

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

Author:	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Attainment; Corporate Director - Children's Services (DCS)
Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out improvements, challenges and future direction of the portfolio for the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Question and Answer session is to ensure that the Cabinet Member provides the Scrutiny Committee with performance and financial information relative to their portfolio responsibilities. It provides an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to ask questions and challenge the Cabinet Member. Scrutiny Committee received a detailed Q&A report for Children's Services in March 2018. This report provides Scrutiny with an update on progress over the last 6 months.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Take note of the report by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Attainment, to put appropriate questions and challenge the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and to decide if any further information or action is required.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Attainment, is Councillor Mary Martin. The Leader of the Council has assigned the following responsibilities to the Cabinet Member:
 - 3.1.1 Children and Family Services including Early Help, Youth Offending Team, Young Person Substance Misuse team, Targeted Mental Health, Education Welfare, Educational Psychology, Youth Engagement, Services for Disabled Children and the Troubled Families programme
 - 3.1.2 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)

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

- 3.1.3 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.
- 3.1.4 Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- 3.1.5 Education Services including, Provision for Early Years, LA Maintained Schools, Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Education Other Than At School, Tuition Service, Championing Excellence and Promoting High Standards. This includes the Education Strategy Board; Schools' Forum, the Music Service, Plas Pencelli Outdoor Education Centre, Governor Support services and Traded Services to schools
- 3.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services is also responsible for delivering some aspects of Priority Two and Priority Four of Swindon's vision for 2016-2020.
- 3.3 Priority Two focuses on offering education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places. The pledges we are committed to in delivering this priority are:
 - 3.3.1 In addition to the two new free secondary schools, build one secondary and 12 primary schools to meet the needs of our increasing population
 - 3.3.2 Improve educational attainment, in particular at ages 16-19 so we are above the average in England within five years.
- 3.4 Priority four focuses on helping people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults. The pledges we are committed to in delivering this priority are:
 - 3.4.1 Increase the number of foster carers in Swindon so that every 'child looked after' who should be, is placed in their home Borough.
 - 3.4.2 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.
 - 3.4.3 Ensure that Swindon's vulnerable children and young people are safeguarded and protected.
- 3.5 If Members require further information on specific portfolio areas not covered in this report, please see contact below.
- 3.6 The Q&A Children's Services report received by Scrutiny in March 2018 described the significant pressures Children's Social Care is facing from increased demand and the challenges of securing permanent, experienced and

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

suitably qualified staff. There continues to be high numbers of children in care, children in need and children subject to child protection plans. Although Swindon's position is set within a national context of increased demand for Children's Social Care Services, we continue to be an outlier compared to our statistical neighbours. The increase in service demand, experienced also across the Country continues to impact on spend and the significant pressures on staffing budgets, placement budgets and legal costs are ongoing. As at July 2018, the budget for children's social care is forecasting to overspend by £5.1m at year end.

- 3.7 In the last 6 months a strategic plan has been developed (locally known as the 'Pillar Plan') to sustain improvement and ensure our service is consistently safe, effective and efficient across all areas. The plan comprises of six pillars which cover the main areas for improvement (see 3.7.1 to 3.7.6 below). Each of these pillars have comprehensive action plans. Progress is monitored by Children's Leadership Team and through the monthly Performance meetings and quarterly Assurance Board chaired by David Haley. Monthly update reports are received by the Corporate Management Team and the Leader's Advisory Group. From September 2018, the Corporate Parenting Board will also receive performance updates. Regular reports against these pillars will be submitted regularly to Scrutiny Committee to monitor progress and as necessary. A summary of progress to date, current priorities and impact for each of the six pillars is provided below. The six pillars comprise of:

- 3.7.1 **Workforce Recruitment & Retention Strategic Pillar** - This priority is led by Sonia Grewal, Director of HR and Organisational Development. The aims of this 'pillar' are to: reduce the turnover of agency staff; reduce the number of vacancies by recruiting permanent staff; improve retention of permanent staff; and support the development of staff, managers and leaders across the service, with good career progression routes available.

