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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Cabinet**

**Date: Tuesday, 9th January, 2018**

**Time: 2.00 pm**

**Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite**

**Contact: Colin Gamble**

**Email: colingamble@southend.gov.uk**

**A G E N D A**

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 7th November 2017**
- 4 Notice of Motion - Caged Peafowl**  
Notice of Motion attached.
- 5 Notice of Motion - UBER Licensing**  
Notice of Motion attached.
- 6 Notice of Motion - Traveller Community**  
Notice of Motion attached.
- 7 Notice of Motion - The Effects of Development in Leigh-on-Sea**  
Notice of motion attached.
- 8 Notice of Motion - Scrap the Pay Cap**  
Notice of Motion attached.
- 9 Monthly Performance Report**  
To follow
- 10 Housing Strategy**  
Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People) attached
- 11 Annual Report on Safeguarding Children and Adults 2016-17**  
Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People) attached
- 12 Journey of the Child Bi-Annual Report and Updated Statements of Purpose for Adoption & Fostering**  
Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People) attached
- 13 Passenger Transport - Policy Changes**  
Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People) attached

**14 Passenger Transport - Operating Model and Procurement Process**  
Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People) attached

**15 Debt Management - Position at 30th November 2017**  
Report of Chief Executive attached

**16 Council Procedure Rule 46**  
Report attached

**17 Exclusion of the Public**

To agree that, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**18 Council Procedure Rule 46 - Confidential Sheet**  
Report attached

# **SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Meeting of Cabinet**

**Date: Tuesday, 7th November, 2017**

**Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite**

**Present:** Councillor J Lamb (Chair)  
Councillors A Holland (Vice-Chair), T Byford, J Courtenay, T Cox,  
M Flewitt, A Moring and L Salter

**In Attendance:** Councillors N Folkard, C Mulroney and R Woodley  
A Griffin, J K Williams, S Leftley, A Lewis, J Chesterton, J Ruffle,  
C Gamble, I Ambrose, E Cooney, S Houlden, A Keating, J Lansley,  
T MacGregor, J O'Loughlin, C Robinson and V Smith

**Start/End Time:** 2.00 p.m. - 2.55 p.m.

### **435 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence at this meeting.

### **436 Declarations of Interest**

The following Members declared interests as indicated:

(a) Councillor Flewitt – Agenda Item 8 (Alternative Delivery Models – Governance Arrangements) – Non-pecuniary interest – friends and family are tenants of South Essex Homes Ltd;

(b) Councillor Flewitt – Agenda Item 21 (Airport Business Park) – Non-pecuniary interest – lives in the vicinity of London Southend Airport;

(c) Councillor Holland – Agenda Item 13 (Transport Review – Policy) and Agenda Item 14 (Transport Review – Delivery Models) – Non-pecuniary interest – president of Southend Stroke Club which uses the Council's passenger transport services;

(d) Councillor Salter – Agenda Item 4 (Reference from Council – Compulsory Licensing Scheme and Rent Controls) – Disclosable Pecuniary Interest – private landlord in the borough (withdrew).

### **437 Minutes of the Meetings held on Tuesday 19th September and Tuesday 10th October 2017**

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meetings held on Tuesday 19th September and Tuesday 10th October 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

**438 Reference from Council, Thursday 19th October 2017 - Compulsory Licensing Scheme and Rent Control**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) requesting consideration of the resolutions of Council (19<sup>th</sup> October 2017) regarding the introduction of a compulsory licensing scheme and rent controls on private sector landlords.

Resolved:

1. That the proposal to introduce a compulsory licensing scheme be referred to the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration by way of pre-Cabinet Scrutiny.

2. That the Deputy Chief Executive (People) be requested to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to ascertain the Government's view on the introduction of rent controls on private sector landlords letting properties to tenants.

Reason for Decision:

To respond to the resolutions of Council.

Other Options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function

The decision in 1 above is referred direct to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

The decision in 2 above is eligible for call in to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Flewitt

**\*Called in to:- Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

**439 Monthly Performance Report**

Resolved:

That the submitted report be noted.

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Eligible for call in to all three Scrutiny Committees.

Executive Councillor: as appropriate to the item.

**\*Referred direct to all three Scrutiny Committees**

**440 Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive presenting the annual report on compliments and complaints received throughout the Council for 2016/17, incorporating separate sections on Adult Social Care Services,

Children's Social Care and a report from the Monitoring Officer on decisions by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

Resolved:

That the Council's performance in respect of compliments, comments and complaints for 2016-17 be noted, including the summary of decisions by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

Reason for Decision

To inform Members of the comments, compliments and complaints received throughout the Council.

Other Options

None

This is an Executive Function

Executive Councillors – Courtenay, Cox, Lamb and Salter

**\*Referred direct and called-in to all three scrutiny committees**

#### **441 Information Governance and the GDPR**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on the Council's approach to information governance and management and presented the Senior Information Risk Owner's (SIRO) Annual Report 2016/17.

Resolved:

1. That the SIRO's report on Information Governance for 2016/17, be noted.
2. That the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and the publication of the Data Protection Bill along with related implications of these measures for the Council, be noted.
3. That the action being taken to prepare for the GDPR and Data Protection Bill, be noted.

Reason for decision:

To comply with the requirement for the SIRO to provide an annual report and to note the actions being taken to prepare for the impending new legislation on data protection and information management.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Eligible for call in to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring

## 442 Alternative Delivery Models - Governance Arrangements

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive presenting a range of alternative delivery vehicles that the Council controls, the current governance arrangements and proposals on potential ways forward.

Resolved:

1. That the current group structure of the Council Companies, Joint Ventures and Charitable Trusts and associated governance arrangements, be noted.
2. That a new advisory forum reporting to Cabinet be established to be called "The Shareholder Board" to provide an effective means of Council governance of the Council Companies and this shall replace the existing Member Advisory Forum (re: Trading Companies).
3. That the terms of reference of the Shareholder Board shall be added as a new section 4.6 in Schedule 2 of Part 3 to the Constitution, as set out in Appendix 3 to the submitted report, with a membership that is politically proportional (5 Conservatives, 2 Independent, 2 Labour) and that includes the following members of Cabinet:
  - The Leader
  - The Deputy Leader
  - Executive Councillor for Corporate & Community Support Services
  - One other Executive Councillor
4. That Cabinet receive an annual report on the operation of the Council's Joint Ventures and Charitable Trusts.

Reasons for decision:

To provide a common unified governance structure between the Council and Council Companies, Joint Ventures, and to ensure proper exercise of its role as trustee of its Charitable Trusts.

Other options:

To retain the current ad-hoc arrangements by which the Council exercises its shareholder role or to establish other arrangements.

Note: This is a Council Function

Eligible for call in to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring

**\*Called-in to: Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

## 443 Capital Monitoring for 2017/18 and Revised Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2020/21

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive setting out the capital expenditure as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and recommending in-year amendments to the approved Capital Programme for 2017/18 to 2020/21.

Recommended:

1. That the actual capital expenditure position as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 of £27.790 million as shown in Section 4 and Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be noted.
2. That the financial position of the Capital Programme as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017, as set out in Section 5 of the report, be noted.
3. That the proposed changes to the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 6 to the report, be approved.
4. That the revised Capital Programme for 2017/18 to 2020/21 resulting from these changes, as set out in Appendix 7 to the report, be approved.

Reason for decision:

To approve proposed changes to the Capital Programme.

Other options:

The proposed Capital Programme is made up from a number of individual projects, any of which can be agreed or rejected independently of the other projects.

Note:-This is a Council Function

This item is eligible for call in to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor:- Lamb

**\*Called-in to:- Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

#### **444 Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2017/18**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive detailing the treasury management activity for both quarter two and the period from April to September 2017.

Recommended:

1. That the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report for 2017/18, be approved.
2. That the revisions to the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2017/18 and prior years as set out in Section 14 and in Appendix 3 of the submitted report, be approved.
3. That these revisions to the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy are applied retrospectively to 2016/17 and prior years as appropriate.
4. That it be noted that treasury management activities were carried out in accordance with the CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector during the period from April to September 2017.

5. That it be noted that the loan and investment portfolios were actively managed to minimise cost and maximise interest earned, whilst maintaining a low level of risk.
6. That it be noted that an average of £46.9m of investments were managed in-house. These earned £0.099m of interest during this six month period at an average rate of 0.42%. This is 0.31% over the average 7 day LIBID (London Interbank Bid Rate) and 0.17% over the average bank base rate.
7. That it be noted that an average of £5.0m was managed by an enhanced cash fund manager. This earned £0.012m during the six month period at an average rate of 0.48%.
8. That it be noted that an average of £15.2m was managed by two short dated bond fund managers. This earned £0.078m during the six month period from a combination of an increase in the value of the units and income distribution, giving a combined return of 1.02%.
9. That it be noted that an average of £16.1m was managed by two property fund managers. This increased in value by £0.845m during this six month period from a combination of an increase in the value of the units and by income distribution, giving a combined return of 10.47%.
10. That it be noted that the level of borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) (excluding debt relating to services transferred from Essex County Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998) remained at the same level of £227.8m (Housing Revenue Account (HRA); £77.0m, General Fund: £150.8m) during the period from April to September 2017.
11. That it be noted that the level of financing for 'invest to save' schemes increased from £7.90m to £8.82m during the period April to September 2017.

#### Reasons for Decision:

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management recommends that Local Authorities should submit reports regularly. The Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2017/18 sets out that reports would be submitted to Cabinet quarterly on the activities of the treasury management operation.

#### Other Options:

There are many options available for the operation of the Treasury Management function, with varying degrees of risk associated with them. The Treasury Management Policy aims to effectively control risk to within a prudent level, whilst providing optimum performance consistent with that level of risk.

Note: This is a Council Function.

Eligible for call in to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Moring

## **445 Corporate Debt Management Policy**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive proposing the adoption of the revised "Debt Collection and Recovery Policy."



Resolved:

That the revised “Debt Collection and Recovery Policy” set out at appendix A to the submitted report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision:

To adopt the revised policy which will ensure consistent level of service and collection across a range of public services.

Other Options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Eligible for call in to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring

**\*Called-in to:- Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

#### **446 Discretionary Relief Policy**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive setting out the required changes to the current Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy to reflect the new rate reductions announced by the Chancellor in the 2016 Autumn Statement and 2017 Spring Budget.

Resolved:

1. That the award of Public House Relief of up to £1,000 to qualifying businesses in occupation of Public Houses which have a rateable value of £100,000 or less in accordance with Discretionary Rate Relief powers for the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 only, subject to State Aid limits, be approved.

2. That it be noted that the businesses to qualify for the relief must be a ‘Public House’ as detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the submitted report.

3. That it be noted that where a ratepayer demonstrates their entitlement to the Public House Relief, the Revenues Manager has the authority to award the relief.

4. That the award of Local Newspaper Relief of up to £1,500 for office space occupied by local newspapers up to a maximum of one discount per local newspaper title and per hereditament, for the financial years 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, subject to State Aid limits, be approved.

5. That it be noted that where a ratepayer demonstrates their entitlement to the Local Newspaper Relief, the Revenues Manager has the authority to award the relief.

6. That the award of Supporting Small Business Relief (SSBR) to businesses who as a result of the change in their rateable value at the 2017 revaluation lost some or all of their small business relief, in accordance with guidance given by the Department for Communities and Local Government for the financial years 1<sup>st</sup>

April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, subject to State Aid limits, be approved.

7. That the scheme and amount of Discretionary Business Rate Relief, in accordance with Section 7 and Appendix G of the revised policy, subject to State Aid limits, be approved.

8. That it be noted that the Council, through the National Non-Domestic Rate return process, will seek full reimbursement of the cost of this relief from Central Government.

9. That the amended Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy set out at Appendix A to the submitted report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision:

To grant relief to qualifying ratepayers and amend the current business rates discretionary relief policy to enable the granting of the new relief benefits in accordance with Central Government expectations.

Other Options:

The Council could choose not to grant the relief. However, not awarding the relief would mean the funding being returned to Government.

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Eligible for call in to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring

**\*Called-in to:- Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

#### **447 Transport Review (Policy)**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) setting out proposed changes to policies which were recommended as part of the transport review.

Resolved:

1. That the following proposed policies, as per the approach identified in paragraph 3.1 of the submitted report, be adopted:

(a) Home to School Transport for Pre and Post-16 Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018:

The Special Educational Needs Travel Assistance Policy (set out in Appendix A of the report) be implemented as set out in paragraphs 3.1.2 a) and 3.1.2 b) of the report. The provision of 'travel assistance' to be focussed on the promotion of independence and personalisation. As pupils adopt more independent alternative modes of transport then routes will be optimised.

(b) Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Centres and Activities, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018:

The Adult Social Care travel assistance policy (set out in Appendix B to the report) be implemented as set out in paragraph 3.1.2 c) of the report. The focus on maximising independence will mean that travel assistance will only be provided by the Council once all alternative transport options have been considered.

Where transport is provided by the Council, the contribution from the user be increased to the new charge of £4 per day for a return trip and £5 per day where multiple trips are applicable.

(c) Looked After Children, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018:

The looked after children and young people travel assistance policy (set out in Appendix C to the report) be implemented as set out in paragraph 3.1.2 d) of the report.

(d) Dial-a-Ride, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018:

The Dial-a-Ride policy (set out in Appendix D to the report) be implemented as set out in paragraph 3.1.2 e) of the report.

Reasons for Decision:

(a) Home to School (SEND) transport – to approve some changes to current policy to enable consistency and fairness in decisions regarding eligibility.

(b) Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Centres and Activities – To establish a policy that demonstrates how the Council will support individuals by providing travel assistance to access social care activities in a consistent and equitable way.

(c) Looked After Children – To establish policy to enable fairness in decisions about eligibility.

(d) Dial-a-Ride – To establish policy to enable fairness in decisions about eligibility.

Other Options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call in to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillors: Salter, Moring and Courtenay.

**\*Called-in to:- Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

#### **448 Transport Review (Delivery Models)**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) setting out the potential operating models for the delivery of passenger transport services and sought approval to progress the preferred option to procurement stage to identify a preferred partner.

Resolved:

1. That the following key elements to enable procurement activities to commence around this passenger transport review, in parallel with completing the policy consultation with users, be approved:

(a) Procure a partner to develop a 'For Profit' JV partnership as the recommended operating model for providing all its passenger transport services;

(b) Use a full procurement procedure (either competitive dialogue or open procedure) to procure a partner to develop a 'For Profit' JV partnership as opposed to contracting directly with a local authority owned company under Regulation 12 (the old teckal arrangements);

(c) Implement the new service from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019 based on the time table set out in paragraph 6.2 of the submitted report;

(d) Grant a tender exemption to extend existing contracts, based on the understanding that market conditions and potential legislative changes have hindered the Council's ability to procure a partner to develop other types of JV partnership.

2. That a further report be presented to Cabinet in January 2018 that will provide details of the confirmed procurement procedure to procure a partner to develop the JV partnership.

Reasons for Decision:

It is critical that the Council has an agreed, robust and transparent position on each of the matters presented in the report in order to shape the procurement approach and ensure that the ambitions for passenger transport are delivered through the partnership. Not reaching a decision on any of these matters risks delaying the procurement process.

Other Options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call in to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring

**\*Called-in to:- Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

#### **449 Careline Consultation**

This item was withdrawn.

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Eligible for call in to People Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillors: Salter

#### 450 Mid-Year Adoption Report & RAA Update

The Cabinet considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (People) on the activities of the Southend Adoption Service between April and September 2017.

On consideration of the report, the Chairman referred to the excellent work undertaken by the Adoption Team and conveyed his thanks to the staff concerned.

Resolved:

That the submitted report be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

To note the activities of the Southend Adoption Service in the first six months of 2017/18.

Other Options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to People Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Courtenay

**\*Called-in to:- People Scrutiny Committee**

#### 451 Corporate Parenting Annual Report

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) presenting the annual report on the work of the Corporate Parenting Group (CPG) regarding the progress and outcomes of children who are looked after by the Council.

In referring to the report, the Chairman expressed his appreciation to the staff concerned for their contribution towards the achievement of the positive outcomes for children.

Resolved:

1. That the annual report set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted.
2. That the overarching priorities set for 2017/18 set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
3. That the Corporate Parenting Strategy for Looked After Children 2017/18 set out at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision:

None.

Other Options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to People Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Courtenay  
**\*Called-in to:- People Scrutiny Committee**

**452 Local Account**

The Cabinet considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (People) presenting the Local Account of Adult Social Care services in 2016-17, including the priorities and plans for 2017-18.

Resolved:

That the Local Account of Adult Social Care services in 2016-17 be noted as the Council's self-assessment for these services.

Reasons for Decision:

The publication of the Local Account of Adult Social Care Services for 2016-17 ensures the continuity of information for the public about the performance of this service.

Other Options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function.  
Eligible for call in to People Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Salter  
**\*Called-in to:- People Scrutiny Committee**

**453 Annual Report of Implementation of SEN Strategy**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) setting out the progress of the first year (financial year April 2016-March 2017) of the implementation plan of the strategy for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

Resolved:

1. That the progress and areas that require further improvement as indicated in the submitted report for the first year of "Working together to improve outcomes", be noted.
2. That a full review of the provision for SEND area and refresh of the current strategy, with a view to presenting the updated version to Cabinet by the end of the current financial year, be approved.

Reasons for Decision:

To undertake a review of the SEND provision and refresh the strategy.

Other Options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to People Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Courtenay  
**\*Called-in to:- People Scrutiny Committee**

#### **454 Success for All Annual Report**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which presented the draft Success for All Children Group's Annual Report for April 2016 – March 2017.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

To note the Annual Report.

Other Options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to People Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Courtenay

#### **455 Airport Business Park**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) providing an update on the progress of the Airport Business Park Southend (ABPS) development, specifically in relation to the phase 2 Local Growth Fund (LGF) allocation.

Resolved:

That the progress of the development of the Airport Business Park Southend, be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

To note the positive progress made in delivering the ABPS project and the significant opportunity it presents to increase economic growth, employment and skills.

Other Options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to Place Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillors: Lamb, Holland and Moring.

**456 Low Carbon Strategy**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) presenting the updated annual report on the Council's Low Carbon Energy and Sustainability Strategy 2015-2020.

Resolved:

That the Low Carbon Energy and Sustainability Strategy updated Annual Report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision:

To continue to position the Council as a leading local authority in the East of England with regard to the UK's transition to the low carbon economy. The Strategy continues to provide an excellent opportunity for the Council to make a real contribution in delivering local objectives around health and wellbeing, housing, fuel poverty, air quality, transport, education, economic development and community cohesion.

Other Options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function.  
Eligible for call in to Place Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Holland

**457 Council Procedure Rule 46**

Resolved:

That the submitted report be noted.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to the relevant Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: as appropriate for the item.

**\*Called-in to:- Place Scrutiny Committee and Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

**458 Minutes of the Conservation Working Party held Tuesday 26th September 2017**

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Conservation Working Party held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 concerning proposals to investigate the potential



designation of Hamlet Court Road (and associated streets) as a Conservation Area.

Resolved:

That the potential designation of Hamlet Court Road (and associated streets) as a Conservation Area be investigated by officers and a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Conservation Working Party.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to Place Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Flewitt  
**\*Called-in to:- Place Scrutiny Committee**

**459 Minutes of the Public Transport and Buses Working Party held Monday 23rd October 2017**

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Public Transport and Buses Working Party held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017 concerning proposals to investigate the potential for introducing a wider park and ride scheme for the Borough.

