#### Risk Management

5.5 A risk assessment is not required for this report as a briefing of an external inspection and has no risks for consideration. .

### **6. Consultees**

6.1 The officer preparing the report must consult appropriate Corporate Directors, Directors, Heads of Service, other officers, and relevant partners on the purpose, content, and recommendations of the report before presenting the draft report to Cabinet Agenda Review.

6.2 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all Cabinet reports.

### **7. Background Papers**

7.1 There are no background papers associated with this report.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Jo Ash* 01793 465849 [jash@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jash@swindon.gov.uk).

## **Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) Findings**

**Cabinet**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

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### **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Ofsted Report for Inspection of Children's Social Care Services in Swindon

### **9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme**

- 9.1 The report is not a key decision and is in the Cabinet Work Programme for September 2019.



## Call-in Request – Cabinet Member Decision

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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Author: Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer)

Wards: Rodbourne Cheney

Parishes Affected: Central Swindon North

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### **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 To consider a request for call-in submitted in relation to a Cabinet Member decision.
- 1.2 The request for call-in has been made in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 16 of Section 5 of Part 4 (“Rules of Procedure – Overview and Scrutiny Committees”) of the Council’s Constitution.
- 1.3 Members are reminded that the subject matter of the proposed Cabinet Member Decision has been determined to be private and confidential by virtue of paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 as it relates to commercial affairs.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Consider this request for call-in of a Cabinet Member decision.
- 2.2 Consider the supporting evidence provided in relation to the claims submitted in paragraph 5.1 of the Cabinet Member Decision Note and the Notice of Call-in that the decision should be referred back to the Cabinet Member for reconsideration.

### **3. Detail**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is authorised to consider requests for “call-in”, as defined in the Council’s “Call-in” procedure, set out in paragraph 16 of Section 5 of Part 4 (“Rules of Procedure – Overview and Scrutiny Committees”) of the Council’s Constitution.
- 3.2 The call-in procedure is intended for use only in exceptional circumstances, when members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have evidence that a decision has been made without due process being carried out or without an appreciation of the implications of the approved action.
- 3.3 The procedure allows for the call-in of any published decision, within the specified notice period (5 working days) after the publication of the decision, where such request is received from any four members, representing a minimum of two political groups (paragraph 16(c) of the Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference Overview and Scrutiny Committees).

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Douglas Campbell, 07779 413886, docampbell@swindon.gov.uk.

# Call-in Request – Cabinet Member Decision

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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- 3.4 On 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019, a request was submitted to the Monitoring Officer by Councillors Stan Pajak, Jim Grant, Emma Bushell and Steve Allsopp for the call-in of a decision made by Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, concerning the confidential Cabinet Member decision attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.5 A copy of the confidential notice relating to the call-in, including details of the grounds provided by the members in support of their request, is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.6 In accordance with the Council's call-in procedure, the Committee is invited to consider the evidence provided by the four councillors as to why the decision fails to meet the requirements of the Council's principles of decision making, as set out in Article 13 ("Decision Making") of the Council's Constitution, with particular regard to the carrying out of due process in reaching the decision and/or failing to fully appreciate the implications of the decision, and determine whether the matter should be referred back for further consideration.
- 3.7 The Scrutiny Committee is advised that, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 16 of Section 5 of Part 4 ("Rules of Procedure – Overview and Scrutiny Committees") of the Council's Constitution, any decision to refer the matter back to the Cabinet Member for further consideration must address the nature of its concerns about the decision.
- 3.8 It is for the Scrutiny Committee to determine whether to support the case put forward in the notice of call-in and choose not to refer the matter back to the Cabinet Member. In such circumstance, the original decision will take immediate effect.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The options available to the Committee are set out in the report.

## **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 This report to Scrutiny Committee has no financial or procurement implications. The financial and procurement implications of the original Cabinet Member Decision are set out in the Cabinet Member Decision Note.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken into account in preparing this report.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Douglas Campbell, 07779 413886, docampbell@swindon.gov.uk.