Progress	Current priorities	Impact/Outcome
✓ Recruited to 2 Senior Management posts, Early Help Manager and Health and Wellbeing Principle Officer due to start early November.	➤ Re-run recruitment campaign for Assistant Director Children Families & Community Health (CFCH)	➤ Increased stability across the Children's Service workforce, with fewer vacancies and less reliance on agency workers
✓ Agency staff offer reviewed and enhanced with aim of reducing turnover (increased hourly pay, travel and accommodation allowances; impact to be reviewed by end of October)	➤ Strengthen the permanent recruitment advertising campaign to attract Social Workers	➤ Improved capacity and consistency with staffing levels that are safe to deliver the Service and provide greater continuity for the child and family
	➤ Review career	➤ Increased capability,

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Following consultation the re-structure of social work teams to create 10 smaller practice pods and a CLA team ✓ Part of the South West Frontline Social Worker Programme from September 2019 following a year of implementation (12 additional social workers) ✓ Offer guaranteed interviews for those students on the NQSW programme for social work who are undertaking their final placements at SBC – pro-active recruitment in place for January 2019 cohort. ✓ Retention payment authorised and processed for eligible staff within Social Work Teams (paid in September payroll) ✓ Appointed focussed recruitment resource to manage permanent recruitment campaigns and processes 	<p>progression scheme – Oct 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deliver the provision of keyworker housing/alternative accommodation for Social Workers ➤ Attend national Jobs Fair in November 2018. 	<p>confidence and learning across our workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Competent and successful Assessed & Supported Year in Employment (ASYEs) social workers and final Placement Students are encouraged to continue their career within SBC. ➤ Staff feel valued within the organisation, have manageable caseloads and time to support and plan effectively with families.
--	---	--

3.7.2 ICT Strategic Pillar – This priority is led by Glyn Peach, Director of Digital Services & Corporate Programmes. The aims of this pillar are to: deliver an integrated document management and case management system; provide social workers with the tools and skills to enable mobile working and make best use of their time and resources; update content on external facing systems; and improve efficiency and effectiveness through digitisation.

Progress	Current priorities	Impact/Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New case management system procured for implementation by November 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement document management system to align to new case management system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Safe, efficient file management across Early Help, Social Care and Health Visiting

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Effective engagement in digital hubs diagnostic and identification of priorities for next stage of work. ✓ Agreed approach and resource for system mapping in preparation of new system. ✓ Agreed data validity and quality improvement work and resource ✓ Implemented data returns to NHS via electronic portals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Timescales to be agreed to develop, test and implement the new case management system ➤ Induction of two posts to support data migration and system implementation ➤ Scoping work with social workers to determine most effective tools for efficient child centred work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased efficiency of staff time (and reduction in duplication of data entry) ➤ Improved case records – complete and of good quality ➤ Technology used to enable child and family centred work ➤ Improved data reporting and sharing from the system ➤ Case files have consistent high quality data. ➤ Accurate, comprehensive reports are easy to produce.
--	--	--

3.7.3 Partnerships Strategic Pillar – This priority is led by Simon Ratcliff, Swindon LSCB Strategic Manager. The aims of this ‘pillar’ are to: ensure consistent understanding and application of thresholds of need; and ensure effective collaboration across SBC and partners and implement a revised model of Governance and Practice from April 2019.

Progress	Current priorities	Impact/Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Workshops for partner agencies on thresholds of need and decision-making to provide the right help at the right time have been led in September and October (joint initiative with ACP and LSCB). This has reached over 200 staff with representation from across partnership organisations. ✓ A draft model to replace the existing LSCB has been developed with Council, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the police. The model is based on good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Align resources and implement new structure for Children’s Safeguarding, Adult Safeguarding and Community Safety Partnership ➤ Restructure support function across the three existing Boards ➤ Develop Strategy to improve the interface between Children’s and Adult Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved identification of risk and decision-making across SBC and local partners, and ensure the appropriate management of risk. ➤ Improved quality of referrals from schools and other partners ➤ Improved identification of neglect for children across the partnership ➤ Effective safeguarding of children

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

<p>practice and statutory guidance. A robust consultation process will begin in October. A schedule has been planned to ensure smooth transition for implementation from April 2019.</p> <p>✓ External review of the governance of child exploitation and missing arrangements. New arrangements proposed and signed off at the LSCB in September 2018.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More effective use of resources across the partnership ➤ Partners understand and apply their role in safeguarding children
---	--	---

3.7.4 Early Help Strategic Pillar – This priority is led by Louise Campion, Principal Officer, Health and Wellbeing and Interim Service Manager for Early Help. The aims of this ‘pillar’ are to: strengthen our Early Help offer and promote a consistent quality of practice; successfully deliver the Troubled Family Programme and Early Help Hub; improve access to domestic abuse support services; and significantly reduce waiting times for assessment and treatment in children’s mental health, restorative and youth services. A summary of progress to date is provided below but more detail information is provided in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.12 of this report.