Resolved:

That it be noted that an analysis of the pilot park and ride scheme would be undertaken and the results would be taken into account in the development of a parking strategy.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to Place Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Cox

**460 Minutes of the London Southend Airport Monitoring Working Party held Tuesday 24th October 2017**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the London Southend Airport Monitoring Working Party held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017, be noted.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to Place Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Cox

**461 Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved:-

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below, on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**462 Council Procedure Rule 46 - Confidential Sheet**

Resolved:

That the submitted report be noted.

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Eligible for call in to the relevant Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: as appropriate for the item.

**\*Called-in to:- Place Scrutiny Committee and Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Council – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**NOTICE OF MOTION: Caged Peafowl Birds**

There are a number of peafowl caged at Chalkwell Park. These large birds are usually seen roaming free on large estates and zoological gardens, and I cannot recall another example where these birds are caged.

The cage at Chalkwell Park is not nearly large enough, and as the photo shows, when the peacock displays his magnificent plumage there really is barely enough room for him to do so. These birds roam large estates and parks normally; there is no room for flight at all, and these birds can fly.

Aside from the smallness of their present enclosure, this is a sparsely decorated cage that is often dirty, and certainly gives every impression of neglect. These birds are often tormented by visitors and their pets, as if them being caged gives permission to this poor behaviour.

Earlier this summer two chicks were hatched. The peahen was trying to protect them, a difficult job in a small enclosure. One was killed by its sibling. The bowls for feeding and drinking are designed for adult birds, and are too high for chicks; how were the chicks meant to feed and drink?

A resident informed the Council about the chicks, and the dead one was removed. However, since the Council were unaware up to that point that there were chicks then clearly accusations of neglect are appropriate.

This cage is the last vestige of the menagerie that once housed many animals such as bears and chimpanzees. Nowadays this would not be allowed. This is a throwback to an era when animals were not treated with respect. That peafowl are still caged is a disgrace to the town, a town that prides itself as being cultured.

**Motion to Council:**

We call upon the Council to uphold the highest standards with regards to animal rights.

To this end we want the four peafowl housed in the Chalkwell Park menagerie to be moved to somewhere more suitable.

There has been offers of new homes, and we call upon the Council to fully investigate these.

We urge the Council to expedite a move to a more humane home for the peafowl with utmost speed to end this example of animal cruelty.

*Proposed by: Cllr Julian Ware-Lane  
seconded by: Cllr Charles Willis*

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## **Council – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

### **NOTICE OF MOTION:**

#### **UBER Licensing**

Whilst this Council recognises the innovation of companies in the gig-economy like UBER, this Council, supports TFL in not re-licensing UBER's private hire license on public safety grounds. Uber have been found to have a number regulatory challenges in the administration of its business model, inadequate DBS checks, the non-reporting of a number of alleged sexual assaults and other offences committed by its drivers. It is known that drivers, who have previously had their licenses revoked by this Council, have subsequently be issued licenses by TfL to work for UBER in this town even though UBER do not have an operator's license to operate in Southend.

Even though it is a legal requirement for TFL and other regulators to be able to examine records and information held by UBER, the current 'greyball' technology used by UBER, prevents regulators from carrying out their duties.

This Council is also very concerned that a number of TFL licensed UBER drivers are currently operating around the Borough of Southend on Sea without having an operators license. When UBER drivers, licenced by TFL, are working in Southend, they do not fall under the control of Southend Enforcement Officers and are unable to look into customer complaints and are unable to monitor vehicle or driving standards. We also acknowledge that local private hire driver standards are at a higher standard than those of TfL.

This Council also calls on the Government to update Taxi and Private Hire legislation so driver standards are uniformed across the country and Enforcement Officers are able to inspect all vehicles irrespective of what borough they have been licensed in. This Council also supports the introduction of national databases so authorities can check if a driver or operator has ever been refused or had a license revoked in another borough for failing the 'fit and proper' test.

Proposed: Cllr Terry

Seconded: Cllr Cox

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## **Council – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

### **Notice of Motion: Traveller Community**

The traveller community often visits the borough, and the local authority's immediate reaction is to seek police assistance to have them moved on.

Little attempt has been made to find somewhere where the travellers can stay within the borough.

Finding travellers a place to temporarily stay would stop the problem of them pitching up in public parks and other unsuitable open spaces. This may entail, of course, dialogue with our neighbouring local authorities and residents.

We condemn all bad behaviour and law-breaking and this should be punished as appropriate. However, we should not pre-judge.

The traveller community has also been the subject of some very unsavoury comments by some councillors.

This Council therefore:

1. Condemns any language that stigmatises or labels the traveller community.
2. Condemns every instance of race hate language, or support for race hate language.
3. Should encourage greater understanding and tolerance of all minority groups.
4. Welcomes all visitors to the borough. This borough aim is increase visitor numbers, to be a bigger tourist magnet. This local authority should not discriminate at all, nor should it pre-judge the motives of any visitor.
- 5, Should attempt to find somewhere for travellers to temporarily de-camp when they visit, thus ending the sight of caravans in our parks and open spaces.

(The traveller community includes a variety of peoples who prefer a nomadic lifestyle.)

Proposed by: Councillor Ware-Lane  
Seconded by Councillor Borton

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## **Council – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

### **Notice of Motion: The effect of development on services in Leigh**

All members are aware of the rapid growth in development in Leigh, especially in flatted development. These problems are spreading in the Borough, particularly to areas close to the C2C railway stations.

Members will also be aware of the current serious issues in Leigh relating to the school catchment areas, serious parking issues and strain on other services which spreads to other areas as well.

With this Government's push for housing this is set to continue. It is accepted that more housing is needed and more affordable housing but there comes a time when we have to think whether we can cope with any more.

In particular in Leigh:-

- Parking resulting from more development and the popularity as a shopping destination.
- The growing popularity of Leigh south of London Road (i.e. including parts of West Leigh and Chalkwell) for families with children. This reflects not only the popularity of the three primary schools, but also the ease of commuting to Docklands and the City.
- Doctors' surgeries. Waiting time for GP appointments is a national problem but it is particularly acute around Leigh because of the inward population drift associated with new flat developments.
- Bus services
- Pressure on utilities

Many of these will be familiar to other wards. This is not an anti-planning motion but a proper planning one, but we accept that each planning application must be treated on its merits in accordance with the rules and policy. But that does not mean that as a Council we cannot express our concern and seek help from Government to overcome this situation.

We believe Government should urgently consider ways of ensuring that communities are not lost or their cohesiveness impaired through overdevelopment and stress on services.

#### **MOTION:**

That this Council seeks advice from the Local Government Association and information from other Councils who may be suffering similar stresses, with a view to influencing Government to take a more pragmatic approach to development which directs housing development to where it can be assimilated and serviced properly without placing undue stress on local services and thereby inherently protecting areas which are becoming overdeveloped and over stressed.

Cllr Carole Mulroney  
Cllr Peter Wexham

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## **Council – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

### **Notice of Motion: Scrap the Cap**

#### **Southend Borough Council notes that:**

- For most workers in local government and schools, pay and other terms and conditions are determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services
- On average, across the country, NJC basic pay has fallen by 21% in real terms since 2010
- NJC workers had a three-year pay freeze from 2010-2012 and have received only 1% pay increase annually since then
- NJC pay is the lowest in the public sector
- Differentials in pay grades are being squeezed and distorted by bottom-loaded NJC pay settlements needed to reflect the increased Statutory National Living Wage
- The likelihood of rising inflation following the vote to leave the European Union will worsen the current public sector pay inequality.

This council therefore supports the NJC pay claim for 2018, submitted by Unite, UNISON and the GMB on behalf of council and school workers and calls for the immediate end of public sector pay restraint. NJC pay cannot be allowed to fall further behind other parts of the public sector.

This council also welcomes the joint review of the NJC pay spine to remedy the turbulence caused by bottom-loaded pay settlements.

Council further notes the drastic ongoing cuts to local government funding and calls on the Government to provide all additional resources to ensure local authorities can fund a decent pay rise for NJC employees and the pay spine review.

#### **This council resolves to:**

- Write to the LGA asking it to make urgent representations to Government to fund the NJC claim and the pay spine review;
- Write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor supporting the NJC pay claim and seeking the additional resources needed to fund a decent pay rise and the pay spine review;
- Write to local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim
- and the pay spine review.

**Proposed** Cllr Cheryl Nevin

**Seconded** Cllr Margaret Borton

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# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda  
Item No.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People)

to

Cabinet

on

9<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Prepared by: Glyn Halksworth, Group Manager Housing & Social Inclusion, on behalf of Sharon Houlden, Director of Adult Services & Housing

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## Development of a Vision for Housing in Southend

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Councillor Mark Flewitt  
A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

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### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of work underway to develop a 'vision for housing in Southend', incorporating the preparation of a progressive Housing Strategy and clear work plans and strategies relating to the key areas of homelessness prevention, rough sleeping, South Essex Homes, sheltered housing, allocations, and work with the private rented sector.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorses:

- a) The proposed approach and timescales for the development of the Housing Vision and the Housing Strategy;
- b) The approaches and timescales for the development and delivery of other workstreams.

- 2.2 That the Director of Adult Services and Housing and the Director for Planning and Transport, in consultation with Executive Members and Council staff as appropriate, are authorised to:

- a) Approve and make decisions relating to the development of the actions contained herein through the proposed meetings structure; and,
- b) Return to Cabinet with draft vision and strategy documents for final agreement following their development and consultation.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Changes in the financial and policy landscape over the last year have highlighted the need for a refreshed, progressive Housing Strategy for Southend. It was further agreed that this work needs to be corporately owned and to cement in place a vision for housing that is required as part of the longer-term strategic thinking underway around the town's future growth, economic

development, infrastructure and the 'place shaping' the local authority is leading.

- 3.2 The identified need is supported by the findings of a senior management review of how housing and planning services are structured within the Council. This review identified that the current Housing Strategy, which was developed and published in 2011, is largely out of date. It was identified that the Council's vision, aspirations and objectives for housing in the Borough require clarity and it is felt to be essential that re-development of a housing vision and strategy should subscribe to a 'housing is everyone's responsibility' principle. At the national level there are increasing pressures around homelessness and challenges relating to a shortage of suitable affordable housing in many communities, especially in London, South East and Eastern England. In Southend these pressures are evidenced by the growing visible homeless problems in the borough, such as those seen to be impacting in and around the town centre, as well as increasing numbers of households requiring temporary accommodation and who are threatened with homelessness. Responses to these challenges require action on several fronts and thus the development and delivery of the housing vision and the strategic workstreams it informs must actively involve different functions of the Council and our many partners.
- 3.3 The work required to deliver a robust, effective housing offer for Southend is broad. This breadth is illustrated by the proposed Southend Strategy Framework, which is appended to this report (Appendix 1). It is proposed that this framework is adopted in order to guide the work required. As will be seen from this framework, it is felt that the Housing Strategy should encompass the areas of: supply and demand for housing; financial strategy; homelessness prevention; housing allocations; regeneration and development; private sector housing; older people's housing (including sheltered housing); our work with partners, including registered providers; and, housing management.
- 3.4 This work programme would be lead through a specially convened Housing Strategy Development Group. This group would be time-limited and focussed on the delivery of the above work, including coordination across the many workstreams identified. The group would be chaired at Director level, with day to day management of the programme being led by the Group Manager Housing and Social Inclusion. Membership of the group would include different disciplines of the Council and of partners as required by the different workstreams. It is proposed that the group would be authorised, under Director leadership, to approve and make decisions relating to the work. The work will actively involve the Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Sustainability, and will link closely with Executive DMTs for direction on development phases. Members would be regularly consulted on progress prior to final draft vision and strategy documents being returned to Cabinet for final agreement via the Housing and Homelessness Working Party, subject to Council approving the change of name and jurisdiction of this group.

The group will lead two key areas of work, these being:

1. **Establishing a shared vision** around which to shape the approach to housing strategy in the broadest sense;

2. **Delivering a range of workstreams** which are consistent with that vision and strategic approach.

### 3.5 **Establishing a shared vision**

Housing, given its associations with community, neighbourhood, health, life chances and opportunity is something people are passionate about and they therefore need to be able to connect with a vision emotionally as well as practically. The work to establish a shared vision would seek to secure real ownership of an agreed 'view of the world' which will both contribute to the renewed drive and energy at Southend as well as provide a sound platform for future decision making. This vision should be underpinned by some very clear ambitions, aspirations and objectives. It is proposed that the vision would be developed through the following steps:

1. Internal research to clarify how 'Housing' should be described and the interaction of housing with other associated areas. It is important that the vision is consistent with other policy areas and is broad enough to ensure the concept of 'place' is embraced while at the same time is sufficiently focussed to be meaningful.
2. The development of focussed questions that need to be considered to ensure that the vision reflects Southend ambitions as well as the scale of the challenge that needs to be addressed.
3. One to one discussions (either face to face or by telephone) with key stakeholders around the questions identified above to determine their view of the issues, what the priorities should be and the ambitions and aspirations the vision should capture. For this phase of the work key stakeholders will be drawn from senior council and South Essex Homes leaders, including the Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning & Sustainability. Subsequent phases will include broader stakeholders, including Essex Police, local voluntary sector providers, health organisations and local businesses and representative groups.
4. A facilitated workshop bringing stakeholders together to:
  - a) Review the themes emerging from the work carried out and the one to one discussions;
  - b) Question, challenge, debate and strengthen the common understanding of the opportunities and challenges;
  - c) Agree the substance of the vision and headlines for challenges, aspirations and objectives.
5. Testing of the emerging draft vision in order to ensure it is coherent with the Local Plan and South Essex 2050.
6. The production and circulation of formal vision document to be shared with stakeholders and to provide a platform for strategy and policy development. It is proposed that this work should be completed March 2018.

### 3.6 Further workstreams

As identified above and within the appendix, the production of a Housing Strategy necessarily encompasses consideration of a number of other key workstreams which require taking forwards. At this stage of the development of a Housing Strategy these are understood to be:

1. Facilitating and supporting the development of the new Housing Strategy;
2. Developing and progressing other specific housing strategies and policy work, including homelessness prevention, older peoples housing strategy, allocations policy, sheltered housing, and work around Private Sector Housing relating to both quality and affordability ;
3. Developing the role of South Essex Homes in the context of the Council's wider housing strategy and the agreement of a new Management Agreement between the Council and South Essex Homes.
4. Development of the Housing Investment Company, including its role in the development and provision of temporary and affordable housing.

With some of these workstreams there are time pressures (for example, the current housing allocations policy and homelessness strategies are due for renewal from April 2018) and consideration will need to be given to relative priorities of these workstreams, and the need to deploy some 'parallel running', whereby, as long as strategic parameters and intent are understood work can progress before the overarching Housing Strategy is finalised.

Further detail of the above is provided below:

#### 3.6.1 Facilitating and supporting the development of the new Housing Strategy

A significant part of the work will be achieved through the development of the housing vision and ensuring this is meaningful and something which acts as a coordinating, connective tissue between different aspects of these areas of work. Once this vision is established work will be delivered to create an overarching Housing Strategy, involving a broader stakeholder group, and ensuring this is appropriately consulted upon.

It is recommended that this work is completed (drafted and consulted upon) by June 2018.

#### 3.6.2 Support with other specific housing strategies identified within proposed strategy framework

As outlined within the appendix and above, there are several key workstreams which require progression, including the completion of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy, a review of the Housing Allocations Policy (including local connection), development of Private Sector Housing, and more. Some of this work is already partially developed and can be progressed quickly once an understanding of priorities has been agreed and once strategic parameters and intent of the overarching Strategy are understood in order that approaches are consistent.



Timeframes for completion of these workstreams will differ dependent on agreed priorities. It is recommended that aspects such as the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and the Housing Allocations Policy review are quickly progressed in order to be ready by April 2018.

Specific examples of work to be pursued include:

#### 3.6.2.1

##### **Facilitating and supporting the development of a review plan for sheltered housing with appropriate business cases**

The previous sheltered housing review should be revisited in order to ensure its findings are consistent with the housing vision and Strategy being developed. Once we are assured of the requisite coherence work will include:

1. The development of an implementation plan to ensure the review recommendations get delivered;
2. Work to model the viability of options for specific assets;
3. Development of an Older Peoples Housing Strategy.

It is recommended that this work is completed (drafted and consulted upon) by June 2018.

#### 3.6.2.2

##### **Develop the role of South Essex Homes in the context of the council's wider housing strategy and the agreement of a new Management Agreement between the Council and South Essex Homes**

The work of South Essex Homes is critical to that of the Council and adds value to the Council's vision of housing. In this context it is imperative that South Essex Homes' contribution to the Council's work is central to the context of the wider strategy. The role of the ALMO should be integral to the newly developed strategic vision and the revised Management Agreement developed, in partnership, to ensure it reflects the contribution required.

This work would take place throughout 2018, with agreement on the future Management Agreement required well in advance of its required start date of April 2019.

#### **4. Other Options**

No alternative options are recommended.

#### **5. Reasons for recommendations**

A collective vision for housing is critical to providing context and coherence for strategy and policy decisions. The need for housing to be considered as an integral component of the Council's work on behalf of local citizens and their changing demographics and needs is clear: housing is central to our ambitions for economic development and the creation of jobs and enabling of a workforce, and to our aspirations as an emerging city with a broad and compelling offer.

Housing is currently a key policy area at the national level, with many aspects frequently being debated and aligned opportunities emerging, along with legislative and structural changes such as the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016. With both a need to refresh local approaches in light of these and to be ready to take advantage of emerging opportunities these may bring, along with an overarching requirement to ensure housing is joined up and operates in service both of the Council's broader vision and direction, and of its citizens, the timing of this proposed work is apposite.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities**

Ensuring the housing needs of the Borough are met now and in the future is consistent with the Council's Vision and Corporate Priorities of Safe, Prosperous and Healthy.

### **6.2 Financial Implications**

Costs for coordinating and leading this work can be met from existing budgets. Officer time aligned with contributing workstreams will continue to be made available to support the work and to lead on work as necessary in order that we grow our capacity to lead this work in the future.

### **6.3 Legal Implications**

Some of the workstreams to be included are required by statute, for example, the need for a homelessness prevention strategy. These will all be updated and verified through this work.

### **6.4 People Implications**

This work will be supported by existing officer resource. Day-to-day leadership will be from the Group Manager Housing and Social Inclusion.

### **6.5 Property Implications**

Consideration of assets management will be included within several workstreams, particularly those relating to South Essex Homes.

### **6.6 Consultation**

Aspects of the work will require detailed consultation and lead officers will draw upon the expertise of Corporate Consultation officers to ensure best practice. Findings from consultations will be published and will inform final strategies and policies to be endorsed by subsequent Cabinets.

### **6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications**

Aspects of this work programme will require equality analyses to be undertaken in line with national and local requirements. Related activity will report via the

Corporate Equality Steering Group and findings will be incorporated into the final drafting of policy and strategy papers.

#### 6.8 Risk Assessment

The proposal is intended to support improved positioning of housing within broader corporate work and thus to be better aligned to other areas of work. As such it is expected the work will have a positive impact.

#### 6.9 Value for Money

The proposal is deemed to be efficient insofar as it will lead to more coherent working across the corporate landscape and with partners. Lead officer costs will be met from within existing resource, along with additional officer support as identified above. As such it is expected the work will offer good value for money.

#### 6.10 Community Safety Implications

Several areas of work which will be included under the aegis of a vision for housing and the corresponding strategies would positively impact on community safety.

#### 6.11 Environmental Impact

Some areas of work which will be included under the aegis of a vision for housing and corresponding strategy would potentially have a positive impact on the environment. Where required environmental impact assessments would be undertaken.