# Call-in Request – Cabinet Member Decision

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

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## All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 This report has no sustainability or other implications. Such implications in relation to the original Cabinet Member Decision are set out in the Cabinet Member Decision Note

## Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out for this report as any such assessment and implications in relation to the original Cabinet Member Decision are set out in the Cabinet Member Decision Note

## Risk Management

- 5.5 A risk management assessment is not appropriate for this report.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The author has consulted, where appropriate, with Corporate Directors, Directors, Heads of Service, other officers, and relevant partners on the purpose, content, and recommendations of the report.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Private and Confidential – the Cabinet Member Decision Note
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Private and Confidential – The Notice of Call-in

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## Work Programme 2019/2020

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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Author: Chief Legal Officer

Wards: All Wards

Parishes Affected: All Parish Areas

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### **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the topics for the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2019/2020, as agreed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and revised at subsequent meetings throughout the year.
- 1.2 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to have a Work Programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the Municipal Year.
- 1.3 The Work Programme details the various topics and issues that each Committee intends to look into during the coming year with the aim of producing evidence based recommendations intended to provide service improvements for Cabinet and external agencies / bodies to consider.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the approved Work Programme for the Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year.

### **3. Detail**

The Work Programme

- 3.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to have a Work Programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the Municipal Year.
- 3.2 Under the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to agree a Work Programme at the start of the Municipal Year outlining their priorities and likely outcomes of considering these issues. This task was completed by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees at their first meetings during June and July 2019.
- 3.3 The Work Programme is developed taking into account:
  - 3.3.1 Corporate priorities and objectives, including the Cabinet Forward Plan.
  - 3.3.2 Partnership strategic priorities and objectives.
  - 3.3.3 The interests and concerns of Members, Council officers, members of the public, and other stakeholders such as community and voluntary groups and local businesses.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, [VYull@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:VYull@swindon.gov.uk).

# Work Programme 2019/2020

## Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

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- 3.4 Committees are encouraged to review the Work Programme on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant and to prioritise the workload of the Committee.
- 3.5 Members are reminded that the Work Programme must also take into account:
  - 3.5.1 The workload of the Committee and of individual members.
  - 3.5.2 The capacity of officers to support a review.
  - 3.5.3 The resource implications of carrying out a review.
  - 3.5.4 The timescales for a review.
  - 3.5.5 The most appropriate method of carrying out a review e.g. Committee meeting, Task Group, Member Champion review.

### Developing the Work Programme – The Executive

- 3.6 It is important that Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the work of the Council and its partner agencies, and produces tangible outcomes for local people that result in real service improvements. Selecting the right topics is crucial to ensure that scrutiny will be effective.
- 3.7 In order to help the Scrutiny Committee select the right topics for the Work Programme, the Leader of the Council will be giving his annual presentation to the Committee at this meeting, where he will outline priority areas for the coming twelve months, and highlight problem areas or policies that require development and / or renewal. These issues should be considered by the Scrutiny Committee for possible inclusion in the Work Programme. In addition, the Leader may make suggestions for the Scrutiny Committee to include in its Work Programme.
- 3.8 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are encouraged to work with Cabinet in the best interests of the Borough and to take into account the priorities and suggestions of Cabinet as detailed in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward plan, attached at Appendix 2, when considering the contents for the Work Programme.
- 3.9 In addition, Members attention is drawn to the Scrutiny Process Flowchart, attached at Appendix 3, which is aimed at assisting Members in identifying how they could influence policy development.

### Standard Work Programme items

- 3.10 In addition to selecting various topics and issues for inclusion in the Work Programme, the Scrutiny Committee has a number of additional items that it has incorporated into its Work Programme, such as:
  - 3.10.1 Cabinet Member Question and Answer Sessions. Each Cabinet Member will be expected to appear before the Scrutiny Committee to answer

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, VYull@swindon.gov.uk.

# Work Programme 2019/2020

## Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

---

questions relating to their portfolio responsibilities, performance and future plans.

3.10.2 Review of Cabinet Decisions. The Scrutiny Committee will be required to review the decisions taken by Cabinet.

3.10.3 Leader's Report. The Scrutiny Committee will receive an annual presentation and a six monthly update from the Leader of the Council on the administrations priorities for the year and performance.

## 4. Alternative Options

4.1 The Committee can choose not to have a detailed Work Programme although it is recommended that it is best practice to do so.

## 5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

### Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no financial or procurement implications arising as a result of this report. Any expenditure arising as a result of an item on the Committee's Work Programme will be met by the Overview and Scrutiny Support budget, subject to the approval of the Committee.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act requires every local authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to account, undertake policy development and review, monitor and improve performance.

### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 There are no other direct implications arising as a result of this report. Any further implications will be identified when a topic is reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee and in any recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee.

### Diversity Impact Assessment

5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the Work Programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

### Risk Management

5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, VYull@swindon.gov.uk.

# Work Programme 2019/2020

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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**6. Consultees**

6.1 None.

**7. Background Papers**

7.1 None.

**8. Appendices**

8.1 Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/2020.

8.2 Appendix 2 – Current Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for the period October 2019 to October 2020.

8.3 Appendix 3 – Scrutiny Process Flowchart.

## **Scrutiny Committee**

### **Work Programme 2019-2020**

#### **Terms of Reference of the Committee**

- To meet at regular intervals to review the policies, process and implications of Cabinet, Cabinet Member and Officer decision making, and the way in which Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions are made;
- To consider requests for “Call-in” as defined in the Council’s “Call-in” Procedure;
- To refer decisions back to Cabinet (or the decision maker) for reconsideration. It may do this once for any individual decision, after which if there is no agreement the decision will be referred to the full Council for determination;
- To refer Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for investigation without delaying the implementation of the decision concerned;
- To receive a report by the Leader of the Council at its first meeting after each Annual Council Meeting (or at such a meeting as is agreed by the Chair of the Committee and the Leader of the Council) on the service issues for the year ahead, the Leader of the Council’s priorities for the coming year, and on the Council’s performance in the previous year;
- To oversee the arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny within the Council, including determining (i) where matters fall within the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee which of those Committees will assume responsibility for any particular issue, (ii) a system to ensure that referrals from Committees to the Cabinet, either by way of report or for reconsideration, are managed efficiently and do not exceed any limits set out in the Council’s Constitution, and (iii) in the event of reports to the Cabinet exceeding any limits in the Constitution, or if the volume of such reports creates difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardises the efficient running of Council business, at the request of the Cabinet to make decisions about the priority of referrals made;
- To carry out any investigation into the business and functions of the Council and to call in any Cabinet Member or senior officer of the Council so that they can offer advice, support or answer any question that will assist the Committee in carrying out its functions; and
- To carry out an external scrutiny function, particularly in relation to corporate issues and issues falling into the remit of a number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee as they relate to –

- The review, scrutiny and development of policy recommendations,
- The management of performance,
- The monitoring of progress towards delivering corporate priorities,
- The formulation of advice for the Cabinet, Council and other partners and stakeholders, and
- Strategies to reduce or prevent Crime and Disorder.

To have specific responsibility (but not limited to)

- Good governance.
- The Budget Scrutiny function.

#### **Review of the Work Programme**

The work programme will be reviewed at every meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to ensure that it remains relevant, to ensure that Members and Officers have sufficient capacity to deliver the work programme and to include any additional items on the work programme, if appropriate.

To assist members in developing the Committee’s work programme, a copy of the current Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan is attached at Appendix 2 to the covering report.

#### **Contact details**

Committee Officer: Vicki Yull  
 Email: [vyull@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:vyull@swindon.gov.uk)  
 Tel: 07980 752043

<b>10<sup>th</sup> June 2019</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Work Programme 2019/20	To discuss and agree a rolling work programme for the 2019/20 Municipal Year and review the Overview Task Groups	n/a

<b>15<sup>th</sup> July 2019</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Leader of the Council update	To receive a half yearly update from the Leader of the Council on the performance of the Council, to receive details of any major issues or problem areas and to review progress against priorities set out in annual presentation.	Councillor David Renard
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet

<b>12<sup>th</sup> August 2019</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Adults and Health	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health.	Councillor Brian Ford
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence.	Councillor Keith Williams

<b>9<sup>th</sup> September 2019</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Economy and Place	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Place.	Councillor Oliver Donachie

<b>21<sup>st</sup> October 2019</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.	Councillor Mary Martin

<b>18<sup>th</sup> November 2019</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Review of the 2018/19 Municipal Year	To receive the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report.	Chief Legal Officer
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning.	Councillor Gary Sumner
Moredon Playing Fields Sports Hub	To review a progress report.	Head of Property Assets