Progress	Current priorities	Impact/Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Early Help Hub in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has been implemented ✓ The Early Help (EH) Hub Case Management System has gone live. The first full data set available end of September. ✓ Refine the EH Hub processes and procedures to ensure alignment with MASH processes and improvement work ✓ 353 new EH Hub involvements have been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feedback from colleagues and partners to be reflected within the EH Hub Quality Assurance Framework, ahead of final approval ➤ Ongoing recruitment activity for Early Help permanent posts to all roles ➤ Publish the revised Early Help record and process documentation & guidance following the work done with partners in EH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children, young people and families receive the right help at the right time ➤ Fewer children and young people require statutory interventions ➤ Fewer children and young people enter care ➤ Reduced demand on the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

<p>opened, worked and 246 closed (end July 2018). 220 new EH Hub Involvements in July with 208 screened within 2 working days, and 138 in August with 135 screened within 2 working days</p> <p>✓ Embedded processes for children's mental health triage and reduced waiting times</p>	<p>implementation group.</p> <p>➤ Develop and publish the Early Help Offer for Swindon</p>	
--	--	--

3.7.5 Quality of Practice Strategic Pillar – This priority is led by Judith Ramsden, Interim Assistant Director (AD) / Head of Social Work for Children. The aims of this 'pillar' are to: improve the consistency, timeliness and quality of decision making; improve management oversight; ensure our processes, practice and standards are fit for purpose, relationship-based, outcomes-focused and consistently applied across the Service; refresh and embed a quality assurance and learning framework; improve the Social Care pathways for children and young people; ensure we have confident and competent Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs and ensure resources are effectively and efficiently configured across the service. The immediate focus has been to improve the effectiveness of the front door services. A summary of progress to date is provided below and more detail information is provided in paragraphs 3.13 and 3.14 of this report.

Progress	Current priorities	Impact/Outcome
<p>✓ Quality Assurance Framework redesigned and launched</p> <p>✓ Practice Framework co-produced and launched.</p> <p>✓ Workforce training and development plan for Social Workers developed. Mandatory training will be rolled out between September 2018 and March 2019.</p> <p>✓ Social work team structure redesigned and</p>	<p>➤ Embed the improvements in the front door services</p> <p>➤ Develop a plan to improve the effectiveness of the work across Social Care and the Children's legal team</p> <p>➤ Implement redesigned social work teams, following consultation (mid Oct)</p> <p>➤ Launch refreshed policies, practice</p>	<p>➤ Services at the front door are effective and safeguard children</p> <p>➤ Reduced drift and delay and improve permanency planning for children</p> <p>➤ Consistent understanding and identification of risk, with children receiving a proportionate response</p> <p>➤ Consistent application of response, support and</p>

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

45 day consultation undertaken.	<p>examples of 'what good looks like' and Practice Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Streamline the Quality Assurance Performance Improvement Board processes- to support effective oversight and enable front line managers to focus on practice leadership ➤ Commission 'Safer Families' for Children and expand the Family Group Conferencing (FGC) model and embed it within the Social care pathway. ➤ Complete the Child Protection Plan (CPP) project with Child Protection Chairs and review impact in 3 months. 	<p>intervention for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A stable, consistent and confident workforce
---------------------------------	--	---

3.7.6 Improve the outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers Strategic Pillar - This priority is led by David Haley, Corporate Director Children's Services and Judith Ramsden, Interim Assistant Director (AD) / Head of Children Social Work, The aims of this 'pillar' are to: increase the choice of placement options to meet the individual needs of our children; develop and maintain a strong pool of local foster carers who are fully supported to care for our children; improve the stability of placements for our children; and improve the outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers. A summary of progress to date is provided below and more detail information is provided in paragraphs 3.15 to 3.18 of this report.