### 7. **Background Papers**

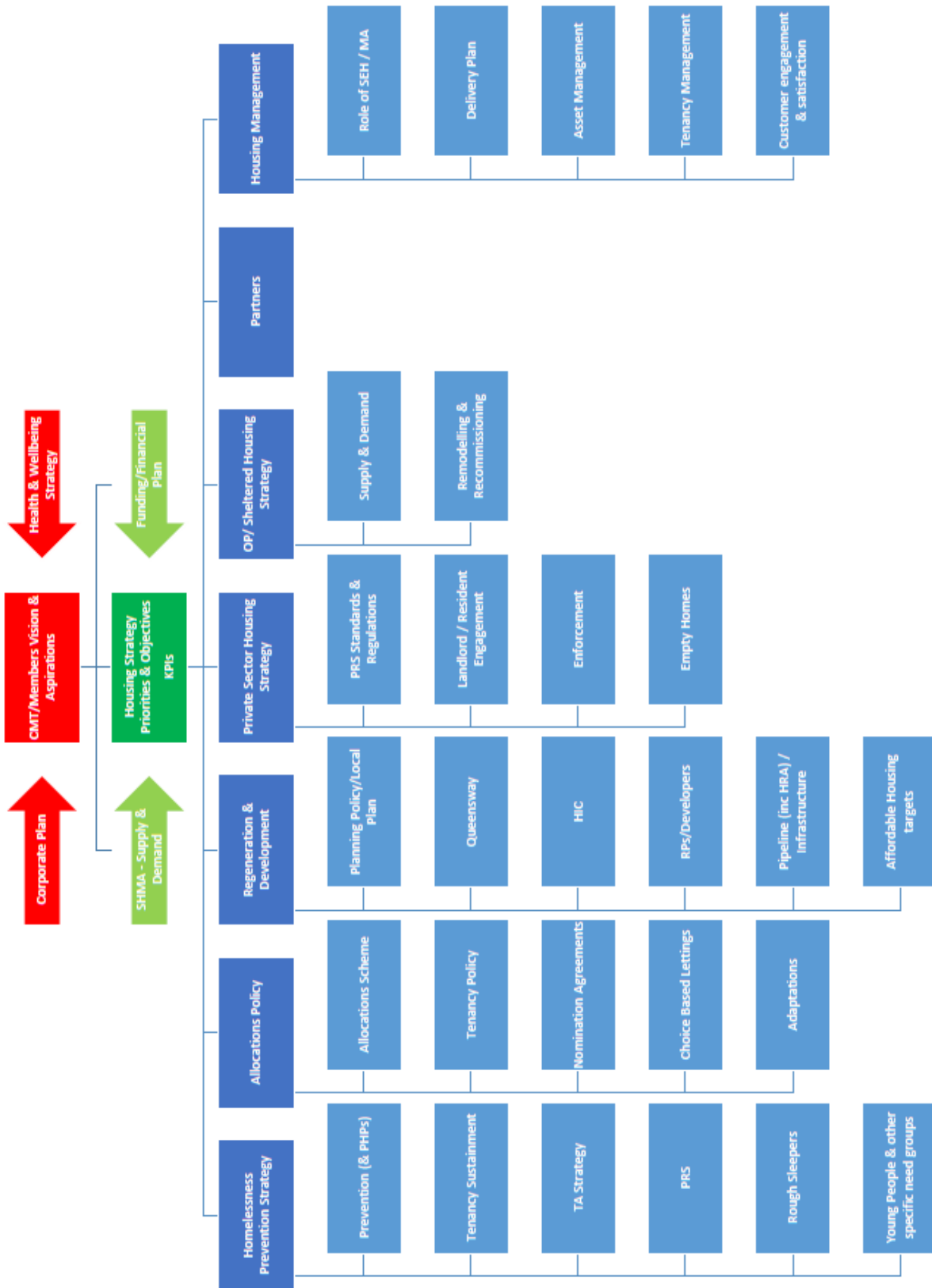
None

### 8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Proposed Southend Strategy Framework



# Appendix 1 – Proposed Southend Strategy Framework



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# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda  
Item No.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive People

to

Cabinet

on

9<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Report prepared by: Helen Carrick Quality Assurance and  
Performance Project Manager and Sanna Westwood Interim  
Project Manager

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## Annual Report on Safeguarding Children and Adults 2016-17

People Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Cllr Courtenay and Cllr Salter  
A Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

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### 1. Purpose of Report

To provide an annual assurance assessment for the Chief Executive and elected members in respect of their responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults in Southend. This report contributes to the requirements of statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and the Care Act 2014.

### 2. Recommendations

**That the report is noted and the actions detailed in Section 6 of the Annual Safeguarding Reports at Appendices 1 and 3 are approved**

### 3. Background

3.1 For the period 2016-17 the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), Southend Borough Council Children's Services and Southend Borough Council Adult Social Care Services have coordinated their annual reporting cycles in order to provide the chief executive and elected members an overview of the activity and effectiveness of safeguarding children and adults service in Southend.

3.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (*Working Together 2015*).

3.3 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory partnership responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding children arrangements in all agencies. The LSCB works alongside the Success for All Children Group, which is responsible for leading and coordinating improvements in services for all outcomes for children, including their safety. Both the LSCB and the Success For All Children Group work with the Health and Wellbeing Board which provides strategic leadership across all services.

3.4 Effective safeguarding children systems are those where:

- the child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates;
- all professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- all professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children's social care;
- high quality professionals are able to use their expert judgement to put the child's needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child;
- all professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes;
- LSCBs coordinate the work to safeguard children locally and monitor and challenge the effectiveness of local arrangements;
- when things go wrong Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are published and transparent about any mistakes which were made so that lessons can be learnt; and
- local areas innovate and changes are informed by evidence and examination of the data.

3.5 The Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is a statutory partnership, responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding adults arrangements in all agencies. The SAB works in Partnership with the LSCB and Health and Wellbeing Board to provide strategic leadership across all services. Safeguarding Adults Boards should:

- identify the role, responsibility, authority and accountability with regard to the action each agency and professional group should take to ensure the protection of adults;
- establish ways of analysing and interrogating data on safeguarding notifications that increase the SAB's understanding of prevalence of abuse and neglect locally that builds up a picture over time;
- establish how it will hold partners to account and gain assurance of the effectiveness of its arrangements;
- determine its arrangements for peer review and self-audit;
- establish mechanisms for developing policies and strategies for protecting adults which should be formulated, not only in collaboration and consultation with all relevant agencies but also take account of the views of



adults who have needs for care and support, their families, advocates and carer representatives;

- develop preventative strategies that aim to reduce instances of abuse and neglect in its area;
- identify types of circumstances giving grounds for concern and when they should be considered as a referral to the local authority as an enquiry;
- formulate guidance about the arrangements for managing adult safeguarding, and dealing with complaints, grievances and professional and administrative malpractice in relation to safeguarding adults;
- develop strategies to deal with the impact of issues of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and gender orientation, sexual orientation, age, disadvantage and disability on abuse and neglect;
- identify mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the implementation and impact of policy and training;
- carry out safeguarding adult reviews;
- produce a Strategic/Business Plan and an Annual Report;
- evidence how SAB members have challenged one another and held other boards to account;
- promote multi-agency training and consider any specialist training that may be required;
- consider any scope to jointly commission some training with other partnerships, such as the Community Safety Partnership.

a. This report provides an annual assurance statement of the LSCB, SAB, and Council's effectiveness in the discharge of their safeguarding responsibilities. The report contains four elements:

- The annual report from the independent chair of the LSCB covering the effectiveness of safeguarding of children, and identifying key priorities locally to improve that effectiveness. (Appendix 1).
- A report from the Head of Children's Services covering the quality and effectiveness of the Council's children's social care delivery (Appendix 2).
- The annual report from the independent chair of the SAB covering the effectiveness of safeguarding adults and identifying key priorities locally to improve that effectiveness. (Appendix 3).
- A report from the Head of Adult Services covering the quality and effectiveness of the Council's adult social care delivery (Appendix 4).

3.7 Working Together 2015 states that the LSCB Chair must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action.

The Care Act Guidance 2014 states that the SAB must publish an annual report that must clearly identify what both the SAB and its members have done to carry out and deliver the objectives and other content of its strategic/business plan.

- 3.8 Ofsted inspected Children's Services over a 4 week period from 26<sup>th</sup> April to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The subsequent report set out the key judgements on Southend Children's Services as: "Overall, Children's Services in Southend-on-Sea require improvement to be good"..

Improvement Plans have been prepared by Children's Services and the LSCB to address the issues identified by the Inspection and Review and to meet the Council's and LSCB's aspiration of being a good/outstanding.

The LSCB's Improvement Plan was developed and agreed by the Board in September 2016 and its implementation is monitored by the LSCB

The Children's Services Improvement Plan consists of an overarching plan detailing key actions and the priorities for completion of the actions, supported by a detailed plan containing the actions which will need to be completed to achieve the outcomes of the plan. The Improvement Plan is overseen by an Improvement Board consisting of senior Members, Officers, an experienced senior manager independent of the Council, the chair of the LSCB and key partners to ensure robust delivery. A Scrutiny Panel reporting to the People Scrutiny Committee will also provide challenge and oversee the progress of the plan.

Serious Case Reviews are undertaken by LSCBs where a child dies or is seriously injured, and abuse or neglect are know or suspected to be a factor in the death. The LSCB commenced one Serious Case Review during the 12-month period covered by the Annual Report, and this was the continuation of a review that originally commenced in 2015/16 and was then paused pending court proceedings. The review recommenced in March 2017 and is ongoing and due to be concluded early in 2108.

- 3.9 As Deputy Chief Executive, I have responsibility for improving outcomes for all children, young people and adults with additional care and support needs in Southend, and to ensure that all appropriate local authority services engage effectively with the LSCB and SAB. The lead members and I have met with the Chief Executive and the Council Leader with this report in order that they can satisfy themselves that I am fulfilling my responsibilities.

#### **4. Other Options**

None

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendations**

To keep the Council informed of the position in respect of safeguarding children and adults in Southend.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities**

The work of partners and the Council in safeguarding children and adults directly contributes to the Council's priority to look after and safeguard our children and vulnerable adults.

### **6.2 Financial Implications**

Spending on Safeguarding Children Services  
Spending on Safeguarding Adults Services

### **6.3 Legal Implications**

This report supports the Council, The Leader, the Chief Executive Director and Lead Member to discharge their statutory duties under the Children Act 2004 and Care Act 2014.

### **6.4 People Implications**

None

### **6.5 Property Implications**

None

### **6.6 Consultation**

The LSCB and SAB are inclusive organisations which involve statutory and voluntary agencies. The LSCB community lay member and the youth lay members represent the interests of the community on the Board and its sub groups, in line with statutory guidance. Consultation with children and families, which influences the way in which services are delivered, is a key strategic priority for the LSCB.

The SAB lay members, service user organisation member, and Healthwatch member represent the interests of the community on the SAB in line with statutory guidance.

### **6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications**

The Council, the LSCB and the SAB have the responsibility to ensure that all children and adults with additional care and support needs have their safety and welfare needs addressed. The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Procedures for both Child Protection and Safeguarding Adults addresses the "recognition of additional vulnerability" and covers the considerations which must be taken into account when meeting the needs of particular groups. All the LSCB and SAB sub groups address equality matters, with a standing item on all agendas.

### **6.8 Risk Assessment**

Risk logs are maintained for the LSCB and SAB and within the Department for People. There is a standing item on the LSCB and SAB Executive agendas identifying risks to the efficacy of safeguarding services identified by partners, and agreeing mitigating actions to address these.

## 6.9 Value for Money

Fulfilling our responsibility to safeguard children and adults and promote their welfare is a statutory requirement. The Council works in partnership with other organisations and local authorities to ensure we fulfil those responsibilities in the most cost effective way. LSCB and SAB members ensure that all functions are undertaken on value for money principles. Since July 2013 the business management resource of the LSCB has been shared with the SAB, with some additional administration resource and a Performance and Quality Assurance Officer shared between both Boards.

## 6.10 Community Safety Implications

LSCB & SAB arrangements support the safety for our most vulnerable members of society across the localities and partnerships. The LSCB and SAB oversee work on road safety, e safety, violence against women and girls, modern slavery, sexual exploitation, bullying and hate crime as it relates to children and adults, and monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of the domestic abuse strategy

## 7. Background Papers

Many are core documents and are the same as identified in previous reports

- The Children Act 2004 Every Child Matters: Change for Children
- Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Care Act Guidance (2014)

## 8. Appendices

Appendix 1- Southend LSCB Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Children in Southend 2016/17

Appendix 2- SBC Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Children 2016/17

Appendix 3- Southend SAB Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Adults in Southend 2016/17

Appendix 4- SBC Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Adults 2016/17

Appendix 1

# 2016-17

## Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Children in Southend



Southend Borough Council

1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017

# Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Children in Southend

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# SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Foreword – by Independent Chair, Liz Chidgey

I am very pleased to be introducing the Annual report covering my first year as Independent Chair for the Southend on Sea Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and I welcome the opportunity to publish information on the work of the board and its sub groups. It is vital that we communicate with the public to both raise awareness on safeguarding issues but also to provide information on the work that has been undertaken and what it has achieved.

2016/17 was a busy year for the board with considerable work being completed in support of our vision to:

- keep children safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation;
- ensure they are secure, stable and cared for, and
- help reduce the likelihood of them suffering from accidental death and injury, bullying and discrimination, and crime and anti-social behavior.

We have a very strong and committed board and I am grateful for the ongoing support of the partnership. I believe this report is both a testament to all we have achieved as a board in the past year, as well as the achievements of the participating partners.

This report contains details of how safeguarding has been promoted and developed in Southend, through the work of the board and its sub groups, which are populated by senior representatives from our statutory partners – the Local Authority, Essex Police and the Southend Clinical Commissioning Group – and a wide range of other agencies including representatives from the local education system, and the voluntary and community sector.

The report also highlights the programme of work the Board has undertaken over the past twelve months, and demonstrates how partners have worked together to implement the Board's Strategic Plan 2016-19 and begun to formulate a response to the national Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Details of the work and outcomes that have been achieved across the safeguarding system over the last 12 months are provided in this report and it is essential that this work is recognised and celebrated.

Finally, the report provides a commentary on the prospects and challenges for 2017/18 and aims to demonstrate the ongoing commitment of the Safeguarding Children Board in recognition of our responsibilities to the children and young people of Southend on Sea and their right to expect effective and timely support.



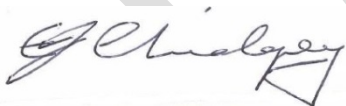
It is my responsibility to support and encourage partners and agencies in Southend to work collaboratively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and bring about continual improvement to the local safeguarding system. It is also part of my role to hold those partners and agencies to account, ensuring that individually, they do what they say they are going to do, and that collectively, agencies are working together to safeguard children and young people effectively.

As the chair, I am satisfied that the agencies that are represented at the board and its sub-groups continue to demonstrate their high level of commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. I am very mindful of pressures on partners in terms of resources and time and grateful to all those who have engaged in the work of the SSCB.

I hope that you find this report interesting and that it provides reassurance that the board remains active in driving improvements through the local safeguarding system. There is a lot of detail in this annual report about which I will not comment further here. Importantly however, regardless of whatever concerns might be triggered in the minds of readers, the assurance offered by me is that Safeguarding Children Board members, and the organisations they represent, know and are open about the reality of the challenges they face and remain willing to work collaboratively and contribute to thinking ahead about responsibilities, risks, ambitions and priorities.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the commitment of all our partners, who once again have delivered a great deal in the past 12 months, and who continue to contribute to improving the way we all work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the many professionals from the public, voluntary, community and private sectors who contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our local children.

I very much look forward to continuing to work with the partnership to drive forward the vision of the LSCB and ensure the effectiveness of the safeguarding system in keeping local children safe from abuse and neglect.



**Liz Chidgey**  
**Independent Chair of Southend Local Safeguarding Children Board**

**December 2017**

## 1.2 Introduction

This annual report is for the period 1st October 2016 to 30th September 2017 and its production is a statutory duty of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. It reports on the effectiveness of the child safeguarding system in Southend-on-Sea and provides evidence the LSCB has fulfilled all its statutory responsibilities.

The LSCB has agreed this reporting cycle in order that the findings of the annual report and the identified priorities for the coming year can be considered and built into the strategies and delivery plans of other partnership boards and commissioners, including the Chief Executive and Leader of Southend Borough Council; the Health and Wellbeing Board; the Children's Partnership Board (Success For All Children Group in Southend); and the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner.

This Annual Report:

- a) details progress toward achieving our priorities and the LSCB Strategic Plan for 2016-2019;
- b) provides an overview of LSCB activities and achievements during 2016–2017; and
- c) summarises the effectiveness of safeguarding activity in Southend including the work of individual member agencies.

The report will be submitted to the Local Authority Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Essex Police, the Southend Health and Wellbeing Board and Southend Community Safety Partnership.

## 1.3 Role of the Southend Safeguarding Adults Board

The LSCB is a statutory body created under the Children Act 2004. Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the objectives of LSCBs, which are:

- (a) *to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and*
- (b) *to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.*

## Vision

The Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) aims to ensure its members work together effectively to:

- keep children safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation;
- ensure they are secure, stable and cared for, and
- help reduce the likelihood of them suffering from accidental death and injury, bullying and discrimination, and crime and anti-social behavior.

## Statutory Duties

Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out that the functions of the LSCB, in relation to the above objectives are as follows:

- 1(a) *developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:*
  - (i) *the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;*
  - (ii) *training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;*
  - (iii) *recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;*
  - (iv) *investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;*
  - (iv) *safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;*
  - (vi) *cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners;*
- (b) *communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;*
- (c) *monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;*
- (d) *participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority; and*
- (e) *undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.*

*An LSCB may also engage in any other activity that facilitates, or is conducive to, the achievement of its objectives.*

*In order to fulfil its statutory functions an LSCB should:*

- *assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help;*
- *assess whether LSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations*
- *quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned; and*
- *monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*

More information about the statutory role and function of the Safeguarding Children Board can be found at [www.safeguardingsouthend.co.uk](http://www.safeguardingsouthend.co.uk).

### 1.4 The Safeguarding Principles

Effective arrangements for safeguarding children should be underpinned by two key principles:

- **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:** for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and

- **a child-centred approach:** for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

## **1.5 Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019**

The current Strategic Plan is being reviewed at the time of writing this report and the reader is advised to refer to the updated plan which will be available on the LSCB website upon completion.