<b>9<sup>th</sup> December 2019</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Leader of the Council update	To receive a half yearly update from the Leader of the Council on the performance of the Council, to receive details of any major issues or problem areas and to review progress against priorities set out in annual presentation.	Councillor David Renard
North Star Development – Trigger Points	To review a progress report.	Head of Property Assets
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet

<b>13<sup>th</sup> January 2020</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Budget Scrutiny	To review the Budget proposals for 2020-2021.	Councillor Russell Holland
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety.	Councillor Cathy Martyn

<b>10<sup>th</sup> February 2020</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment.	Councillor Maureen Penny

<b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Finance and Education and Skills	To review the portfolio and performance of Finance and Skills.	Councillor Russell Holland

<b>6<sup>th</sup> April 2020</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for the Town Centre	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for the Town Centre.	Councillor Dale Heenan



<b>Other issues for Scrutiny Committee to consider</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Averies Task Group Final Report	To receive the final report of the Task Group and make appropriate recommendations to the Cabinet and Council.	Task Group Members
Anti-social enforcement	To review what is being done to address enforcement against anti-social issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Public Space Protection Orders in the town centre</li> <li>• Anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>	Councillor Maureen Penny Councillor Oliver Donachie Councillor Cathy Martyn
An examination of the relationship between the Borough and Parish / Town Councils	One day review by Scrutiny Committee	Chief Executive
Closure of Honda	To receive a confidential update	Leader of the Council Chief Executive

<b>Other issues to be referred</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
Food Waste	To review proposals for dealing with food waste in the Borough	To be referred to Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Collection and Disposal of Used Needles	To review proposals for dealing with the collection and disposal of used needles	To be referred to Adults' Health, Adults' Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Leisure Contracts	To review the leisure contracts, in particular those run by GLL	To be referred to Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Procurement	To review how SBC uses its procurement budget locally	To be referred to Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
North Star	To review the ongoing development at North Star	To be referred to Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

### Proposed AGENDA ITEMS/DELEGATED DECISIONS

If you wish to make your views known on any matter set out in this work-plan, please contact the relevant Cabinet Member or the officer identified.

Councillor:	Portfolio:
David Renard	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet
Russell Holland	Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education, and Skills
Oliver Donachie	Cabinet Member for Economy and Place
Brian Ford	Cabinet Member for Adults and Health
Dale Heenan	Cabinet Member for the Town Centre
Mary Martin	Cabinet Member for Children' Services
Cathy Martyn	Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety
Maureen Penny	Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment
Gary Sumner	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning
Keith Williams	Cabinet Member for Corporate and Organisational Excellence

Senior Committee Clerk: Douglas Campbell, [CommitteeServices@Swindon.gov.uk](mailto:CommitteeServices@Swindon.gov.uk)

### Cabinet Member Delegated Decisions October 2019

Subject	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Lead Director
North Star Regional Leisure Development (called-in)	Cabinet Member for the Town Centre	Head of Property Assets  Head of Property Assets

### Cabinet Meeting Date - 16th October 2019

Subject	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Lead Director
Budget Management Update	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Director of Finance (s151) Officer  Director of Finance (s151) Officer
Polling Districts and Places Review	Leader of the Council	Chief Executive

		Head of Elections and Democracy
Health & Care Board Swindon	Cabinet Member for Adults and Health	Corporate Director Adult Social Services and Health  Corporate Director Adult Social Services and Health
Acquisition of Property in Park South, Swindon	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet	Head of Property Assets  Jonathan Coats, Regeneration and Projects Officer
Investment Opportunity - Industrial Premises, Stratton St Margaret.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Head of Property Assets  Head of Property Assets

Cabinet Meeting Date - 4th December 2019

Subject	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Lead Director
Budget Management 2019/20	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Director of Finance (s151) Officer  Mick Bowden, Director of Finance
Treasury Management Performance 2019/20	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Director of Finance (s151) Officer  Mick Bowden, Director of Finance
Capital Monitoring Quarterly Reports	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Director of Finance (s151) Officer  Director of Finance (s151) Officer