Progress	Current priorities	Impact/Outcome
✓ New governance structure proposed to improve strategic oversight and management of services to support CLA and Care Leavers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To implement the Sufficiency Strategy and commission more short and long-term placements ➤ Ensure Placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children in Care experience stable, secure and local care ➤ Children benefit from a good flow between

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Placement panel and admission to care panel reviewed and changes implemented to improve governance, decision-making, outcomes for the child and value for money. ✓ Most costly placements are being reviewed as a priority programme. Alternative provision is sought where identified it is appropriate to meet the needs of the children. ✓ Complex Needs Panel now reviewing joint-funded placements (Health, Education and Social Care) on a monthly basis. ✓ New strategic framework and action plan to strengthen the Council's Corporate Parent Function. 	<p>Team is fully resourced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Additional accommodation to be identified within Swindon for CLA , with options to commission the care element ➤ Improve the fostering Team offer (allowance, support model and SSW offer) 	<p>placements (no unregulated carers, no gaps between placements)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased range of placement options available for young people. ➤ Foster carers feel more supported, capable and confident. ➤ More children are placed within the local area.
---	---	--

Progress against the Service's top five improvement priorities

3.8 The following priority areas were identified by the service for focussed improvement:

Improvement Area	Performance
Child Protection Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection visits have improved considerably with 371 out of 407 (91.15%) for those children on a plan during August in receipt of at least 2 visits. This is an improvement from 67% (226 out of 338) in April 18. Exception reporting is undertaken by all team managers in relation to children not receiving 2 visits and immediate action taken with social workers to address. • The timeliness of child protection reviews is good with 98% taking place on time.
Children in Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% (772 out of 1159 children in need in community teams and Disabled Children's Team (DCT), have up to date assessments. This is an improvement from 57.6% (548 out of 951) in April 18.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits on time continue to improve, albeit slowly, now at 52.16% (580 out of 1112 children in need who have been in need for 4 weeks or more at the end of August), up from 45.4% (421 out of 927) at the end of April 18. • The percentage of children in need with up to date plans at the end of August 2018 was 40.77%, relating to 349 out of 856 children in need in community teams who have been open for 3 months or more, at the end of August 18. • 39.14% (335 out of 856 children in need) had their reviews completed on time as at end of August 2018. This indicator measures the number of children in need in community teams who have been in receipt of services over 3 months as at the end of the month, who have received a review in the last 91 days. The review has to be signed off by a manager to be included in these figures as completed
Chronologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent audits still finding that few case files have an up to date analytical chronology. The new case management system will enable more automated reporting of this measure and assist with routine compliance monitoring
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60.93% (223 out of 366) of our Children Looked After have had an assessment updated within the last 12 months. Performance for this measure has remained fairly static since March 18. • 78.11% (339 out of 434) of children on a child protection plans have an up to date assessment within the last 12 months, (a slight increase from April 18 where 76% (269 out of 354) was reported, but lower than July when 82.7% (330 out of 399) was achieved. • A number of initiatives are underway to support improvements to ensure assessments are effective and timely. These include: conference chairs routinely checking up to date assessments are included in the Child Protection Plan; the development of standards and tools for staff to demonstrate what a good assessment looks like; rolling out risk assessment training for all managers and social workers over the next 3 months; and undertaking monthly supervision for children subject to child protection.
Pathway Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% (126 out of 170) of Care Leavers have an up to date pathway plan, this is an improvement from 53% (87 out of 163) in April 18. 38.6% (34 out of 88) of children looked after between 16-18 years old have a pathway plan in place and this is being addressed as a priority. • To support improvement a dedicated Children in Care Team is being established. This will provide a more focussed resource to support this cohort of children.
Supervision policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75.8% (994 out of 1312) for 4 locality teams & Disabled

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

compliance	Children's Team. Supervision for child protection cases was higher with 82.6% (323 out of 391 cases), of children on a plan for 3 months or more receiving timely supervision.
------------	--

Early Help (pillar 5)