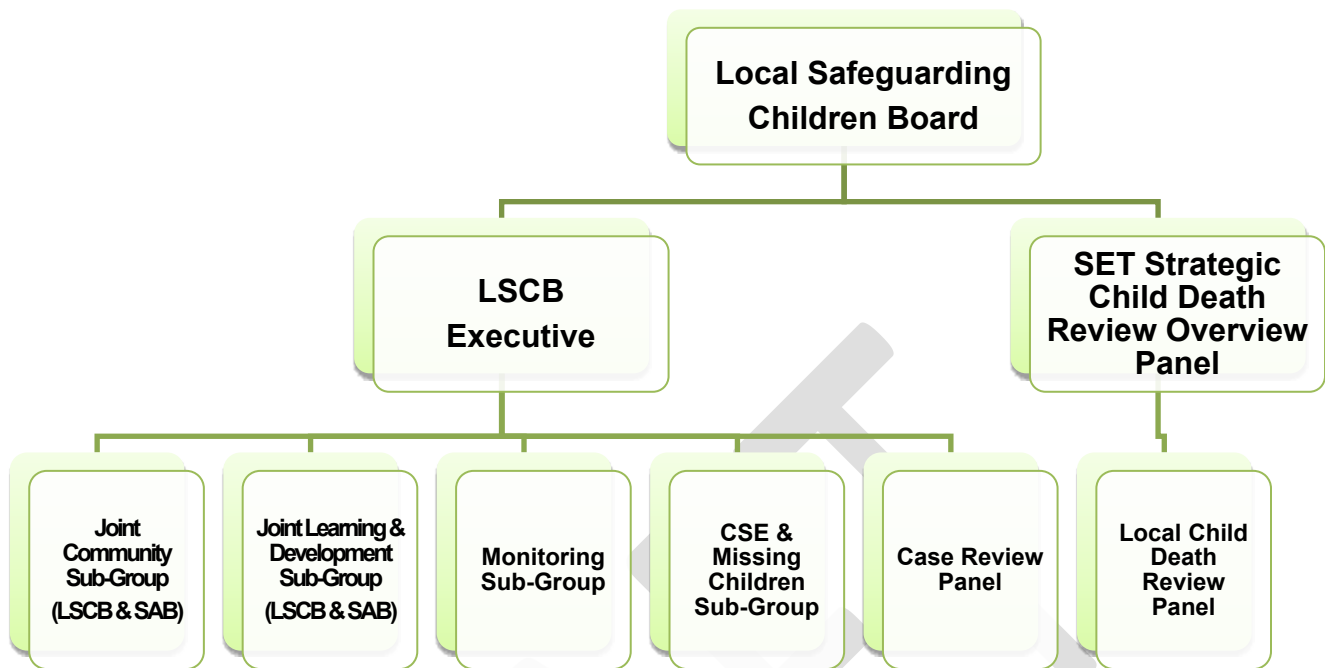
## **1.6 Governance**

Southend Safeguarding Adults Board is chaired by Independent Chair, Elizabeth Chidgey, and meets four times a year bringing partners together from: Southend Council, Southend Clinical Commissioning Group, Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Services, East of England Ambulance Trust, Health Trusts, Probation Services, the voluntary sector and lay members, representing health, care and support providers and the people who use those services across Southend.

The Chair is accountable to the Chief Executive of the local authority in chairing the LSCB and overseeing its work programme. However, she is accountable only to the Board for the decisions she takes in that role. The role of Vice-Chair is undertaken by the Corporate Director – People, Southend Borough Council.

The Board is attended by representatives from the partner agencies with a high level of engagement. Information about Board attendance can be found in Section 6.

The LSCB has six sub-groups chaired by middle and senior managers from across the partner agencies. We report on the business of each of the sub-groups operating during 2016-17 in this report and the structure below reflects the shape of the Board.



### 1.7 Board Structure 2016/17

A review of the structure of the LSCB board was initiated during 2016-2017 and changes agreed as a result will be initiated in 2018.

### 1.8 Strategic Links to other Boards and Partnerships

The Chair of the LSCB is also the Chair of the local Safeguarding Adults Board. She is a member of the Southend Health and Well-Being Board (HWB). She meets regularly with the Local Authority Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive, the Lead Member for adult safeguarding and the Leader of the Council and meets regularly with the Council’s Scrutiny Committee. Links are also maintained through representation on the Community Safety Partnership, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Children Boards.

**Health and Well-being Board:** As a member of the HWB, the LSCB Chair ensures the HWB is effectively considering children’s safeguarding in the decisions it makes. The HWB uses the LSCB as a ‘critical friend’ in safeguarding children considerations and decisions, including the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy; the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; key Commissioning Strategies; and service re-design. The Chair presents the LSCB’s annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding children in Southend to the HWB each January and the HWB ensures that the Police and Crime Commissioner is present at this meeting.

**Success for all Children Group & the Corporate Parenting Group:** The LSCB has a direct relationship with the Success for all Children Group (SACG) and the Corporate Parenting Group (CPG). The SACG and CPG report to the HWB and have responsibility for shaping and delivering the health and wellbeing agenda for children and young people, and looked after children. The LSCB holds the SACG and CPG to account for ensuring the safeguarding of children and looked after children are considered in the

decisions they make and their strategic priorities. The LSCB considers the annual reports from the SACG and CPG and their priorities for safeguarding children and looked after children.

**Community Safety Partnership:** The LSCB also has a direct relationship with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The LSCB seeks assurance that the CSP is appropriately considering children's safeguarding in the decisions it makes. The LSCB specifically seeks assurance regarding the development and implementation of the local Domestic Abuse Strategy and the implementation of lessons learned from domestic homicide reviews.

**Joint LSCB & SAB Scrutiny Panel:** For a number of years an LSCB Scrutiny Panel, consisting of elected members of Southend Borough Council, has scrutinized and contributed to the work of the LSCB. The Panel has been recognized by Ofsted as a model of good practice. Since September 2016, the Panel has also scrutinized the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

**Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET)** work in partnership to provide a common approach to safeguarding children across the county through the SET Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures. The procedures set out the system and process organisations should use to raise safeguarding concerns. This includes a framework for confidentiality and information sharing across agencies.

## **1.9 Funding**

The work of the Board is financed by contributions from partner agencies, of which currently over 45% comes from the council. In addition to financial contributions, partner agencies contribute significant amounts of staff time to support the delivery of the board's work programme, and to support training delivery. Full budget information can be found in **Appendix 2**.

## **SECTION 2 - ASPIRATIONS FOR 2016-17**

(Taken from the LSCB Strategic Plan 2016-19 and 2015-16 Annual Report)

In the 2015-2016 Annual Report the Board identified the following key areas for development:

1. Work is required to ensure children and young people who self-harm, or have other mental health issues, access services in a timely way and through the most appropriate routes. This will include more analysis of the issues and the development of a multi-agency action plan;
2. The analysis of intelligence from all partners, including the public, to identify, disrupt and prosecute those who exploit children and young people;
3. Mainstreaming of funding and development of timely specialist support services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and exploitation is required by commissioning agencies;
4. Mainstreaming of funding and development of timely specialist support services for perpetrators of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and exploitation is required by commissioning agencies;
5. To continue to exercise oversight of, and analyse, the child protection process and application of thresholds by children's social care, and review the conferencing system to ensure partners maximise its effectiveness and impact on families;
6. To ensure the early help model is fully integrated with child protection processes, making one unified and comprehensive system to ensure all children are safeguarded and professionals know how and where to get the right help. Early Help services will be tested by the LSCB in 2017-18 to ensure hard to reach groups have the right access to those services;
7. To ensure the Voice of the Child is increasingly embedded in the way that services are delivered, and that achieving specific outcomes for children are increasingly driving the work of professionals;
8. To continue to address and improve the governance of the Safeguarding Partnership (currently the LSCB) in light of the Wood Review of LSCBs, to ensure that cross cutting areas of work are approached holistically across the partnership, and that potential gaps and overlaps are identified and addressed effectively;

The 2016 -19 Strategic Plan further identified the following key strategic priorities:

9. Reduce incidents of self-harm among children and young people;
10. Reduce the number of children and young people who have experienced bullying including face to face, text or internet;
11. Ensure that the Violence Against Women and Girls, Modern Slavery and Domestic Abuse Strategies are effectively resourced and implemented to reduce the impact of Violence, Modern Slavery, and Domestic Abuse on children and young peoples' life chances;
12. Support families at the earliest opportunity to prevent their needs escalating and ensure early help (including that for young adults) is fully integrated with the multi-agency sharing of information and child protection processes;

13. Partners and strategic boards work together to identify, resource, and provide support to children and young people at risk of, or victims of, exploitation (including child sexual exploitation and radicalization), to prevent harm and reduce the impact on their life chances; and to identify and disrupt perpetrators; and
14. Ensure that looked after children are safeguarded effectively.

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## SECTION 3 - ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016/17 - HIGHLIGHTS

This year the LSCB undertook significant work to ensure that it fulfilled its statutory responsibilities, and in January 2017, the Board welcomed new Independent Chair, Liz Chidgey, following the retirement of Chris Doorly.

The LSCB Chair meets regularly with senior board members from the Southend Clinical Commissioning Group, Essex Police and Children's Services and is a member of the Health & Wellbeing Board (HWB) and the Children's Services Improvement Board. The LSCB continues to work closely with the Southend Safeguarding Adults Board.

### 3.1 Safeguarding Children Board

- Formulated a local direction of travel in response to the Woods Review into Local Safeguarding Children Boards, and further to previous work undertaken to better coordinate public protection functions that cut across several strategic Boards operating in Southend.
- Following the Jay report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, meetings chairs and business managers from the HWB, LSCB and CSP - chaired by the Chief Executive of Southend Council - were initiated to examine the effectiveness of working in cross cutting areas such as CSE.
- Commissioned and commenced a review of the Board's priorities and the development of a performance and risk management framework to support the Board's ambitions.
- The new Independent Chair presented the 2015-16 LSCB Annual Report to Southend HWB, outlining performance against Business Plan objectives in the previous financial year. This provided the opportunity for the HWB to take on issues raised by the LSCB.
- The LSCB held:
  - a **challenge event** with Board members to consider Ofsted, HMIC and CQC Inspection reports for Children's services, Essex Police and the NHS Southend Clinical Commissioning Group and to identify and agree opportunities for collaborative working, which is informing strategic planning across the system.
  - a one day **Neglect workshop** for practitioners from across the safeguarding system on working with the lived experience of neglectful families. The workshop was led by Emeritus Professor of Child Welfare, Jan Horwarth, and explored the challenges of taking a child centered approach in cases of neglect and how understanding lived experiences of family members can be utilized to achieve child-focused outcomes; and
  - hosted a **FGM learning seminar** - delivered by the National FGM Centre - for practitioners across the safeguarding system in order to share learning, improve partnership working and provide practitioners with the opportunity to build their

understanding and confidence in tackling, FGM.

- **SET Joint Working:** The LSCB has continued to work with the Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Children Boards to ensure a consistent approach is taken to safeguarding across the three local authority areas. Projects this year include:
  - Updating the SET Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures, including updates to the Child Sexual Exploitation Chapter to ensure the Procedures reflect current good practice and the government’s new definition of CSE;
  - Updating and broadening the SET suicide toolkit for practitioners to include self-harm, (for launch in late 2017);
  - The launch of a new CSE risk assessment tool and associated training platform. This tool was developed with the NWG, a charitable organisation seen as a leading organisation for CSE in the UK.

The sub-groups identified in Section 1 support the work of the Board and the delivery of its strategic plans. The sub-groups benefit from multi-agency representation, with staff from statutory and non-statutory agencies attending and contributing to the work. The sub-groups review a range of information, including performance reports from member agencies, report to the LSCB Executive on their progress and make recommendations where additional work is needed to assure the Board or improve existing practice, policy, procedure and training.

Activity within the sub-groups for 2016/17 included:

- The development and implementation of the CSE & Missing Sub-Group workplan and significant developments including the introduction of a CSE risk assessment tool.
- The embedding of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel process..
- Pilot project with SoS Rape Crisis to provide therapeutic interventions for young people where there have been concerns about sexual exploitation.
- SCR action plan monitoring and learning from cases reviews.
- Basic safeguarding e-learning updated for 2016 and available to all partners via Virtual College.
- Increased understanding of the LeDeR programme

### **3.2 Board Partners’ Achievements in improving Safeguarding Children 2016-17**

The LSCB has been involved in partnership activity throughout the 2016/17 period. The following organisations regularly report into the LSCB and have all provided an Annual Statement (available on request), summarised below.

#### **Essex Police – highlights from annual statement**

- Southend Community Policing Team are the first district in the county to appoint a CSE coordinator as a dedicated link to Children's Social Care.
- Essex Police have developed the use of a co-located MARAT over the last year and are now looking at the option of a multi-agency First Contact team.
- Reviewed and republished our joint working protocol in relation to police protection powers with a view to minimising the time vulnerable children are with the police.

### **Southend Borough Council Children's Services**

- The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Team is now established within Southend Police Station.
- Introduction of new missing children procedures.
- A joint audit with SUHFT and the CCG to assess the quality of referrals to Children's Services from the health sector.

### **Southend Clinical Commissioning Group – highlights from annual statement**

- Harmonised minimum key performance indicators and data sets for safeguarding children training to ensure standardised expectations across the health economy.
- Raised awareness within health organisations of the changes in legislation and data reporting requirements for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Agreed an approach to commence the implementation of a Child Protection Information Sharing Project in Essex.
- Worked with primary care to improve their recognition of, and response to, safeguarding children.
- Contributed to the development of the Prevent agenda and Channel Panels
- Worked with partners to improve the multi-agency response to victims of Honour Based Abuse.
- Supported and advised the re-procurement of the Sexual Assault Referral Service.

### **Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust - highlights from annual statement**

- Undertook a range of audits including audits of antenatal information sharing; effectiveness and impact of child safeguarding supervision; maternity case load sheets.
- Provided additional support and strategy development to ensure that multi-agency working is robust, that challenge and the escalation processes are considered and any newly developed safeguarding processes are not compromised.
- Collaborative working with the SUHFT Adult Safeguarding Team on FGM, Prevent, Domestic Abuse and Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking.

### 3.3 Training

The CCG has delivered Level 3 training for GPs within their Time to Learn programme.

Southend GPs	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Level 3	100%	94%	100%	88%
Southend CCG				
Level 2	89%	93%	82%	77%
Level 4	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 5	100%	100%	100%	100%
Governing Body	100%	100%	100%	100%

Children's Services continued to roll out of mandatory training for decision makers and practitioners on decision making, assessment and domestic abuse and support this with learning sets and practice workshops throughout the year led by a dedicated Practice Lead.

Essex Police have continued to roll out vulnerability training to their staff as part of a wider campaign to raise awareness of vulnerability under their continuous improvement programme. The training is complimented by a three day Public Protection Awareness Course which has been delivered to over 2000 of their staff to date.

Additional training to Essex Police staff on identifying children affected by domestic abuse incidents, with an emphasis on S47 training to domestic abuse investigation teams.

Joint training has taken place with partners to better enable staff to identify modern slavery issues.

SUHFT developed Level 1 and Level 2 refresher quiz and training resources to aid compliance with training.

EFRS introduced new e-learning safeguarding training as well as PREVENT training and information sessions for all staff.

SEH provided safeguarding training to resident representatives and community sports coaches who work with residents on youth projects.

SAVS and the LSCB have continued to work in partnership to provide training in all aspects of safeguarding including Child Sexual Exploitation, Prevent (countering radicalization) and Human Trafficking.

### **3.4 Key Successes and improvements in practice**

#### **Essex Police identify their key success within safeguarding children for 2016 – 2017 as:**

- The embedding missing person Liaison officers and Child and Young Person Officers into the community safety hub and the CAIT teams in Southend.
- The success of the MARAT with partners has also been a highlight and has prompted the review of further co-location with the First Contact Team.
- One of the county's first complex and organised CSE investigations, Operation Cobham led to the successful conviction of 2 males in December 2016 who ran Girls4you from Shoebury. One was given a four year sentence for controlling child prostitution, controlling activities of a person in prostitution for gain, possession of indecent images of children, distribution of indecent images of a child and being concerned in the supply of Mephedrone, and the second male two-and-a-half years for arranging or facilitating child prostitution, controlling prostitution for gain and being concerned in the supply of Mephedrone.

#### **Children's Services identify their key success within safeguarding children for 2016 – 2017 as:**

- Improvements in the proportion of decisions made in relation to new referrals within 24 hours; the timeliness of child protection investigations; and statutory visits to children on child protection plans / in care
- Significant increase of initial child protection to case conference in 15 days
- Improving decision making processes
- Co-location of a multi-agency – LA, Police and Health - team at the Front Door to Children's Services, enabling strategy meetings to be held within 24 hours.
- The LA restorative practice approach training has been extended to partners

#### **SUHFT identifies their key success within safeguarding children for 2016 – 2017 as:**

- The introduction of an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate Role.
- Information leaflet for new staff to re-enforce safeguarding practice for bank staff and volunteers.
- Improved quality of safeguarding referrals to children's social care.
- Introduction of a Quick Reference Guide for staff which clarifies the issue of consent for treatment in respect of Looked After Children.

## Essex County Fire & Rescue Services identify their key success within safeguarding children for 2016–2017 as:

- Collaborative working with Essex Police to deliver lessons at 42 of Southend's 56 schools: seeing 18,562 children. Lessons included:
  - Year 3: Home Safety
  - Year 6: Cyber Safety
  - Year 7: Road safety  
Heat of the moment (involving arson and hoax)
  - Year 8: Home Safety (revisited)
  - Year 9: Healthy relationships
- Delivery of the Firebreak Programme:
  - **Fire Fit:** Healthy lifestyles
  - **Fire Inspire:** Building confidence, self-esteem and team working skills.
  - **Fire Respect:** Delivers the traditional Firebreak framework but can be tailored to the needs of the participants to also cover safe sex and teenage pregnancy, young offending and anti-social behavior, alcohol and drugs abuse, domestic violence, the importance of worthwhile and fulfilling relationships, community engagement, and bullying and cyber safety.
  - **Fire Empower:** Preparing for employment.

### 3.5 Key risks and challenges identified by partners

#### 3.5.1 Cross cutting risks and challenges

- Identifying, engaging and affecting change with vulnerable young people at risk from multiple types of exploitation including CSE, exploitation linked to drugs, radicalisation and other criminality, and those for whom there may be emerging concerns.
- Ensuring there is clear governance in relation to the oversight of young people at risk of exploitation and work with potential perpetrators.
- Developing system wide solutions to safeguarding challenges within healthcare under the Success Regime.
- On-going financial and capacity issues across the health economy will challenge both commissioning and provider health organisations.

### 3.6 Key areas for development identified by partners

- Expansion of collaborative working arrangements within the safeguarding system, to include the First Contact Team.
- To continue seeking improvements in the use and response to police protection; the

quality of investigations involving children affected by domestic abuse; and the management of dangerous offenders.

- To develop the capability of non-warranted police staff, further integrating them into one investigative team – building on the results of the restructure of the Crime and Public Protection Command.
- Move towards a competency-based approach to safeguarding training for primary care which is flexible to the needs of individuals.
- Commission hospital-based Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors for 3 acute NHS Trusts and support the services already established in other Trusts.
- Provide an equitable delivery of services for all Looked After Children in South East Essex.
- Support health professionals to enhance their skills, enabling them to explore issues with patients in order to identify risk to children and young people.
- Work with adult safeguarding leads to develop pathways and guidance relating to gangs. This is an issue of local concern.
- Review and refresh Best Practice Guidelines for Practitioners working with Families/Pregnant Women when domestic abuse is an issue and develop training to support the changes in maternity records and practice.
- Develop, review and update Child Protection Policy in line with local and national guidance including Working Together 2015, Intercollegiate Document 2014 and findings from local and other SCRs.
- Further develop the process to capture and report to commissioners on the Trust's compliance with training and supervision.
- Continue to monitor service level uptake of training via the Safeguarding Children Committee with a commitment to maintain uptake of >90% among clinical staff through a targeted comprehensive training programme.
- Refresh and maintain staff information pages on the SUHFT intranet, including the safeguarding newsletter on the Staffnet and Communications pages, and ensure SUHFT staff are aware of national concerns for "challenges" relating to social media i.e. "Blue Whale".
- Monitor the rates of self-harm/attempted suicide for children/young adults, noting trends and share information accordingly with the LSCB.
- Support and action the findings and recommendations made from Serious Case Reviews and Partnership Learning Reviews ensuring work streams are embedded in practice and reflected in hospital policies and guidance.