Public Open Space and Parish Asset Transfers - Response to Council motion	Leader of the Council	Head of Property Assets  Head of Property Assets
Housing Revenue Account - Housing Development Sites	Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety	Corporate Director Communities and Housing  Head of Housing
Transfer of the Community Meals Service to AGE UK Wiltshire	Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment	Corporate Director Communities and Housing  Head of StreetSmart
Swindon Borough Local Plan Review - Regulation 19 Consultation (submission draft) (Minute for Confirmation)	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning	Head of Planning, Regulatory Services & Heritage  Service Manager – Planning Policy

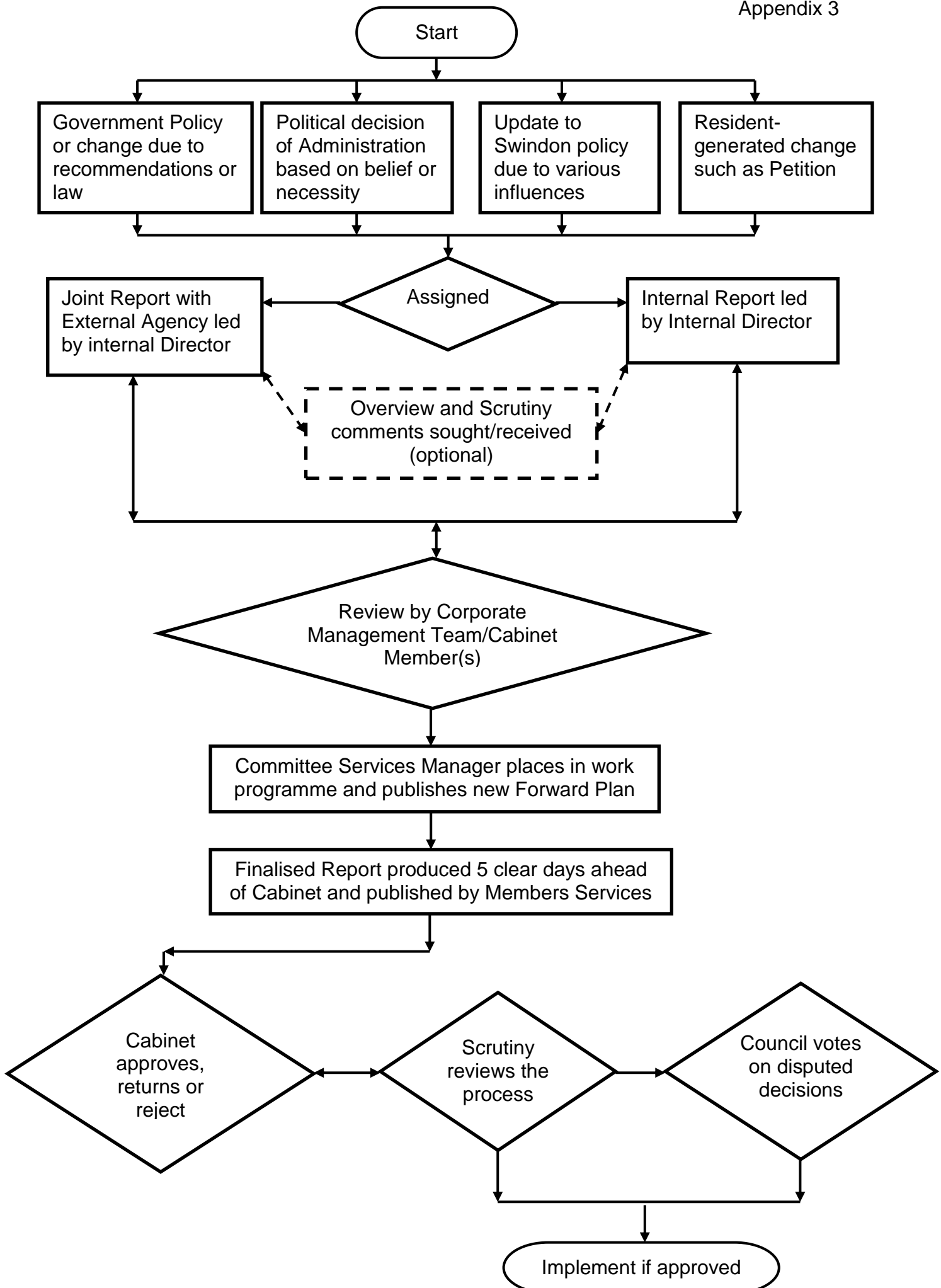
Cabinet Meeting Date - 5th February 2020