- 3.9 In June 2018, the route to Early Help was strengthened and aligned to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), through the implementation of the Early Help Hub. The Hub directs those cases not reaching statutory threshold to early intervention provision. The Hub also provides support to agencies in undertaking Early Help assessment to complete timely and appropriate Early Help Records and Plans (EHRPs). The majority of Early Help Records and Plans and provided by schools.
- 3.10 Work is also underway to further develop our use of Family Group Conferencing (FGC) to better engage with families at the earliest opportunity. The aim is to build resilience and prevent problems escalating so that children are supported to remain living safely within their families.
- 3.11 Children and their families are effectively being identified when eligible for the Troubled Families programme and allocated a lead professional. A focus on improving outcomes and led to an increase in claims which brings in additional money for the authority. As at June 2018, we had successfully helped 522 families (97.5% of the quarter 1 target). These results place Swindon second in the South West region's performance table for payment by results. A further 87 claims are in the pipeline.
- 3.12 Butterflies Family Centre (one of the original Swindon Children's Centres) has recently been commissioned to provide targeted support and outreach services across Swindon (previous remit was restricted to SN25). Their aim is to offer support at the earliest possible identification of a need to prevent escalation to more intrusive and costly statutory services. Butterflies continues to create innovative early intervention programmes to help build resilience and prevent families reaching crisis The centre has published an extended menu of services for the coming months to support Swindon's Early Help Offer. There is a new course for families experiencing Domestic Abuse where the victim and the children directly affected are supported separately initially then brought together to re-build attachment and role model strategies to reduce parental conflict in the home. There are also stay and play groups at venues across Swindon to tackle social isolation and encourage vulnerable families to access other support services when appropriate.

Quality of Practice (Pillar 4)

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

- 3.13 Since June 2018, work has taken place to co-produce a new Practice and Procedure Framework for Swindon. Workshops were held over the summer with staff to co-produce what 'good' social work practice looks like. Practice Champions have been identified across the workforce, key policies and procedures have been and continue to be refreshed, and mentors are in place to support outcome and relationship focussed practice. Outcome-focussed analysis and planning tools/ prompts have been adopted across the MASH and the Assessment and Child Protection (ACP) Teams with worked case examples. A core training programme is being rolled out for Social Work staff from September 2018 to March 2019. Mandatory training for social workers and managers covers Risk Assessment, Outcome & Relationship Focussed Practice, Permanency Planning and Supervisory Training.
- 3.14 The profile of tackling Child Exploitation (CE) in Swindon remains high. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) receives regular updates on progress. A successful campaign 'Report it don't ignore it' launched in July 2018 to raise awareness of CSE and CCE and encourage reporting of any safeguarding proved successful. A higher than average engagement rate and a reach was achieved on Facebook of 33k in August 2018. The council webpage has had 2,768 views since the campaign. Training continues to be delivered to targeted groups. Sessions have included Young People's Supportive Housing, Foster Carers, Head Teachers and School safeguarding leads.
- 3.15 Qualitative audits have set out the areas where direct work with young people can improve and this is being addressed. Work across the partnership has started to think through how practice can be more responsive to adolescents who are at risk, and how we can work together better to address the contextual safeguarding issues.

Improve the outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers (Pillar 6)

- 3.16 Swindon's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020 has recently been refreshed along with the CLA and Care Leavers Strategy and adopted by the Corporate Parenting Board in September 2018. The Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy outlines how we will ensure there are sufficient placements to meet the needs of those children and young people in Swindon for whom it is in their best interest to become looked after. Securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and prevention services to support children in their families as well as better services for children if they do become looked after.
- 3.17 The strategy takes into account the ambition to improve preventative and early help services, increase the number of children for whom permanency is secured and ensure children are matched to the right placement to meet their needs. It has been informed by a high level analysis of need of children and young people already in care. The strategy details our key developments to address the volume and type of placement demands. It is recognised that, as an organisation,

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

we need to be more agile in responding to these challenges going forward. We need to improve our market engagement and management, develop more effective provider relationships and implement robust contracting and quality assurance processes if we are to be able to meet the needs of our children locally. The CLA and Care Leavers strategy sets out a range of actions designed to improve services and outcomes for children.