- SUHFT safeguarding team, adult safeguarding leads and SUHFT Human Resources will develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for referral processes and information sharing specific to contact with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) regarding allegations made against staff working with children/vulnerable adults.
- SEH will continue working in partnership with Southend on Sea Domestic Abuse Projects (SOSDAP) to provide support to victims of domestic abuse across refuge and move-on accommodation for victims of domestic abuse.
- Expand on the existing support services currently offered by Temporary Accommodation Officers and Community Development Officers in order to tackle social isolation; prevent homelessness; support residents who are victims or perpetrators of anti-social behavior; and support vulnerable parents.
- NHS England East will continue to improve safeguarding practices for both adult and children & young people across the East DCO area through their safeguarding forums work programme.
- The Essex Community Rehabilitation Company will work with colleagues in Essex Police and the National Probation Service, to develop a new information sharing agreement regarding domestic abuse histories of their allocated service users.
- There is a need for the LSCB – through the CSE & Missing Sub-Group – to establish effective strategic working arrangements with the Community Safety Partnership in order to avoid duplication of effort in tackling CSE and to secure the assurance the LSCB requires that CSE is being addressed through the CSP-linked MACE process.
- In order to better prevent CSE, members of the CSE & Missing Sub-group will explore and develop methodologies for identifying young people and children where risk of CSE is an emerging concern.



## **SECTION 4 - LEARNING FROM SERIOUS CASE AND OTHER REVIEWS IN 2016-17**

### **Serious Case Reviews**

Serious Case Reviews are undertaken by LSCBs where a child dies or is seriously injured and abuse or neglect are known or suspected to be a factor in the death. Their purpose is to identify and implement learning to improve how services work together to safeguard children and they are a statutory requirement.

The LSCB commenced one Serious Case Review during the 12 month period covered by this report. This was the continuation of a review which was originally started in 2015/16 and then 'paused' pending court proceedings. The review re-commenced in March 2017 and is ongoing. It is due to be concluded early in 2018 and will therefore be addressed in the next LSCB Annual Report. Learning from the review continues to drive changes in practice as it emerges.

### **Child Death Reviews**

Child Death Reviews for children resident in Southend are undertaken by a multi-agency Child Death Review Panel (CDRP) covering South East Essex. The Panel is chaired by a representative from Public Health and is overseen by a multi-agency Strategic Child Death Overview Panel (SCDOP) for the County. During the year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 the CDRP received eight notifications of deaths of children resident in the Southend area and completed 12 child death reviews for Southend cases. (Not all reviews are completed in the year the notification was received: especially when an Inquest or criminal proceedings have been involved.)

Of the 12 deaths reviewed, four were found to have one or more modifiable factors, including co-sleeping, parental smoking, alcohol/substance misuse and poor parenting/supervision.

Due to a previous increase in numbers of sudden unexplained deaths in infancy, the SCDOP continues to increase awareness of the risks associated with co-sleeping and to highlight safer sleeping information. In December 2016 a questionnaire was circulated to professionals working with families to gather information on what, when and to whom, advice is being given and the data was used to revise the safer sleeping campaign for 2017, and in January 2017 a 'Thunderclap' social media message was successfully launched. 135 agencies and individuals signed up to support the campaign which had a social reach of 489,024.

### **Essex LSCB Partnership Learning Review**

This was an Essex led review of a family who had had contact with Southend-based agencies as a result of moving between Essex and Southend authority. Therefore links between the Essex review panel and the Southend Case Review Panel have been established and maintained in order to identify and utilize learning to drive improvements through the safeguarding system in Southend.

## SECTION 5 - HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

Using a range of data, this section provides a summary analysis of volume, nature and outcomes of safeguarding activity over the year and key demographic information for context.

### 5.1 Statistical context

Southend is an exceptionally diverse and fast-changing borough and a range of available statistics provide us with the ability to track these changes over time in order to ensure the safeguarding system remains fit for purpose.

The following snapshot provides the statistical context surrounding the ongoing activity to safeguard children and promote their welfare:

Measure	Southend
Population	179,800
Aged 0-17 (inclusive)	38,729
School age BME population	6,616
Births per year	2,292

Source: 2016 Office for National Statistics estimates

**Deprivation:** Around 43.2% of those age 0-17 (16,723) live in the areas of the borough classified as falling within the 30% most deprived areas in the country. For contextual purposes it should be noted only 30% of the total population live in these same areas.

**Poverty:** 21.6% of 0-19 year-olds are living in families in receipt of Child Tax Credits whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median income, or in receipt of Income Support or (Income-Based) Job Seekers Allowance.

**Entitlement to free school meals:** The proportion of children entitled to free schools meals:

- a. Primary: 13.6% compared to 14.1% on average nationally
- b. Secondary: 8.2% compared to 12.9% on average nationally

Source: 2017 Schools Census

### 5.2 Safeguarding Activity 2016-17

Southend Borough Council has produced an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding children. The full report is available on request and highlights from the report are detailed below.

### 5.3 Safeguarding concerns

Where there are concerns, assessments of children are undertaken in accordance with a local assessment protocol based on Department for Education statutory guidance, Working Together 2015. The assessment seeks to establish the level and nature of any

risk and harm so appropriate support services can be provided to improve the outcomes for the child. The assessment will ascertain if:

- The child/sibling group are a child/children in need (s17 Children Act 1989)
- There is reasonable cause to suspect the child/children are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm (s47 Children Act 1989)
- The child/children are in need of, or requesting, accommodation (s20 or s31 Children Act 1989)

## **5.4 What the statistics are telling us**

The safeguarding system collects a wide range of information about activity to safeguard children in Southend, so we know how well they are being safeguarded. This information helps the Southend LSCB decide what their next steps should be.

Data in relation to all safeguarding issues is monitored both locally and nationally. All safeguarding concerns and enquiries are recorded and co-ordinated by Southend Council. Progress from initial concern through to conclusion is monitored for timeliness and quality across a wide variety of measures including the nature and location of harm, service user groups, outcomes, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. This information is scrutinised by the LSCB sub-groups who report key issues and trends to the Board via the LSCB Executive group.

Southend Council also submits annual data returns to the Department for Education (DfE) who collate these with the annual data from the other authorities in England for the purpose of comparison. The following sections are based on the most recent annual data return, which provides figures for the 12 months ending 31 March 2017.

In the period 1.4.16 to 31.3.17, there were 2,229 referrals, of which 16.3% (363) had been made within 12 months of a previous referral. The number of assessments completed was 2,012 and the median number of days taken to complete the assessment was 38 days, compared to a median number of days for the East of England of 30 days.

686 Section 47 enquiries were undertaken in the 12 months ending 31.3.17, followed by 321 initial child protection conferences. The median number of days between the start of the Section 47 enquiry and an initial child protection conference was 16 days, which compares to a median of 13 days for the Eastern Region as a whole.

Activity within Local Authority Children's services has decreased in some areas during 2017 but remains higher than in 2015 in relation to looked after children. Some of the increase in numbers of looked after children relates to changes in children's status when they are cared for by family members.

### **5.4.1 Abuse location**

Abuse can happen anywhere; in someone's own home, in a public place, in hospital, in a care home for example. It can happen when someone lives alone or with others. It is important to understand the circumstances of abuse, including the wider context such as whether others may be at risk of abuse, whether others have witnessed abuse and

the role of family members and paid staff or professionals.

#### 5.4.2 Age

The population aged 0 to 17 (age at mid 2016) based on Office of National Statistics projection data is estimated at 38,700.

Age range	Estimated population 2016
0-4	11,449
5-9	11,395
10-14	9,853
15-17	6,003

#### 5.4.3 Ethnicity

**Minority ethnic population:** The percentage of school age children from a minority ethnic group is 25.3% compared to 30.7% nationally and ethnic diversity continues to increase within the 0-19 population compared with the boroughs population as a whole.

Source: 2017 Schools Census

**English as a second language:** The proportion of children with English as a second language:

- a. Primary: 13.8% compared to 20.6% on average nationally
- b. Secondary: 13.8% compared to 16.2% on average nationally

Source: 2017 Schools Census

#### 5.4.4 Primary needs

As at 31.3.17 there were 1,387 children in need episodes recorded of which the majority (1,201) had a primary need at assessment of neglect or abuse. By the end of the assessments the following factors had been identified:

Identified factor	No.
Domestic violence	753
Mental health	578
Drug misuse	307
Neglect	304
Emotional abuse	300
Alcohol misuse	248
Learning disability	234
Physical abuse	187
Socially unacceptable behaviour	137
Physical disability or illness	112
Going/being missing	83
Sexual abuse	76
Self-harm	57
Child sexual exploitation	51
Young carer	31
Gangs	17

Female Genital Mutilation	0
Abuse linked to faith or belief	0
Privately fostered	X
Unaccompanied asylum seeker	X
Trafficking	X

'X' is used where numbers are small and confidentiality needs to be preserved.

#### 5.4.5 Abuse type

Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan at 31.3.17 by initial type of abuse:

Neglect	128
Emotional Abuse	63
Multiple <sup>1</sup>	20
Physical Abuse	X
Sexual Abuse	X

<sup>1</sup> Cases where more than one category of abuse is relevant to the child's current protection plan.

'X' is used where numbers are small and confidentiality needs to be preserved.

#### 5.4.6 Referral source

Number of referrals completed by Children's Services in the year ending 31.3.17 by source of referral

Police	680
Schools	456
LA services (Referrals from social care, other internal local authority services and external local authority services)	275
Health services (Referrals from GPs, health visitors, school nurses, other primary health services, A&E and other health services)	248
Other	215
Individual (referrals from family members, relatives, carers, acquaintances and self-referrals)	210
Other legal agency	59
Anonymous	40
Housing	31
Education services	9
Unknown	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,229</b>

**Note:** If a child had more than one referral in the period then each referral will be counted.

### 5.5 Safeguarding Outcomes

An improvement in performance in relation to statutory visits to looked after children and children subject to child protection plans. Visits to children subject to child protection

plans stood at 88.5% in mid-November (provisional data) and for looked after children at 84.9% at the end of October 2017 (validated data). The LA has not yet met its target, however this is an area of significant and sustained progress.

An improvement of 35.7% in the timeliness of child protection investigations in the twelve months to September 2017 and improvements in the proportion of decisions made in relation to new referrals within 24 hours of the referral being received following revisions to process and changes in management oversight.

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## **SECTION 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND WHAT THE BOARD WILL BE WORKING ON IN 2017-2018**

The Annual Report evidences strong ongoing commitment across the partnership to effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of children living in Southend. The LSCB will continue to strengthen its impact on the local safeguarding system through effective oversight and coordination of the system, robust monitoring and challenge of performance and progress among partner agencies and the work of other local strategic bodies.

To ensure the progress made by the Board over the last year continues, the following areas for development have been identified for the next 18 months. (During the production of this Annual Report it has been agreed that the next Annual report should cover the period 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2019, to align with the Boards financial cycle and partners operating years).

The Board is aware of the ever-changing nature of the environment in which safeguarding services operate, and will direct their attention and efforts taking a dynamic and proactive approach, reviewing priorities on a regular basis. The Board has also identified individual themes that will be focused on throughout the year and these will be identified in the Board's Forward Plan and the work programmes of the sub-groups.

- Conclude and implement the Strategic review of the LSCB and its sub-group priorities and activities, and ensure the views of children and young people inform future Board activity through better engagement.
- Continue to build on the Southend response to the Alan Wood review of LSCB's further to the publication of the Department for Education consultation on significant revisions to the statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (following the introduction of legislative changes through the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and new 'child death review' guidance.
- Support the development of multi-agency responses to neglect and assurances that there is a shared understanding of neglect that promotes the safety, well-being and development of children with consistency of support
- Understanding and assessing the impact on safeguarding of system changes and commissioning plans e.g. Sustainable Transformation Partnerships, the Transforming Care Programme and actively supporting the change programme system wide including workforce delivery issues
- Implement a new performance and risk framework to support the Board in delivering its statutory responsibilities – including understanding the impact of local resource commitment to safeguarding and funding plans.
- Develop and implement induction training and an ongoing development programme for Board members and recruit lay-members to replace recent resignations.

- Develop a revised audit programme to be overseen by the LSCB based on increased targeted audit activity and analysis that includes Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR), Thresholds, Child Sexual Exploitation, self-harm and suicide prevention.
- Conduct a review of safeguarding training and agree the Board's safeguarding training offer.
- Improve Board communication, review the Southend LSCB website and fully engage with social media.
- Improve understanding of the local response to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking to identify improvements needed.
- Work collaboratively with both Thurrock and Essex Councils on any initiatives arising from our new relationship with the Essex Police & Crime Commissioner.



## **SECTION 7 - APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1** Board membership and attendance October 2016 – end September 2017

**APPENDIX 2** Financial Report April 2016 to March 2017

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# APPENDIX 1 - Board membership and attendance October 2016 – end September 2017

✓	=	Attended by nominated representative or substitute.
Apologies	=	Formal apology received.
'-'	=	No formal apology received and did not attend.
Vacant	=	Position vacant following resignation from the Board
Not appointed	=	Post was vacant following resignation from the member agency/or postholder was not a member of the Board at the time of the meeting.

Agency/Role	Nov 2016	Feb 2017	Jun 2017	Sept 2017
Board Independent Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vice Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lay member	✓	Apologies	Vacant	Vacant
Lay member	✓	✓	Vacant	Vacant
Community lay member	Apologies	Apologies	-	Apologies
LSCB Executive Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Probation Services	✓	✓	✓	✓
CAFCASS	✓	✓	✓	✓
Essex CRC	✓	✓	✓	✓
SBC – Childrens Services	✓	✓	✓	✓
SBC – Learning Services	Not appointed	✓	✓	Apologies
SAVS	✓	✓	✓	Apologies
Essex PCC	Not appointed	✓	✓	Apologies
Police	✓	✓	✓	✓
Essex Fire & Rescue	✓	✓	✓	-
Ambulance Trust	-	-	Apologies	-
Southend CCG	✓	✓	✓	✓
Southend Hospital	✓	✓	✓	✓
Legal advisor	✓	✓	✓	Apologies
SEPT (now EPUT)	✓	✓	✓	Apologies
NELFT	✓	✓	✓	✓
Better Start	Apologies	-	-	✓
NHS England	Apologies	-	-	-
South Essex College	Apologies	✓	Apologies	✓
Schools: Secondary	Apologies	✓	✓	✓
Schools: Special Schools	Apologies	✓	✓	Apologies
PreSchool learning Alliance	-	-	-	Apologies
Public Health	-	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Executive Councillor	Apologies	✓	Apologies	Apologies

## APPENDIX 2 - Financial Report April 2016 to March 2017

Agency	Percentage Contribution	Contribution
Southend Borough Council	49.5%	£43,065
Clinical Commissioning Group	26.0%	£22,620
Police & Crime Commissioner	16.5%	£14,355
National Probation Service	3.6%	£3,132
Essex Rehabilitation Company	3.6%	£3,132
CAFCASS	0.8%	£696
<b>Total contributions</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£87,000</b>

The LSCB shared a business manager and part-time administrative staff with the Safeguarding Children Board and there is a considerable 'in kind' contribution from partners to the Board, Executive and sub-groups - a major resource which is difficult to quantify, but is critical to the effective functioning of the LSCB.

For the year 2016-17 the LSCB's expenditure was as follows:

Description	Expenditure (£)
Total employees	£66,743.99
Total supplies and services (includes chairs remuneration and meeting/training costs)	£55,358.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>£122,102.70</b>

During the year £34,000 was drawn down from reserves and reserves carried forward were £10,900.

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# **Annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding children by Southend Council's Children's Social Care Services**

Prepared by John O'Loughlin, Director of Children's Services and Ruth Baker, Group Manager Children's Service Transformation

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council with information in order to give assurance about the functioning and effectiveness of the safeguarding of children and young people by children's social care
- 1.2 To support members to discharge their safeguarding duties in relation to children and young people
- 1.3 This report should be read alongside the annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the report is noted and the priority areas for improvement for 2018/19, as detailed in the Children's Service Improvement Plan, Appendix 1, are noted.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Children's social care service is the lead service area responsible for discharging the council's duties to assess need and to protect children assessed to be at risk of suffering, or suffering, significant harm. This duty is discharged in partnership with all Departments within the Council and partner agencies such as health, education, police, probation services and the third sector. The three statutory children's safeguarding agencies are the Local Authority, the Police and Health.
- 3.2 Our statutory duties are contained within the Children Act 1989, subsequent legislation and statutory guidance such as the Children Act 2004 and Working Together 2015. It should be noted that Working Together is in the process of being revised. The consultation period ended on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017. We have submitted our views on the proposed changes, to be contained within Working Together 2018, following a report to the Executive Departmental Management Team (People).
- 3.3 Case holding Health and Care Professional Council (HCPC) registered children's social workers, across 7 teams, are the lead professionals for children in need, children in need of protection, children in care and care leavers from 12 weeks gestation to 18 years of age or 25 years of age for care leavers attending University or who are disabled. In addition children with

additional needs, needs which cannot be met solely by universal service provision, are supported by early help family support services, placement and resources service, youth offending service and the quality assurance service.

- 3.4 In April 2016 Ofsted, the regulatory body for children's social care, undertook an inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers.
- 3.5 The outcome of the inspection was that children's services in Southend required improvement to be good. The services for children looked after and children in need of help and protection and management, leadership and governance all require improvement to be good. The performance of adoption services and the experiences of care leavers were both judged to be good by Ofsted.
- 3.6 The regulatory framework for the inspection of children's services has changed and the new inspection framework will begin in April 2018. We do not anticipate that we will be inspected until the autumn of 2018 at the earliest however our focus on improving services, and the experience of children and families in Southend, remains a priority regardless of when we are next subject to regulatory inspection.
- 3.7 Significant amounts of review, planning and activity has continued in response to the outcome of the inspection and the finding of two peer reviews of children's services which were undertaken during 2017.
- 3.8 This report will outline key safeguarding activity but will not replicate the detailed information which is contained within Children's Services Improvement Plan nor that which is reported to the Children's Services Improvement Board.
- 3.9 The activity and performance in relation to Looked after Children is reported in a separate suite of reports to Cabinet. Namely the Corporate Parenting Annual Report and reports relating to the regulated fostering and adoption services. These reports include information relating to safeguarding such as the quality of placements for looked after children and looked after children missing from care.

#### **4. Performance**

- 4.1 Performance continues to be regularly and robustly monitored. Team, service and group managers have access to 'live' performance data for their service areas. Children's Services Departmental Management Team (CSDMT) review performance at a monthly meeting supported by managers from the data and performance service.
- 4.2 Following feedback from the peer review undertaken by LB Westminster in September 2017 we have assured ourselves that our newly appointed team managers are able to access the performance data they require.

- 4.3 Performance is reported to EDMT on a monthly basis with particular focus on areas where performance has dropped below target or has not yet reached target.
- 4.4 The Children's Services Improvement Board, which is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes the Leader of the Council, Executive Member for Children and Learning and shadow portfolio holder as members, receive progress reports including performance measures. The Board meets bi-monthly.
- 4.5 The lead member for Children and Learning will continue to meet regularly with the Director of Children's Services to review performance and any identify safeguarding concerns.
- 4.6 In October 2017 we changed from one case management system, Care First, to another, Liquid Logic. This means that at the time of the writing of this report it takes longer to verify the performance data we have. This is due to the impact of a period of time where different case management systems have been used. We have a number of control measures in place which means that, despite this, we are able to access live data on children's cases and are therefore able to meet the safeguarding needs of individual children.
- 4.7 During 2017 we have seen improvement in performance in relation to statutory visits to looked after children and children subject to child protection plans. Visits to children subject to child protection plans stood at 96.2% in mid-November and for Looked After Children at 86.9% at the end of October 2017 (validated data). We have not yet met our target however this is an area of significant and sustained progress.
- 4.8 We have seen an upward trend for another area of focus; the timeliness of child protection investigations. We remain below target however we had seen an improvement of 35.7% in the twelve months to September 2017.
- 4.9 We have also seen improvements in the proportion of decisions made in relation to new referrals within 24 hours of the referral being received following further revisions to the process and changes in management oversight.