Subject	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Lead Director
Budget 2020/21 and Beyond	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Director of Finance (s151) Officer  Director of Finance (s151) Officer
Capital Programme 2020/2021	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Director of Finance (s151) Officer  Head of Finance - Deputy Section 151 Officer
Treasury Strategy Statement 2020/21	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Director of Finance (s151) Officer  Head of Finance - Deputy Section 151

		Officer
Housing Revenue Account - Rents and Charges	Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety	Corporate Director Communities and Housing  Director of Finance (s151) Officer
Swindon Pay Policy Statement 2020 / 2021	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence	Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications  Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications
School Admission Arrangements 2021-22 and Home to School Transport Policy	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Corporate Director of Children's Services  Strategic School Admissions Manager

Cabinet Meeting Date - March 2020

Subject	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Lead Director
Capital Programme Monitoring 3rd Quarter 2019/20	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Education and Skills	Director of Finance (s151) Officer  Head of Finance - Deputy Section 151 Officer



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## **Status of requests for action and / or information**

**Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

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Author: Chief Legal Officer

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

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### **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the status of requests for action to be taken or information to be provided.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report.
- 2.2 Consider the responses provided by officers, and actions taken in relation to each issue, and determine if any further action is required.
- 2.3 Agree that, subject to the Committee's requests for further action to be taken, issues shown as being completed be removed from the status report.

### **3. Detail**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee has requested that a report be submitted to each meeting on the status of its earlier decisions, allowing members to consider if any further action is required.

### **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 None.

### **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 This report has no financial or procurement implications.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been fully taken into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None.
- 

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, [VYull@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:VYull@swindon.gov.uk).



## Status of requests for action and / or information

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

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### Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the Work Programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

### Risk Management

- 5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 None.

## **7. Background Papers**


- 7.1 The Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee.

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Schedule of the status of requests for action to be taken or information to be provided.

<b>SUMMARY OF PUBLIC QUESTIONS REQUIRING A WRITTEN RESPONSE AND MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION 12 August 2019</b>		
<b>Minute No. 18</b>	<b>Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Cllr Steve Allsopp asked what proportion of the overall workforce do temporary workers make up at Swindon Borough Council.	<p>Response received from the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications as follows:</p> <p>For July 2019:</p> <p>Headcount: 2597 Temporary Staff: 458</p> <p>% of temporary staff out of total headcount = 17.6%</p> <p>It is worth noting though that whilst headcount is 2597, the Full time Equivalent is 2330. We don't hold FTE numbers for temporary staff.</p>	<b>Complete</b>

<b>SUMMARY OF PUBLIC QUESTIONS REQUIRING A WRITTEN RESPONSE AND MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION 9 September 2019</b>		
<b>Minute No. 24</b>	<b>Consideration of Cabinet Minutes</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Cllr Jim Grant referred to the criteria against which the potential sites for transferring to the Housing Company had been assessed and identified, and it was agreed that this would be circulated.	<p>Response received from the Commercial Development Project Manager as follows:</p> <p>Please see below the outline process of site evaluation. Also included is the criteria from Planning Policy which helped inform the Project Team:</p> <p><u>SBC work:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidation of all Council owned land (long list of sites).</li> <li>• High level evaluation by SBC officers (Project Team lead by Anthony W.) as to whether sites are developable / achievable for</li> </ul>	<b>Complete</b>

	<p>housing purposes and any known constraints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member consultation undertaken in Oct 2017 and Jan and August 2018 (lead by (former) Cllr. Elliott and Cllr. Sumner) on principle of development.</li> <li>• Sites cross referenced with SHELAA.</li> <li>• Sites rated (1-5) based on all collated information.</li> <li>• Sites categorised into Housing Co. sites and HRA sites.</li> </ul> <p><u>Housing Co. work:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites selected based on above information, ease of development and Housing Co.'s business model / workstreams allocation.</li> <li>• Final list presented to LAG.</li> <li>• Cabinet paper drafted and approved.</li> </ul> <p>Remaining sites to be brought forward following further investigative work and development potential undertaken by SBC officers and assisted by Housing Co.</p> <div data-bbox="667 1384 724 1447">  </div> <p>Housing Lists AW Comment.docx</p>	
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