- 3.18 The Care Leaver 'Local Offer', which has been co-produced with service users, went live at the end of September 2018 and is available on Swindon's website.
- 3.19 The Leaving Care Team has been re-structured and the remit broadened to support all looked after children and care leavers aged 16 to 25 years. A business case is being developed to extend the service to provide 24 hour support every day. Property is being sought to provide a base for a Care Leavers Hub. From April 2018, Care Leavers were exempt from paying council tax. The Care Leavers Participation Group has requested for this benefit to be extended to 25 years and include young people who have been accommodated Out of Borough. This proposal will be worked through and presented to the Corporate Parenting Board for consideration in the Autumn 2018.
- 3.20 We are allocating Personal Advisers to Care Leavers within agreed timescales with performance currently at 100%. As at August 2018, 74% of Care Leavers had up to date pathway plans, an improvement from 53% in April 2018. The number of Care Leavers in education, employment or training (EET) remains above the National Average (50%) and statistical neighbour (48%) with performance as at August 2018 being 57.89%. As at August 2018, our local measure shows 90% (151) of Care Leavers live in suitable accommodation. This is better than our statistical neighbour (82.7%) and England overall (84%).

School Place Planning

- 3.21 By 2026, the 10 to 15 years age group is projected to increase by 2,300, and 16-17 year old age group by 1,000. The New Eastern Villages development will bring an additional 8-10K homes to East Swindon so we have reviewed the Pupil Product Ratio. Since March 2014, the Council committed to seek Free School applications for new provision. There has been an active campaign to engage academy sponsors and as a result Swindon has a fifth of all the Free Schools in the programme for the South West Region. This programme will ultimately provide approximately £78m of new primary, secondary and special school provision for the Borough through external investment into Swindon. A number of new schools are being progressed and seven new schools have been approved. The first new school opened in September 2018. (Great Western Academy -North Swindon). A recent Free School wave opened in July 2018 and Swindon has been actively promoting the need for new provision. It is likely that 14 applications will be submitted by academy sponsors for 5 new primary schools

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

School Admissions

- 3.22 We continue to see good performance for School Admissions with 93% of secondary school parents receiving their first school preference, and 99% of parents receiving one of their top three secondary school preferences. 92% of primary school parents received their first preference school and 99% received one of their top three primary school preferences. There continues to be large numbers of in-year school transfers with over 2500 being processed between September 2017 and February 2018. The introduction of a new co-ordinated admissions system and online application process has made the allocation process more efficient and reduced applicant waiting time.

Nursery Provision and Take up of eligible funded early education

- 3.23 Following the 2018 census, the uptake for 2-year-old early education by Swindon families who are economically disadvantaged was 102% (the excess of 100% is due to population movement and eligible families being picked up locally before being included in the national targets set by Department of Work & Pensions). The annual trends show greater uptake each year with a 23% uptake in 2018 which ranks Swindon ninth in the country.
- 3.24 As of September 2018, there are 28 primary schools delivering early years education across Swindon. A further two primary schools plan to lower their age ranges and open nursery classes from January 2019. There are plans to consult to lower the age range of a further two schools from September 2019.
- 3.25 The value of early education is now universally accepted, and 2-year-old early education in particular is identified as making an important contribution towards greater social mobility. To encourage uptake amongst the hard to reach groups in the community we are releasing a video in Autumn 2018 to provide more information and advice for parents on the availability and benefits of early education. The film has been translated into Konkani – the second most widely spoken language in Swindon after English.

School Ofsted Inspections

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

- 3.26 The latest ratings for Ofsted Inspection outcomes for Swindon school are shown below (17/18)

Provision	Total No. of schools	Out-standing	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	% schools good or better
Primary	62	9	42	10	1	82%
Secondary	12	0	6	3	3	50%
PRU	1		1			100%
Special	6	1	3	1	1	67%

Primary School Attainment

- 3.27 In 2017, primary outcomes improved significantly with outcomes at Key Stage 2 (11 year olds) at the expected level and Swindon had the most improved results in the country. Unvalidated results for 2018 indicate we are slightly below the national average overall for attainment. Pupil progress has improved and is in line with the national average for reading, just above the national average in writing, and below in mathematics (although improved on 2017 results). Phonics outcomes improved by 1% in 2018 and are just below the national average in Year 1 (6 year olds) but in line with the national average in Year 2 (7 year olds). In Key Stage 1 assessments (7 year olds), outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with or above the national average in all subjects and are the highest they have been for many years. Pupils are now assessed as being at the expected level or having a high score/working at greater depth. The focus for primary schools this year, as discussed with Head teachers and the Swindon Challenge Board, is to improve outcomes with a focus on mathematics. There is also a considerable gap between high attaining and lower attaining schools.