## **5. Quality Assurance**

- 5.1 The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is currently being revised to incorporate learning from the peer review undertaken by LB Westminster. The revised quality assurance framework will support improved practice within Children's Services. The framework incorporates audits of the files of foster carers, adoptive parents, supervised contact and assessments undertaken at the Marigold Family Resource Centre.

- 5.2 The revised framework will include greater opportunities for case holding practitioners to engage in case audit activity. This will support the dissemination of learning throughout the service.
- 5.3 During 2017 we have increased both the level and speed of manager response when practice within a case audit identifies that it is not to a good standard. This gives assurance that the audit activity has a direct impact on, and benefit to, the experience of children.
- 5.4 Case audit activity enables us to identify areas of challenge and take action to make improvements. Improvements have been seen in relation to child in need cases, timely recording and reviewing officer activity. Planning and management oversight is stronger. Continued areas of challenge include the recording of supervision, recording the sharing of reports with parents and consistently recording statutory home visits.
- 5.5 The LSCB undertake multi-agency quality assurance activity and this is reported to the LSCB Executive and monitored by the LSCB Monitoring Sub-group. This activity is currently being reviewed.

## 6. Summary of areas of challenge

- 6.1 We have commissioned a review of demand across the children's system which will inform our planning during 2018. We have commissioned Research in Practice to undertake the review. Research in Practice are an organisation who have supported evidence-informed practice and social policy in children's services since 1996.
- 6.2 Activity within the service has decreased in some areas during 2017 but remains higher than in 2015 in relation to looked after children..

	31/03/2015	31/03/2016	30/09/2016	30/09/2017	% change
Number of children subject to child protection plans	184	188	209	148	-20%
Number of Looked After Children	229	258	280	278	+18%
Number of children subject to Interim Care Orders	20	41	58	42	+110%

- 6.3 The impact of the increase in numbers of children is an increase in caseload for social workers and for independent reviewing officers. This results in challenges in making improvements in practice and in performance. It should be noted that



due to changes in practice being seen in terms of demand (placement panel, edge of care team, an increase in capacity to deliver family group conferences) and investment in the service with additional staff being employed) we are beginning to see reductions in caseloads for practitioners.

- 6.4 Some of the increase in numbers of looked after children relates to changes in children's status when they are cared for by family members. Some arrangements which had been considered as private family arrangements are now considered as meaning that a child has become looked after. This remains an area of focus and the implementation of Restorative Practice will support more families to find their own solutions together, with support from the service, resulting in less children becoming looked after.
- 6.5 The significant increase in the number of children subject to interim care orders is a measure which gives an indication of the increase in applications made to the Family Court when children are experiencing significant harm in the care of their parents. The increase is replicated across Essex and Thurrock. Much of the increase is due to a change in case law relating to children accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act. The case law broadly states that Section 20 should only be used as a short term measure. The use of Section 20 is being reviewed to ensure we are complying with the recent case law. This should result in a reduction in the number of care proceedings being issued. It should be noted that we have not received criticism from the Court for issuing care proceedings unnecessarily.
- 6.6 The changes in practice in relation to safeguarding processes, which includes an increase in service manager oversight, has led to a reduction in the number of children requiring child protection plans.
- 6.7 As stated above the learning from the review of demand across the children's system which we have commissioned will inform further changes to service delivery. This will support us to meet demand while ensuring our intervention is at the right level; that we do not intervene in the lives of families unnecessarily and that when we do intervene we do so without delay.

## **7. Workforce**

- 7.1 As reported in previous years the recruitment of experienced social workers is a challenge being experienced on a national basis.
- 7.2 We have temporarily increased the establishment within children's services to support our improvement journey. We recruited two additional posts within the service and within HR to support our workforce and recruitment activity. We continue to lead the work within the Eastern Region relating to the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers.
- 7.3 The impact of this can be seen in the reduction in the number of vacancies and the reduction in the number of agency social workers within the service. All

team managers within Fieldwork Services, the services which discharge our statutory social work services to children, are now permanent employees. The present position is that we have 2 permanent vacancies and 2 temporary vacancies. Caseloads have reduced to an average of 22.

- 7.4 It should be noted that there was a period of instability within the workforce in Fieldwork Services during Q1 and part of Q2 prior to the full impact of the additional focus and resource relating to recruitment being felt. The instability, which included a number of vacant posts, was a contributory factor to children experiencing changes in social workers and practitioners holding higher caseloads.
- 7.5 Our recruitment strategy is currently being revised. We acknowledge that this is a key element to enable us to continue to make improvements as the quality of our workforce has a direct correlation to the experience of children.
- 7.6 We successfully delivered a social work academy during 2016/17 and have taken the learning into a revised programme for 2017/18. Four social workers in the academy moved into permanently established roles in August 2017 replacing agency social workers. We have recruited 5 newly qualified practitioners to our new programme and they took up post in November 2017.
- 7.7 We are engaging in a regional 'step up to social work' programme which supports fast tracked Masters level students entering the social work profession. We are also engaging with the return to social work programme.
- 7.8 We commission training based on identified need. Need is identified from learning from case reviews and areas identified regionally and nationally. Training commissioned for 2018 has been commissioned to support the Improvement Plan. Training in relation to child sexual exploitation continues to be delivered as is core safeguarding training.
- 7.9 All permanent staff within children's services, including managers, social workers, alternatively qualified and business support staff are enrolled on Restorative Practice training which is being delivered between December 2017 and June 2018. Restorative Practice is the model of practice we are committed to in Southend and our commitment to training all staff is evidence of how significant an element of our practice it is. Senior Leaders within the Council, including the Chief Executive, members of the Corporate Management Team, the portfolio holder and lead member will be attending a half-day briefing on Restorative Practice in January 2018.
- 7.10 During both peer reviews in 2017 the review teams reported that social workers and other practitioners felt well supported by their managers and were able to access a wide variety of training and development opportunities.

7.11 Supervision of social workers, including the opportunity to access reflective supervision, remains a priority for Children's Services. Ofsted reported favourably on supervision within the service. The quality of supervision will continue to be measured as part of the QAF. We know that the frequency and quality of formal supervision, as opposed to the informal supervision and management oversight we see, is not yet consistently evidenced to a high standard.

7.12 The revised improvement plan includes an outcome which address the need to create an environment where good practice can flourish. As part of this outcome we are setting clear practice and behavioural expectations alongside ensuring practitioners and managers have the support they need to perform well.

## **8. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children**

8.1 We continue to focus on missing children and child sexual exploitation as a priority area.

8.2 The CSE strategy and action plan has been revised and the associated actions are monitored by the LSCB.

8.3 We have recruited a practice lead for CSE which supports a clear conduit between strategy, research and practice on the ground. The post holder supports practitioners and also reviews the intelligence held by children's services and partner agencies to ensure we focus the resources of the partnership where they are most needed.

8.4 There is currently one significant operations relating to CSE. The strategic oversight of the operation is undertaken by a multi-agency board of senior managers chaired by the Director of Children's Services.

8.5 The operational management of the work of partners, with the primary focus being the welfare and safety of children, is overseen by a group chaired by the Group Manager for Early Help, Family Support and YOS. We have recruited an additional experienced qualified social worker to be the lead practitioner for the group of young women who have been identified as part of this operation.

## **9. Radicalisation and Extremism**

9.1 The implementation of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on 1 July placed a duty on local authorities and other public bodies to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism", as part of the Prevent Duty.

- 9.2 Southend's Channel panel continues to meet to review cases, of both adults and children, where there has been an assessment that a person is at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- 9.3 If safeguarding concerns are identified the usual statutory processes are undertaken by children's social care.
- 9.4 During 2017 there have been very few children referred to the Channel panel.
- 9.5 It should be noted that the Government has proposed that the lead agency to manage the Prevent programme should change from being the Police to being the Local Authority. Due to the small numbers of adults and children referred in Southend, and in greater Essex as a whole. It is likely that Southend, Essex and Thurrock will join together to plan discharge this duty across the region when the changes come into force. There is currently no indication from the Government of the timescale for the changes to be made nor specific details of what the changes will be.

## **10. Overall summary**

- 10.1 The Children's Services Improvement Plan will continue to be the vehicle to improve services for children in need of help and protection. We have revised the improvement plan and now focus our activity on six overarching outcomes.
- 10.2 The revised Improvement Plan uses a model of outcome based accountability (OBA) to drive impactful and sustainable improvement.
- 10.3 The Improvement Board and Children's Scrutiny Panel will each meet 6 times a year. There will therefore be oversight and scrutiny each month and this will result in any delay in meeting targets and actions being challenged in a timely manner.
- 10.4 The improvements will supported by a number of other strategies within the service including the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, Recruitment Strategy and Sufficiency Strategy (recruitment of carers for looked after children).

2016-17

Annual Report on the Effectiveness of  
Safeguarding Adults in Southend

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**Annual Report on the Effectiveness of  
Safeguarding Adults in Southend**

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## SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Foreword – by Independent Chair, Liz Chidgey

I am very pleased to be introducing the Annual report covering my first year as Independent Chair for the Southend on Sea Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) and welcome the opportunity to publish information on the work of the board and its sub groups.

It is vital that we communicate with the public to both raise awareness on safeguarding issues but also to provide information on the actions being taken and the results being achieved.

2016/17 was a busy year for the board with considerable work being completed in support of our vision:

*to ensure the safety and protection of adults with care and support needs within the borough; that is, adults who have care or support needs and who are subsequently less able than others to defend themselves against the threat of abuse, exploitation, or neglect.*

We have a very strong and committed board and I am grateful for the ongoing support for the partnership, which has developed as reflected in this report and shows what was actually done both as a partnership and through the work of participating partners.

The report contains details of how safeguarding has been promoted and developed throughout Southend, through the work of the Board and its sub groups, which are populated by senior representatives from our statutory partners, along with other agencies including representatives from the voluntary and community sector.

It highlights the programme of work of the Board, undertaken over the past twelve months, and shows how partners have worked together to achieve its objectives and implement its Strategic Plan 2016-19. Details of the work and outcomes that have been achieved are provided in this report and it is essential that the work undertaken over the past year is recognised and celebrated.

The report also offers a commentary about the prospects and challenges for 2017/18 and aims to demonstrate the commitment of the Safeguarding Adults Board and recognition of our responsibilities to the people of Southend on Sea and what they have the right to expect from local safeguarding services.

This report provides detail on the actions taken during the year and there have been no cases in the last year that met the criteria for commissioning a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR). (A SAR is commissioned when an adult with care and support needs dies as a result of abuse or neglect, or is known or suspected to have experienced serious abuse or neglect, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult), However we have been finalising the actions and recommendations carried forward from SAR Anne which was published last year.



It is my responsibility to support and encourage partners and agencies in Southend to work collaboratively for the benefit of adults with care and support needs and bring about continual improvement. It is also part of my role to hold agencies to account ensuring that individually, they do what they say they are going to do, and that collectively, agencies are working together to address issues surrounding abuse and neglect.

As the chair, I am satisfied that the agencies that are represented at the board and its sub-groups continue to demonstrate their high level of commitment to keeping people safe. I am very mindful of pressures on partners in terms of resources and time and grateful to all those who have engaged in the work of the SSAB.

I hope that you find this report both interesting and of reassurance that the board is being very active in driving forward improvements. There is a lot of detail in this annual report about which I will not comment further here. Importantly however, regardless of whatever concerns might be triggered in the minds of readers, the assurance offered by me is that Safeguarding Adults Board members and the organisations they represent know and are open about the reality of the challenges they face. They are willing to engage with each other in collaborative working and willing to contribute to thinking ahead about responsibilities, risks, ambitions and priorities.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the commitment of all our partners, who once again have delivered a great deal in the past 12 months, and who continue to contribute to improving the way we all work together to protect adults with care and support needs from the risk or experience of abuse. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of all front line practitioners who work in the field of safeguarding adults with care and support needs, including the public and voluntary and community sectors.

As we move into the next few months the Board is committed to taking this agenda forward with the continued support of all our partners remembering importantly that “safeguarding is everyone’s business”.

## **1.2 Introduction**

This annual report is for the period 1st October 2016 to 30th September 2017 and is produced as part of the Board’s statutory duty under The Care Act 2014 and Chapter 14 of the Care & Support Guidance. It is one of the three core statutory duties of the Chair of the Board to publish an annual report in relation to the preceding financial year, on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.

This Annual Report gives details of progress on our priorities and Strategic Plan 2016-2019; and provides an overview of SAB activities and achievements during 2016–2017 summarising the effectiveness of safeguarding activity in Southend including the work of individual member agencies.

The report will be submitted to the Local Authority Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Essex Police, the Chair of Southend Health and Wellbeing Board and Southend Healthwatch.

More information about the statutory role and function of the Safeguarding Adults Board can be found at [www.safeguardingsouthend.co.uk](http://www.safeguardingsouthend.co.uk)

### **1.3 Role of the Southend Safeguarding Adults Board**

The Southend Safeguarding Adults Board is a statutory body that works to make sure that all agencies are working together to help keep adults in Southend safe from harm and to protect the rights of citizens to be safeguarded under the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

#### **Vision**

**The Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) aims to ensure the safety and protection of adults with care and support needs within the borough; that is, adults who have care or support needs and who are subsequently less able than others to defend themselves against the threat of abuse, exploitation, or neglect.**

#### **Statutory Duties**

The Board has three core duties defined by the Care Act 2014:

- developing and publishing an annual strategic plan setting out how we will meet our objectives;
- publishing an annual report which sets out what we have achieved; and
- commissioning safeguarding adults reviews where serious abuse or death has occurred and learning can take place.

### **1.4 The Safeguarding Principles**

The work of the Southend SAB is underpinned by the safeguarding principles which were set out by the government in the statutory guidance accompanying the Care Act 2014. The following six principles apply to all sectors and settings including care and support services. The principles inform the ways in which we work with adults.

- Empowerment – The presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent, supporting the rights of the individual to lead an independent life based on self-determination.
- Prevention - It is better to take action before harm occurs, including access to information on how to prevent or stop abuse, neglect and concerns about care quality or dignity.

- Proportionality - Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection - Support and representation for those in greatest need, including identifying and protecting people who are unable to take their own decisions, or to protect themselves or their assets.
- Partnership - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding, with agencies recognising that it may be necessary to share confidential information, but that any disclosure should be compliant with relevant legislation.

### **1.5 Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019**

The Strategic Plan 2016-2019 is being reviewed at the time of writing this report and the reader is advised to refer to the updated plan which will be available on the SAB website on completion.

### **1.6 Governance**

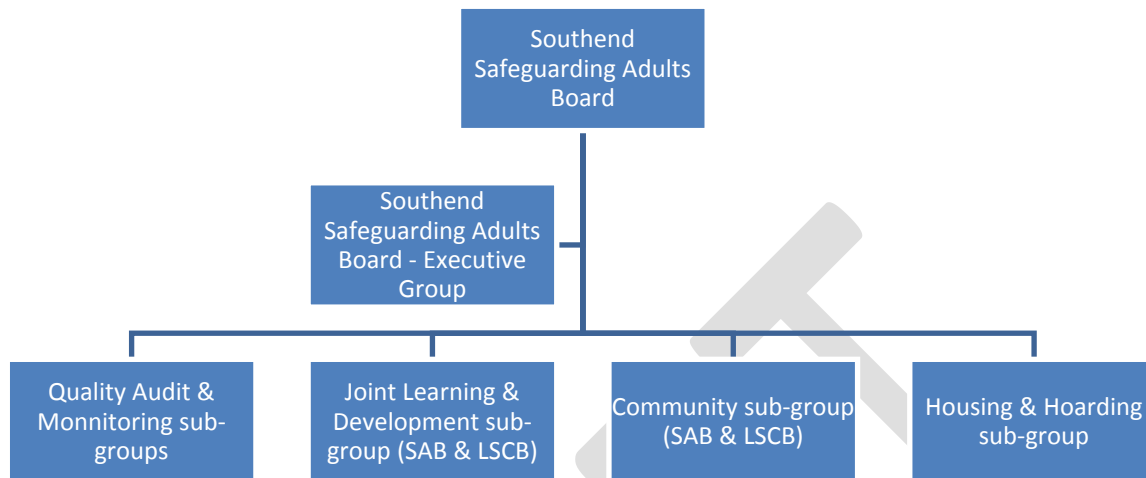
Southend Safeguarding Adults Board is chaired by its Independent Chair, Elizabeth Chidgey and meets four times a year bringing partners together from: Southend Council, Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Services, East of England Ambulance Trust, Southend Clinical Commissioning Group, health trusts, probation services, the voluntary sector and lay members, representing health, care and support providers and the people who use those services across Southend.

The Chair is accountable to the Chief Executive of the local authority in chairing the SAB and overseeing its work programme. However, she is accountable only to the Board for the decisions she takes in that role. The role of Vice-Chair is undertaken by the Deputy Chief Executive (People) – Southend Borough Council.

The Board is attended by representatives from the partner agencies with a high level of engagement. Information about Board attendance can be found in Section 6.

The SAB has four subgroups chaired by senior members from across the partner agencies. We report on the business of each of the sub-groups operating during 2016-17 in this report and the structure below reflects the shape of the Board.

## 1.7 Board Structure 2016/17



A review of the structure of the SAB board was initiated during 2016-2017 and changes agreed as a result will be initiated in 2018.

## 1.8 Strategic Links to other Boards and Partnerships

The Chair of the SAB is a member of the Health and Well-Being Board and presents the SAB Annual Report to the Board; She meets regularly with the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director - People, the Lead Member for adult safeguarding, the Leader of the Council, and is also the Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board. The Chair also meets regularly with the Council's Scrutiny Committee. Links are also maintained through representation on key strategic partnerships:

- Community Safety Partnership
- The Health & Wellbeing Board
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Essex Safeguarding Adults Board
- Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board

Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET) work in partnership to provide a common approach to safeguarding across the county. The SET Safeguarding Adults Guidelines set out the system and process all organisations should use to raise safeguarding concerns. This includes a framework for confidentiality and information sharing across agencies.

## 1.9 Funding

The work of the Board is financed by contributions from partner agencies, of which currently over 45% comes from the council. In addition to financial contributions, partner agencies contribute significant amounts of staff time to support the delivery of the board's work programme, and to support training delivery. Full budget information is

contained within **Appendix 2**.

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## **SECTION 2**

### **ASPIRATIONS FOR 2016-17**

(taken from Strategic Plan 2016-19 and 2015-16 Annual Report)

In the 2015-2016 Annual Report the Board identified the following key areas for development:

- Ensure the provision of services for young people who require extra support and assessment but do not meet the criteria for statutory adult services are integrated and accessible. The SAB proposes there should be a one-year funded project to look at the scale of this group and their needs, and how to work with them with, possibly using a worker in the third sector. The project to report back at the end of the year on issues and recommendations for this role in the future.
- Improving the experiences of adults discharged from hospital ensuring good coordination between relevant partner agencies. The SAB to propose a project to look at drilling down into the issues underpinning hospital discharge concerns and develop “whole system” recommendations to be rolled out across the partnership to improve the safety, coherence, and consistency of this process for patients.
- The provision of funding by commissioning agencies for a specialist hoarding support service
- The provision of support services for domestic abuse perpetrators who are not in the criminal justice system, which has a good evidence base, by commissioning agencies
- Increase capacity of Health Based Places of Safety (HBPOS) in Southend and Essex as a whole, and a reduction in the use of section 136. As a matter of urgency Southend CCG to look into the reasons for the delays in refurbishing the existing section 136 health suites, and ensure adequate levels of local provision. (*Referred to the CCG for action November 2016*).
- Commissioning agencies to ensure there is sufficient capacity in registered care homes and domiciliary care providers to meet the demands of an increasing elderly population
- Ensuring DoLs assessments continue to be undertaken in a timely way to ensure the rights of adults with additional care and support needs are safeguarded effectively

The 2016 -19 Strategic Plan further identified the following key strategic priorities:

- Assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place, as defined by the Care Act 2014 and other legislation, and that they are effective, person-centred and outcome-focused

- Assure itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults with additional care and support needs in Southend
- Prevent abuse and neglect where possible and ensure timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
- Assure itself that arrangements to implement the Domestic Abuse Strategy are robust and that information sharing and assessment of risk is undertaken in a timely way
- Respond to the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda, so called Honour-Based Abuse and Modern Slavery, providing a comprehensive programme of work in partnership with other strategic boards
- Assure itself that safeguarding adults services are informed and improved by the views of adults with additional care and support needs and their family or carers
- Improve practitioner awareness and understanding of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS)
- Assure itself that adults who are vulnerable to exploitation or radicalization are identified and supported appropriately

## **SECTION 3**

### **ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016/17 - HIGHLIGHTS**

This year the SAB undertook significant work to ensure that it fulfilled its statutory responsibilities and welcomed new Independent Chair, Liz Chidgey, who took up post in January 2017 following the retirement of Chris Doorly.

#### **3.1 Safeguarding Adults Board**

- Commissioned and commenced a review of the Board's priorities and the development of a performance and risk management framework to support the Board's ambitions
- Looked at how local agencies address safeguarding where Female Genital Mutilation is identified
- Initiated a review of how Modern Slavery and Exploitation is identified and responded to by local health organisations
- Identified a local issue with an NHS Health Provider where Do Not Attempt Resuscitation Orders are in place and how these orders are managed locally – ongoing assurance required on how these are put in place and monitored
- Transition from Child to adult services addressed in SAR 'Anne' Learning
- Responded to the introduction of the Herbert Protocol and agreed wide dissemination of the initiative with partners
- Recommended a multi-agency review of pathways for people leaving prison with care and support needs – complete
- Ensuring that the SAB had effective oversight of the implications for safeguarding of the recent merger of local CCGs.
- Appropriate adult for people in custody review by SAB Executive
- HMIC published an adverse reports on Essex Police who were invited to report on how they were addressing the issues raised. They provided action plans and gave a brief overview of the inspections and their outcomes. Members were advised that following the inspection outcomes, the force has changed its branding, culture and training programme.
- East of England Ambulance Services working to make changes to their safeguarding referral systems with any changes expected to be seen during 2017/18
- SAB has continued to work closely with the Southend Safeguarding Children's



Board. Joint activity has included Joint Sub-groups for Learning and Development and Community.

- The Independent Chair presented the SAB Annual Report to Southend Health and Wellbeing Board, outlining performance against Business Plan objectives in the previous financial year. This provided the opportunity for the Health and Wellbeing Board to take on issues raised by SAB.
- SAB has continued to work with the Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Adult Boards to ensure a consistent approach is taken to safeguarding across the three local authority areas. Projects this year include:
  - Updating the SET Safeguarding Adults Guidelines (published March 2017)
  - Reviewing the SET Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Policy and Guidance
  - Template Safeguarding Adults Policy (published May 2017)
  - Missing Person Protocol (published June 2017)
- On a strategic level, the SAB Chair remains a member of the Health & Wellbeing Board in order to better coordinate the work of the Board with the work of the SAB and to provide appropriate ongoing challenge and support in relation to safeguarding.
- The Chair also meets regularly with senior Board members from the CCG, Essex Police and Children's Services on an individual basis to maintain oversight of the system.
- The SAB continues to monitor actions plans from any external inspections of member agencies with a specific on safeguarding. These include Essex Police, and the Health System.

### **SAB Executive**

The SAB Executive drives the work of the Board and directs the sub-group work in accordance with the strategic plan and makes recommendations to the Board for improving the system. It will also deliver recommendations from the Board regarding any developments to the strategic plan

The sub-groups identified in Section 2 support the work of the Board and delivery of its strategic plans. The sub-groups benefit from multi-agency representation with staff from statutory and non-statutory agencies attending and contributing to the work. The sub-groups review single agency performance reports and report to SAB Executive, and are actively looking to better involve people who use services and their representatives in the work of the subgroups.

Activity within the sub-groups for 2016/17 included:

- Audit programme – initiating review/scoping of staff understanding of exploitation
- Discharge letters to GP replaced by e-discharge, care homes now working with a reporting tool to record when discharges are unsatisfactory (includes medication)
- SAR action plan monitoring and learning from cases reviews and the introduction of a transition protocol
- Increased understanding of the LeDeR programme
- Basic safeguarding e-learning updated for 2016 and available to all partners via Virtual College
- Reviewing safeguarding training performance reports from partners and sharing good practice
- Shared learning on paraffin based treatments – learning from Lewisham SAR
- Increased awareness and understanding of hoarding and introduced a process to gain consent and share information

### **3.2 Board Partners' Achievements in improving Adult Safeguarding 2016-17**

The SAB has been involved in partnership activity throughout the 2016/17 period and the following organisations regularly report into the SAB and have all provided an Annual Statement (available on request), summarised below.

- Essex Police
- Southend Borough Council
- Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (SUHFT) – Now called Essex
- Southend CCG
- Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS)
- South Essex Homes (SEH)
- Essex Fire and Rescue (EFRS)
- National Probation Service (NPS)
- Essex Community Rehabilitation Company (ECRC)
- NHS England

Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding Adults Guidelines are used by all partner agencies and a SET audit which is carried out biennially was conducted during this reporting period and the audit results have informed partners' strategic plans. All partners have an identified designated safeguarding adults lead.

Partners have assured SAB that they have policies in place for the safeguarding of adults which are consistent and comply with the above guidelines to ensure that safeguarding arrangements comply with the statutory duties within the Care Act 2014.

SUHFT introduced new strategic safeguarding plans and policies during the year which reflect the Safeguarding Adults Board Safeguarding Strategy as well as local and national safeguarding guidance. A Mental Capacity Act audit assessment was carried out to assist the Trust to understand how staff can be supported and agreed that a revised mental capacity assessment tool should be implemented during 2017-2018.

ECRC undertakes monthly quality audits with the assessment of safeguarding practice as a key component and have Partner Link workers who work with current and former partners of men participating in the domestic abuse perpetrator work and actively work to safeguarding those partners and children.

SAVS is a membership organisation and supports members to ensure they have the right safeguarding policies and processes in place as well as delivering projects for vulnerable people including Safe as Houses funded by the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner - supporting older people who have been identified as vulnerable to postal scams and preventing new people succumbing.

The NPS is committed to reducing re-offending, preventing victims and protecting the public and engages in partnership working to safeguard adults with the aim of preventing abuse and harm to adults and preventing victims. The NPS acts to safeguard adults by engaging in several forms of partnership working including both operational and strategic ensuring that information and lessons learnt are shared.

During the year South Essex Homes reviewed and updated their Safeguarding Policy and have a dedicated organisation safeguarding lead and actively support the SAB chairing and attending sub-groups as required.

Essex Police actively provide information to members of the public under 'Clare's Law'- The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS Right to Ask and Right to Know) and have written and published a Domestic Abuse Action Plan and progress is ongoing against this.

There is a pilot scheme within the Adult Triage Team to improve the management of referrals for vulnerable adults, which helps to ensure that the most vulnerable cases are actioned and reduces bureaucracy by eliminating inappropriate referrals.

Essex Police has a team of dedicated Hate Crime Officers (HCOs) who manage the safeguarding of and support to high risk and high and medium risk repeat victims. The HCOs also have a community engagement role by attending Local Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and Hate Crime Panels to promote the reporting of hate crime and to increase the understanding of hate crime in communities.

## **Southend Borough Council**

Southend Borough Council aim to support all of their residents to have opportunities to thrive- to achieve their hopes and aspirations and experience a life free from abuse and risk of harm. The Department of Adult Services and Housing, in partnership with the

other directorate areas within the Council, work collaboratively with residents and partners to this end. The principle of wellbeing and coproduction is the golden thread that runs through their work, aiming to prevent, reduce and delay the impact of harm, working to keep the adult and their family at the centre.

**Case Studies:** Partnership Initiatives

Over the period of 2016 to date, Southend Borough Council has collaborated with its partners on a number of projects and initiatives to improve preventative and supportive practice.

**Social Work:** Competent social work practice is the bedrock on which to create an empowered community. Signalling a belief that corporately social work is integral to our business and the wellbeing of our community, the Council appointed the current Safeguarding Adults' Manager as the Principal Social Worker for Adults. The Principal Social Worker role is intrinsic in ensuring the delivery of robust, competent and inspirational social work practice. The role also advises at a strategic and operational level, managers and leaders of the Council in complex or controversial cases and on developing case or other law relating to social work practice.

The Council, led by their social worker workforce, has been working with their partners on transforming and integrating their assessment and care provision and have launched a number of routine locality-based multi-disciplinary meetings with partners aiming to support individuals to make informed decisions about their care without having to tell their story repeatedly.

The Council works proactively with the University of Essex (Southend), Anglia Ruskin University and the Open University to recruit students to undertake placements in Southend. They also offer opportunities for more experienced staff to consolidate their learning and practice experience by undertaking specialist qualifications such as the Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP), the Best Interest Assessor (BIA) and the Practice Educator course.

The Council hosted two spectacular events for student social workers and Council practitioners to celebrate social work. These events (the World Social Work Day in March 2017 and the Practitioners' Event in October 2017) were made possible with the support and strength of our partnerships. They were supported by the University of Essex- Southend, the Southend and District Sorooptimists, Essex University Partnership Trust and Southend CCG. During the Practitioner Event, the Council also welcomed Lyn Romeo, Chief Social Worker for Adults.

**Oral Health:** Southend Borough Council, in partnership with Southend Clinical Commissioning Group (Southend CCG) facilitated some interactive workshops for care home and domiciliary staff across the borough to support and promote effective oral health. The sessions, led by the NHS Community Dentistry Service, were well received and gave care staff the opportunity to explore the importance of achieving good oral health and its impact on nutrition, pain management, physical health and dignity.

**Post Falls Guidance:** The Council collaborated with the CCG and care providers to

produce '*Post Falls Guidance*', which supports providers and families with advice and tips to support someone who has experienced a fall. This guidance is useful to work through to ensure that the person receives appropriate first aid and medical treatment to try to reduce the risk of undetected injury.

**Covert Medication:** Led by Southend CCG, the Council contributed heavily towards the development of the *Covert Medication Flowchart*, which has been issued to all primary care providers, specialist nurse providers, care home and domiciliary providers as well as social work and nursing staff. This guidance, read in conjunction with the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Mental Capacity Act procedures, supports the person administering medication to do so safely whilst safeguarding the person's human rights.

**Herbert Protocol:** Southend-on-Sea Borough Council continues to support Essex Police to implement a national scheme locally, which aims to help reduce the time taken to gather vital information when a person with dementia goes missing.

The [Herbert Protocol](#), named after war veteran George Herbert who lived with dementia, encourages carers, friends and relatives of people with dementia to fill in a [form](#) which could help authorities find their loved one quicker in the event of them going missing.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council continues to work with Essex Partnership Trust, Essex Police, Essex County Council, Thurrock Council, and the Alzheimer's Society and other providers to encourage and support the completion of the form which can then be passed to the police in the event someone with dementia cannot be found. The form records all the vital details in one place including medication required, mobile numbers, places previously located or attended, a photo, details of daily routine etc. In the event someone goes missing a completed form saves vital time allowing officers the ability to get on with searching rather than gathering basic information.

#### **Modern Slavery and Forced Marriage:**

In December 2016, Southend Borough Council, in partnership with Southend Safeguarding Adults Board, Southend LSCB, Essex Police and the University of Essex-Southend, held a symposium for professions. This conference was supported by Stop the Traffik, the Salvation Army and the Essex and Kent Constabulary. To support the success of this conference, additional multi-agency training continues on a rolling basis commissioned by Southend Borough Council, open to all partners, on modern slavery and trafficking responses and responsibilities. This training is facilitated by Stop the Traffik with input from Essex and Kent Police Constabulary.

#### **Keep Safe**

Children's Services and the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safeguarding Children's Boards continued to fund the Keep Safe Scheme for 2016/17. Keeping Safe is a scheme to support people aged 16+ who have a learning disability and access the community independently. The scheme operates in Southend and due to its' success, has rolled out to Leigh-on-Sea as well. The scheme is facilitated by SHIELDS

Parliament, a self-advocacy group. Local businesses are signed up to the scheme by agreeing to provide use of a telephone in a public area for a person who may be experiencing an emergency or who is in distress. Participants in the scheme would look for the yellow and black telephone sticker in the shop window. Using the emergency number card or fob provided, the person themselves would call their carer or parent. If required, the shop would assist or call the police if needed.

The scheme supports people to reduce the feelings of fear or agitation in accessing the community alone. The Keep Safe scheme is being championed by Southend SAVS and Essex Police and we are working in partnership to launch this initiative.

### **Domestic Abuse:**

Southend Borough Council - Adult Social Care is a key partner in the delivery of domestic abuse support in Southend. Adult Social Care has a duty to support adults at risk with care and support needs who may be experiencing domestic abuse, which may occur alongside a myriad of other social needs. Adult Social Care is represented in the work of the Southend Domestic Abuse Strategy Group, which delivers against the Southend Domestic Abuse Strategy.

During 2015/16, the Safeguarding Adults Manager worked collaboratively with the Joint Domestic Triage Group to support and develop the administrative process until the introduction of the Southend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Team (MARAT).

### **3.3 Training**

A well-attended SET Safeguarding Adults Board Members Development Event focussed on the legal responsibilities of Board members was held in April 2017 funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner and facilitated by Michael Mandlestam.

From July 2016, Adult Social Care is an embedded member of the Southend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Team (MARAT). Council practitioners and operational SAB partners receive standard and advanced training from Essex Police to ensure that workers appropriately risk assess victims using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment tool. Since July, Adult Services has deployed a qualified social worker into the joint team to add skill, leadership and knowledge of the adult framework. This move signals our commitment to safeguarding children and adults and working collaboratively with our partners to this end.

Adult Social Care is working to continuously review the provision of domestic abuse training to ensure that practitioners have the required skills to support people experiencing harm.

The Safeguarding Adults Service Manager (SBC) works closely with the Council's Workforce Commissioning Team to ensure that the training and continuous professional development commissioned for providers and practitioners is appropriate and informed by national and local learning.

During 2016/2017, the SAB/LSCB Workforce Development Subgroup continued the

rolling programme of quality assuring and approving all Safeguarding and Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS) training programmes.

The Council, in partnership with the NHS, Essex Fire and Rescue Services and Essex Police, recently delivered a conference for providers of care to adults. The conference covered a range of topics from flu prevention and vaccination, hospital admission and discharge pathway, the Herbert Protocol, to advice about fire, safety and safe application and use of emollient creams.

The Council continues to commission a range of training and continuous professional development opportunities for the workforce, many of which are free. The Southend Training Network covers a range of topics, inclusive of safeguarding: <http://www.southendtrainingnetwork.uk/Communication>

Partners have also provided a range of training including:

- SUHFT require all clinical staff to complete Safeguarding training according to their role – this training is a mix of e-learning and face to face with uptake and attendance regularly monitored with 80% compliance in year which is below the 90% target and additional sessions are now planned. PREVENT training (Levels 1 – 3) has also been delivered to SUHFT staff.
- ECRC has reviewed its safeguarding training and safer recruitment training during the year
- EFRS introduced new e-learning Safeguarding training as well as PREVENT training and information sessions for all staff and have a Community Safety team delivering talks and giving practical advice to vulnerable groups on home fire safety.
- SAVS provide training in partnership with the SAB in several areas of safeguarding, e.g. Modern Slavery, Prevent, Human Trafficking
- SEH provide safeguarding training to all front line staff and include safeguarding awareness sessions for their contractors and residents living in their sheltered schemes; requiring all contractors and sub-contractors who work for them to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- During 2016/17 NHS England facilitated a number of regional training sessions including:
  - Supervision Training Delivered by NSPCC aimed at the adult workforce;
  - Safeguarding Adult Conference – target audience frontline health and care professionals from primary and secondary care. The conference covered issues including self-neglect, trafficking, radicalisation, cybercrime and fraud, data protection and information sharing in relation to safeguarding;

- Information Governance Training;
- Self-neglect masterclass.

NHS England (East DCO) has also completed two programmes of work:

- MCA workbook and DVD resource specifically produced for health staff to use. This material is hosted on the SCIE website and is thus freely available to health professionals and can be accessed via: <http://www.scie.org.uk/mca-directory/trainingcourses/nhs-workbook/6arthur.asp>
- MCA Training: The Medical Protection Society in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council and NHS England developed and launched a new Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty online learning tool specifically for health professionals across England and Wales.

Essex Police are:

- rolling out three-day face to face training in Public Protection Awareness with over 2000 staff already completing it.
- The Officer's Guide to Vulnerability which was produced in 2016 (a pocket sized booklet) has been updated and is now available via mobile data terminals (MDTs). This ensures a consistent approach is taken across the whole force when dealing with such issues as safeguarding, victim welfare and the pursuit of outcomes.
- Since April 2016, a series of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events have been taking place within the Force to enhance the skills of officers and staff in specific areas of investigation such as file preparation and Achieving Best Evidence interviews.

### **3.4 Key Successes and improvements in practice**

- SUHFT identifies their key success within adult safeguarding for 2016 – 2017 as:
  - To continue to develop and strengthen the Adult Safeguarding Governance Structure.
  - Introduced a new reporting safeguarding governance and assurance process during 2016-2017 including the introduction of an Adults and Children's Safeguarding Committee
  - The introduction of a Trust Safeguarding Strategic Plan.
  - An open and transparent response to the Safeguarding Audit.
  - Partnership working with the Children's Safeguarding Team.



- The introduction of an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate Role.

- Essex Police

Essex Police have created a network of Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRC) allowing members of the public to report hate crimes at locations other than police stations as well as providing advice and support. The HIRC project has succeeded in forging improved links to existing and emerging communities in Southend and has been a factor in the increased reporting of hate crime in the district from 488 incidents in 2015/16 to 621 incidents in 2016/17. The project has begun to build a sustainable network of support, advice and reporting facilities which has increased peoples understanding of hate crime and willingness to report it.

Essex Police have been operating a Street Triage Scheme since 2015 and the key results for this year (April 2016 – March 2017) were:

- Attendance at 1385 incidents where it provided appropriate support and help to people experiencing a mental health crisis.
- It appropriately prevented 253 people being detained under section 136 MHA
- This has led to an almost 30% increase in the number of 136 MHA detentions that have been prevented.