Secondary School Attainment

- 3.28 The Swindon Challenge Board, funded by SBC, continues to bring partners together to support a range of initiatives to raise standards in education across both primary and secondary schools. For example, all secondary schools have received funding to become members of the national secondary school improvement organisation PIXL (Partners in excellence). There have been a number of successful initiatives promoting school to school collaboration which have had an impact on improving standards in those schools that fully engaged with the programmes. The Swindon Challenge Board is supporting the development of the 'Swindon Learning Town'. One of the key aims of the Learning Town idea is to engage the whole community in raising the profile of education in Swindon to raise aspirations. This includes a series of Borough wide

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

events with a focus on reading, science and technology and mathematics. This links to the Swindon National Literacy Trust Hub sponsored by WH Smiths.

- 3.29 We continue to have concerns about secondary education outcomes overall, although there has been an improvement in the number of schools judged good or outstanding. School reported data for 2018 GCSEs is improved on 2017. The headline data used for measuring secondary school performance is published in the DfE publication "Secondary Accountability Measures" (November 2017). These include Attainment 8 and Progress 8 which measure performance in the best 8 subjects a pupil takes at GCSE with double weightings available for English and mathematics. In addition, there are measures for the proportion of pupils who enter the English Baccalaureate (EBacc - English, mathematics, science, a humanities subject and a foreign language) and since 2018, the EBacc headline measure is the average points score (APS) measure of the average grade achieved by pupils in EBacc subjects. The final headline measure is for pupil destinations into education and employment.
- 3.30 In 2017, Swindon's Attainment 8 outcome was 42.9 against a national average of 46.4 which ranked Swindon at 137 (out of 152) local authorities. In 2018, this has improved in school reported data but provisional national data is not currently available. In 2017, Progress 8 outcomes were at minus 0.26 (against a target of 0) which ranked Swindon at 136th against other local authorities. For 2018, this has now improved to minus 0.12 (unvalidated data) which is much improved on the previous year.
- 3.31 The proportion of pupils taking the EBacc dropped nationally from 40% to 38% last year, and in Swindon only 30% of pupils took the range of academic qualifications. 13% of Swindon pupils achieved the EBacc (with a strong pass in English and mathematics) against 21% nationally. These figures are a cause for concern and improving secondary outcomes is a major focus for the Swindon Challenge initiative.
- 3.32 Post 16 education is provided by Sixth Forms and two FE colleges. In 2017 there was an overall decline in A-level performance although all providers of post 16 education are graded by Ofsted as good or outstanding (including Swindon's two FE colleges). The average points score per A-level entry (APS) was 25.65 against a national average of 31.13 which ranks Swindon at 146th in the country against other local authorities. Thirty-six percent of young people completing A level or equivalent qualifications move on to higher education (one of the lowest proportions in the country) against a national average of 51%. Many pupils with higher grades at GCSE attend other colleges outside Swindon such as Cirencester Sixth Form College (two thirds of pupils at this college are from Swindon). In 2018, school/college reported outcomes show overall improvements in students attaining higher grades, but these are still likely to be below the national average. We have commissioned a comprehensive needs assessment and developed a draft Higher Education Strategy in partnership with the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The strategy implementation plan is

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

currently being developed and includes key activity to raise aspirations and progression. The Council is also working with key stakeholders to bid for an Institute of Technology to improve progression to higher level technical qualifications.

School Exclusions

- 3.33 In 2017/18, there has been an 18% reduction in Secondary School exclusions (although these are still high) whilst primary exclusions remain at the same level as 2017. The number of permanent exclusions (PEX) is a concern. An Alternative Provision Working Group is reviewing Borough practice and protocols to improve practice in agreement with schools. There are plans to expand primary provision in 2018/19 to cater particularly for younger PEX pupils whilst also allowing a more flexible approach for pupils at risk of exclusion.
- 3.34 Fixed term exclusions in primary schools in 2017/18 have reduced by 18% compared with the previous year. Secondary fixed term exclusions have risen. Although more pupils are being excluded, the length of exclusion has reduced.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

- 3.35 The percentage of pupils in Swindon schools with a Statement of Special Educational Need or Education Health and Care plan (EHCP) remain higher than the average for both our comparator group and England overall. However, we have maintained 3.7% (1262 of 34,142 pupils) whereas nationally the figure has increased from 2.8% to 2.9%. In 2017/18, there has been a national increase from 11.6% to 11.7% for pupils with SEN support, whereas in Swindon we have a decline from 13.3% (4,498 of 33,761 pupils) to 13.0% (4,451 of 34,142 pupils).
- 3.36 Positive steps have led to significant improvements in reducing the time that children and parents have to wait for their statutory assessment to be completed. In 2018, Swindon maintains an above average performance of 93.3% (224) of EHC plans issued within 20 weeks (excluding exception cases) compared to the national figure of 69.4% (2017). In contrast, due principally to the high demand for new statutory assessment (49.2/10,000 compared to national 38.7) and high levels of staff sickness, it has not been possible to transfer all the Statements of SEN to EHCPs by the Government target of end of March 2018. Forty-six statements remain outstanding of which 39 should be finalised by October 2018.
- 3.37 The percentage of school age population with SEND in out of Borough Placements as at October 2018 is 3.5% (55) compared to the national figure of 5.9% (as at January 2018). The percentage placed in maintained and academy special schools has reduced in Swindon (from 38.3% Jan 2017 to 34.8% Jan 18) and is below the national figures of 36.1% (as at January 2018). The percentage placed in specialist resource provision has increased from 8.6% in 2017 to 10.1% in 2018. This is higher than the national average of 5.1%. However the total percentage of pupils attending specialist provision is 48.4% and aligns with the

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

national and south west average of 46.1%. Placement of pupils with EHCPs in PRUs is 0.4%, this is below the national average of 0.7%.

- 3.38 In 2018, the primary need recorded nationally for children with EHCPs is autism at 28.2%, this is similar to the picture locally at 30.4% (380 of 1250 children with EHCPs in Swindon). For children within the SEN Support cohort, moderate learning difficulties is the highest primary need both nationally (24%) and locally (21.6%, 942 children out of 4368). Social, emotional and mental health is the second highest category of need locally at 20.5% (895 children out of 4368) which is higher than the national figure of 17.5%.
- 3.39 The demand relating to referrals and diagnosis for autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) is a challenge and waiting times remain high. The Managing Challenging Behaviours Courses provided by Butterflies Family Centre is supporting the reduction in waiting times (see paragraph 3.12)
- 3.40 There were no permanent exclusions in special schools for a number of years, and only one in 2017/18. The number of fixed term exclusions (FTE) in 2017/18 was 150 (152 in 2016/17, 306 in 2015/16) involving 51 pupils (51 in 2016/17, 75 in 2015/16). The Reducing Exclusions Project, the move of St Luke's to an Academy Trust, and the potential impact of the Mental Health Trailblazer bid (if successful) will support further reductions in exclusions. The Parent-Carer Forum raised concerns around exclusion in the broader sense around part-time time-tables and internal exclusion practice. SENCo champions have followed this up with good practice awareness around inclusion for school trips.
- 3.41 Eighty two percent (1029 of 1250 children) of pupils with EHCPs and 80.9% (3534 of 4368 children) pupils with SEN Support attend good or outstanding schools. The pattern of improvement in educational attainment reflects that for non-SEN pupils, however, overall the attainment of pupils with SEND continues to be much lower than their non-SEN peers. Work continues to ensure schools are focussed on improving pupil progress for SEN pupils. A detailed report for the attainment of all pupils including those with SEN will be reported to Cabinet in January 2019.
- 3.42 The relatively new Parent Carer Forum - Swindon SEND Families Voice (who represent the views of parents/carers who have children with SEND) is actively supporting and enabling opportunities for joint working and co-production. Forum representatives have attended in excess of 20 strategic meetings between March and July 2018. The forum recently accepted the nomination as vice chair for the SEND Board sub-group. The forum has also successfully increased social media presence from 340 followers to over 500. Our young people's forum (Thought Tank) are active in a number of areas including development of a top tips for listening video. Feedback from a local survey to gather the views of users of our Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) was very positive. 90% (34) of respondents reported they were either very satisfied (28) or satisfied (6) with the service.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

4. Alternative Options

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

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.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 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)

- 5.3 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

- 5.4 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

- 5.5 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 Children's Strategic Leadership Team and Councillor Mary Martin
- 6.2 The Section 151 Officer and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd October 2018

8. Appendices

8.1 Glossary