Two Essex Adult Social Care members of staff have been recruited to the Operational Centre and are working with the Triage Team. This will ensure staff from both organisations engage face to face and allow the sharing of information to take place immediately

Mental Health represents a significant challenge due to legislative changes anticipated to be enacted in December 2017. This means that Police Custody can only be used as a Place of Safety where a person poses an imminent risk of death or serious injury to themselves or another person. As a result, the use of Custody has virtually ended with Hospital Emergency Departments now being used as a contingency place of safety when needed.

- ECRC engages with multi-agency arrangements to safeguard adults, particularly concerning the impact of domestic abuse and when involved with a perpetrator support the safeguarding process and where required hold those involved to account and take enforcement action.
- EFRS conduct Community Builder visits in the Southend area requested by other agencies or where referrals do not meet the threshold for a referral to the Access Team, also carrying out hoarding and social visits where other agencies have been in contact.
- SEH evicted 28 tenants a reduction from 45 the previous year – attributed to the support provided by their Community Development Team.

- South Essex Homes manages the two HUBs one in central Southend and one in Shoeburyness and over the past year the HUB has seen 1000 clients working in partnership with other agencies including Healthwatch, Social care, Southend College and health to provide advice and support.
- SAVS Safe as Houses service provided support to 503 households over the year and identified 250 people who were receiving scam mail and actively being scammed.

### **3.5 Key risks and challenges identified by partners**

#### **3.5.1 Southend University Hospital Foundation Trust**

SUHFT is part of the Mid and South Essex Success Regime Planning which will provide additional opportunities and challenges as the acute trusts work together to develop system wide solutions to challenges within healthcare. A review of safeguarding provision for both adults and children will form part of this process. This work has already begun and will continue into 2017 – 2018. To date the team has engaged and participated with discussions on the safeguarding agenda within the Success Regime discussions. Regular updates have been provided to the Safeguarding Adults Board.

In June 2016 the Trust received a formal Care Quality Commission (CQC) report, which gave the Trust a rating of “Requires Improvement”. The Adult Safeguarding Team has continued to work on developing the safeguarding service within the Trust to contribute to the wider programme to meet the CQC requirements.

#### **3.5.2 Essex Community Rehabilitation Company**

ECRC has a new model for “through the gate resettlement” and will need to ensure service delivery adapts to the changed priorities to ensure best outcomes

#### **3.5.3 South Essex Homes**

Unfortunately, there is no funding available to SEH to assist residents who are suffering from Diogenes syndrome (hoarding) however the HUB board will be looking to seek funding to support clearance work for residents who have been referred to the Hoarding and Housing sub-panel.

### **3.5.4 Essex Police**

Plans are being developed Essex wide between Health and Essex Police to manage the changes to 136 Mental Health Act detentions in custody. This covers areas such as the conveyance of those detained to a health based place of safety (HBPOS) and contingency plans should there be no HBPOS at the time a detention occurs.

### **3.6 Key areas for development identified by partners**

Southend Borough Council is currently working with our Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding Adults Working Group colleagues on revising or development a number of procedures and guidance. Some of these include updating the SET MCA and DOLs policy, procedure and assessment forms, launching the SET Local Area Designate Officer process, and doing more joint work around explore the understanding of the public and workforce regarding exploitation.

The Council continues to move strongly forward with partners, working collaboratively with our community to shape future service design where autonomy, self-determination and choice are the key drivers. To assist our practitioners to continue enhance their competency, no matter what stage they are in their career progression, Southend Borough Council is reviewing our supervision and audit processes. With the knowledge and support of industry leaders such as Community Care Informs and Skills for Care in this work, the Council is looking positively towards the future.

SUHFT has identified the need to continue to work on keeping up with the changing priorities of adult safeguarding and ensure all aspects of safeguarding and categories of abuse are considered within its systems. Their strategic plan includes specific work streams on cyber bullying, female genital mutilation and modern slavery. This work will be led by the hospital safeguarding operational groups.

A number of areas for improvement were identified by the SET audit; for example, staff need to be supported to be confident in recognising and reporting certain types of abuse including modern slavery and human trafficking. Work has commenced on looking further at these areas with partners via the Quality Monitoring and Audit sub-group and will be continued next year.

South Essex Homes being able to secure funding for its continued community services activity which is not statutorily funded and to expand the current services offered by Careline to support vulnerable clients to continue to live independently.

Essex Police identify the following as their key areas for development:

- Essex Police continue to support the abstraction levels to ensure all front-line staff are provided with the Public Protection Course, supporting officers in practice and thereby protecting vulnerable adults.

- The Investigation Advisory Team to continue to ensure that internal practices and investigation are of a high standard and improvement plans for the force are progressing.
- Ensuring that the College of Policing Monitoring of Authorised Professional Practice is continued to ensure best practice and national guidance is implemented.
- The HIRC network will be rolled out to ensure coverage over the whole of the county. HCOs will take on the role of training future HIRCs and HCAs cohorts ensuring fair distribution of these resources countywide.

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## **SECTION 4**

### **LEARNING FROM SAFEGUARDING ADULTS REVIEWS IN 2016 -17**

It is a requirement of the Care Act 2014 that the details of any Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) conducted during the year must be in the SAB Annual Report. It is the responsibility of the SAB Chair to decide whether or not a death or serious incident should be the subject of an SAR, which would involve commissioning an independent review and publishing a full report written by an author recruited for the purpose.

There were no Safeguarding Adults Reviews needing to be conducted during 2016/17, and there were no requests for SARs received.

During 2016/17 briefing papers concerning serious safeguarding incidents where individuals had been in receipt of services from statutory bodies and other organisations were considered by the Board.

There were outstanding actions from SAR Anne that was published last year and these have been progressed during 2016/17.

## **SECTION 5**

### **HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?**

Using both quantitative and qualitative data and information/case studies/stories for partners this section will provide a summary analysis of the outcomes of safeguarding activity over the year.

Southend is an exceptionally diverse and fast-changing borough. We have a population of 179,800 according to 2016 Office for National Statistics estimates, and around 30% of the population lives in areas classified as falling within the 30% most deprived areas in the country.

The number of older people (65+) in Southend living alone is estimated to have increased year on year since 2011 coupled with an increase of older people living in care homes.

Southend Joint Strategic Needs Assessment describes the health, care and wellbeing needs of the local population, this helps the Clinical Commissioning Group and Southend Council commission the best services to meet those needs

#### **5.1 Adult Safeguarding Activity 2016-17**

Southend Borough Council has produced an Annual Data Report with data sourced from the NHS Digital data set (the full report is available on request) see below for the report highlights.

#### **5.2 Safeguarding concerns**

There are two different types of safeguarding enquiries

The type of safeguarding enquiry depends on the characteristics of the adult at risk. If the adult fits the criteria outlined in Section 42 of the Care Act, then local authorities are required by law to conduct enquiries. Local authorities will sometimes decide to make safeguarding enquiries for adults who do not fit the Section 42 criteria.

#### **5.3 What the statistics are telling us**

The council collects information about safeguarding adults work in Southend, so we know how well people are being safeguarded. This information helps the Southend SAB decide what their next steps should be.

Data in relation to all safeguarding issues is monitored both locally and nationally. All safeguarding concerns and enquiries are recorded and co-ordinated by Southend Council. Progress from initial concern through to conclusion is monitored for timeliness

and quality across a wide variety of measures including the nature and location of harm, service user groups, outcomes, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. This information is scrutinised by the SAB sub-groups who report key issues and trends to the Board via the Executive group.

Southend Council submits returns annually to the Department of Health (DH) for collation and comparison of the key data across all authorities in England. The enquiry

In the period 2016 -17 there was an 37.5% increase in the numbers of individuals for whom a safeguarding concern has been identified, from 858 in 2015/16 to 1180 in 2016/17 with a decrease in the number of Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries of 2.8% as well as a decrease in the number of individuals involved in Section 42 enquiries from 542 in 2015/16 to 505 in 2016/17 with 86% of safeguarding concerns for Southend for unique individuals.

#### 5.4.1 Abuse Location

Abuse can happen anywhere; in someone’s own home, in a public place, in hospital, in a care home for example. It can happen when someone lives alone or with others. It is important to understand the circumstances of abuse, including the wider context such as whether others may be at risk of abuse, whether others have witnessed abuse and the role of family members and paid staff or professionals.

#### 5.4.2 Age

When looking at the ages of individuals involved in Section 42 enquiries the highest proportion of clients are aged between 18 and 64 years old and this age group has also shown an increase since 2014/15 with the proportion of 85-94 year olds declining (26.9% to 25.7%)

	Southend 2014/15	Southend 2015/16	Southend 2016/17
18-64 r	26.9%	35.2%	35/6%
65-74	13.5%	13.0%	11.9%
75-84	20.2%	20.4%	20.8%
85-94	33.7%	26.9%	25.7%
95+	5.8%	4.6%	5.9%

#### 5.4.3 Ethnicity

Southend had a high percentage of ‘white’ individuals involved in Section 42 enquiries and al ow percentage of Asian/Asian British individuals. When comparing Southend data across 3 years, proportions have remained consistent although in 2016/17 5% of ethnicities were ‘undeclared/not known’ compared to 0% in the previous 2 years.

#### 5.4.4 Primary Support Reason

The 'Primary Support Reason' is the main 'reason' why an adult requires support or care. When comparing 2016/17 data to previous years Southend have a smaller proportion of 'No support reason' than 2015.16 by 21.4% indicating that less individuals were involved in Section 42 enquiries that were not receiving any other service support from 2015/16

The chart below shows that the most common Primary Support Reason for people experiencing a Section 42 enquiry is Physical Support (40.2%).

Southend yearly comparison			
Primary Support Reason	Southend		
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Learning Disability Support	8.7%	5.5%	5.9%
Mental Health Support	7.7%	1.8%	7.8%
Physical Support	75.0%	31.2%	40.2%
Sensory Support	1.9%	0.0%	2.0%
Social Support	2.9%	0.0%	2.0%
Support with Memory and Cognition	2.9%	0.9%	2.9%
No Support Reason	1.0%	60.6%	39.2%

#### 5.4.5 Abuse Type

The charts below show that the most common abuse types recorded by people experiencing a Section 42 enquiry are neglect, physical abuse, psychological/emotional abuse and financial abuse.

Types of abuse	Southend		
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Physical	23.3%	19.6%	19.6%
Sexual	2.0%	4.7%	4.8%
Psychological and Emotional	19.3%	16.9%	18.5%
Financial and Material	19.3%	18.2%	17.9%
Discriminatory	0.7%	0.00%	0.0%
Institutional	3.3%	4.1%	1.8%
Neglect & Omission	32.0%	27.0%	25.0%
Other	0.0%	9.5%	12.5%

'Other' in the above table indicates type of abuse that were non-mandatory to submit (including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, modern slavery and self-neglect) and there was a 3% increase in these types from 2015/16:



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## **5.5 Safeguarding Outcomes**

The rate per 100,000 of concluded Section 42 enquiries was 450.1 and compared to 2015/16 the number of concluded Section 42 Enquiries has increased by 29.6% from 490 to 635 in 2016.

For those Section 42 Enquiries that were concluded in the year data is collected relating to mental capacity of the adult. In Southend the highest percentage was for adults that did not lack capacity, indicating that adults in Southend were more likely to make their own decision relating to their safeguarding incident. 7.7% recorded an answer of 'Don't know' and Southend had recorded an answer for every concluded Section 42 enquiry.

In all safeguarding enquiries the person at risk of abuse or neglect will be helped to stay safe from harm. If necessary, monitoring of their risk will be increased, and the frequency, type or location of their care may change. Action will be taken against the person who caused the harm. This might include removal from a service, further training or disciplinary action if they were a paid carer.

### **5.6 Case study – Safe as Houses (SAVs)**

Visited James and he explained he was very lonely and isolated since the death of his wife, he had been responding to scam mail as he thought he was helping charities out and it was giving him something to do in the day as he felt lost. The team explained how the scammers worked and that there was no benefit to the charities. James eventually disclosed he had been scammed out of £700. He is now a member of our Folk like Us project helping him to break his isolation and loneliness and build his resilience

## **5.7 Partners' effectiveness highlights**

### **5.7.1 Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust raised 128 safeguarding referrals to the relevant Local Authorities during 2016 - 2017. A further 28 safeguarding referrals were raised against the Trust and safeguarding enquiries undertaken.

Themes / categories of these safeguarding enquiries were:

- Category of neglect: Care concerns, pressure area damage, medication errors, discharge failures, communication failure.
- Category of physical abuse / harm: Manual handling problems, use of restraint / restriction, falls, pain caused by a procedure.
- Category of financial abuse / harm: Loss of personal belongings

The Adult Safeguarding Team also responded to 351 requests for safeguarding advice from its staff or partner agencies during 2016 - 2017. The Trust has seen a positive

increase in staff requesting advice or raising adult safeguarding concerns with the Trust Adult Safeguarding Team. Work to continue to improve on this needs to continue during 2017 – 2018.

### **5.7.2 South Essex Homes**

58 Referrals SET/SAF over 50% of which were from sheltered housing (25) and half of these were for either financial or domestic abuse.

### **5.7.3. Essex Police**

A total of 227 SETSAF referrals for the Westcliff, Leigh and Southend area were made by Essex Police for the period October 2016 to September 2017 – which is an increase from previous years and reflects the investment made in training and awareness of safeguarding.

26 domestic violence protection notices were completed which resulted in 21 domestic violence protection orders being granted by the court and this coupled with 12 applications under the domestic violence disclosure scheme and 127 applications under the Right to Ask part of the scheme and 127 applications under the Right to Know (Clare's Law).

## **SECTION 6 – Conclusions and what the Board will be working on in 2017-2018**

The report provides evidence of quality partnership and commitment to making Southend a safer place for people who may be vulnerable. The SAB continues to develop and is having more impact on the coordination of safeguarding adults' services in the Southend area and has challenged and monitored the performance and progress of partner agencies and strategic bodies on many key areas as described in Section 3.

To ensure that the progress made by the Board during this year continues across the partnership, the following areas for development have been identified for the next 18 months (during the production of this Annual Report it has been agreed that the next Annual report should cover the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, to align with the Boards financial cycle and partners operating years).

The Board are aware of the ever-changing nature of the safeguarding environment in which safeguarding services operate, and will direct their attention and efforts to respond, taking a dynamic and proactive approach requiring Board priorities to be reviewed on a regular basis. The Board has also identified individual themes that will be focussed on throughout the year and these will be identified in the Board's Forward Plan.

- Conclude and implement the Strategic review of the SAB and its sub-group priorities and activities and ensure that engagement with the service user is improved and their voices captured to inform future Board activity
- Board members – put in place induction training and ongoing development programme, recruit lay-members to replace recent resignations
- Implement a new performance and risk framework to support the Board in delivering its statutory responsibilities – including understanding the impact of local resource commitment to safeguarding and funding plans
- Understanding and assessing the impact on safeguarding of system changes and commissioning plans e.g. Sustainable Transformation Partnerships, the Transforming Care Programme and actively supporting the change programme system wide including workforce delivery issues
- Develop a revised audit programme to be overseen by the SAB
- Conduct a review and agree the Board's safeguarding training offer
- Increase targeted audit activity and analysis – including suicide prevention and the Mental Health Strategy, modern slavery, Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR)
- Improve Board communication and review the website and engage fully with social media
- Further work on understanding local responses to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking and identifying any improvements needed
- Making Safeguarding Personal – Review how both the practice and culture underpinning Making Safeguarding Personal are embedded across the whole Safeguarding system – including both audit and a review of partners

commissioning plans, and the promotion of partnerships, the development of preventative approaches and sharing best practice and learning

- Work collaboratively with both Thurrock and Essex Councils on any initiatives arising from our new relationship with the Essex Police & Crime Commissioner
- Supporting partners to identify alternative funding sources to enhance services and their capacity to safeguard effectively

In summary we are moving forward in further refining and targeting our safeguarding assurance activity to ensure that local services are both maintained and continually improved in response to the Boards challenge. We will ensure that we use data and information to inform our key activity over the coming year to enable us focus our resources effectively.

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**SECTION 7  
APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1**

Board membership and attendance October 2016 – end September 2017 (nominated representative or substitute)

<b>Agency or Role</b>	<b>29/11/2016</b>	<b>8/2/2017</b>	<b>14/6/2017</b>	<b>13/9/2017</b>
Independent Chair Chris Doorly/Liz Chidgey	√	√	√	√
Vice Chair – Simon Leftley - SBC	√	√	√	√
DIAL Southend	√			
EEAST	√	√		
Healthwatch Southend	√	√	√	
South Essex Homes	√			
CRC	√	√	√	√
NPS	√	√		√
Southend Hospital	√	√		√
SEPT (now EPUT)	√	√	√	√
Adult Social Care	√	√	√	√
CQC	√			
NHS Southend CCG	√	√	√	√
Lay member	√			
Lay member	√	√		
PohWER	n/a	n/a	n/a	√
SAVS	√	√	√	√
Essex Police	√	√	√	√
SBC - Safeguarding	√	√	√	√
Essex Fire & Rescue		√		
SEAOP (CEOP?)				
SBC – Trading Standards	√			√
Essex PCC	n/a			
Public Health				√
Executive Councillor	Lesley Salter	Lesley Salter	Lesley Salter	Lesley Salter

## APPENDIX 2

Financial Report April 2016 to March 2017

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>
Southend Borough Council	48%	£41,928
Southend CCG	26%	£22,711
Essex Police	26%	£22,711
Total contributions		£87,350

The SAB shared a business manager and part-time administrative staff with the Safeguarding Children Board and there is a considerable 'in kind' contribution of partners to both the Board and sub-groups, a major resource which is difficult to quantify, but is critical to the effective functioning of the SAB

For the year 2016-17 the SAB's expenditure was as follows:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Expenditure (£)</b>
Total employees	£66,679.28
Total supplies and services (includes chairs remuneration and meeting/training costs)	£19,218.59
Total	£85,897.87

During the year £3,350 was drawn down from reserves leaving an unspent budget of £4,802 and reserves carried forward of £4,800.

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## **Assurance Prevention Statement: Safeguarding Adults**

**2016/17**

### **Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's Adult Services**

Prepared by: Sharon Houlden: Director of Adult Services and Housing

Sarah Range: Group Manager for Safeguarding Adults

Purpose of the report:

- To support Elected Members to discharge their safeguarding duties in relation to adults at risk.
- To provide the Southend-on-Sea Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), Chief Executive and the Leader of Southend Borough Council with information in order to give assurances about the preventative functioning and effectiveness of safeguarding adults' enquiries by the Council's People Department: Adult Services & Housing.

This report should be read in conjunction with the 2016/17 Annual Report for the Southend-on-Sea Safeguarding Adults Board.

It is the aim of Southend Borough Council to support all of our residents to have opportunities to thrive- to achieve their hopes and aspirations and experience a life free from abuse and risk of harm. The Department of Adult Services and Housing, in partnership with the other directorate areas within the Council, work collaboratively with residents and our partners to this end. The principle of wellbeing and coproduction is the golden thread that runs through our work. We aim to prevent, reduce and delay the impact of harm, working to keep the adult and their family at the centre.

### **Case Studies: Partnership Initiatives**

Over the period of 2016 to date, Southend Borough Council has collaborated with its partners on a number of projects and initiatives to improve preventative and supportive practice.

**Social Work:** Competent social work practice is the bedrock on which to create an empowered community. Signalling a belief that corporately social work is integral to our business and the wellbeing of our community, the Council appointed the current

Safeguarding Adults' Manager as the Principal Social Worker for Adults. The Principal Social Worker role is intrinsic in ensuring the delivery of robust, competent and inspirational social work practice. The role also advises at a strategic and operational level, managers and leaders of the Council in complex or controversial cases and on developing case or other law relating to social work practice.

The Council, led by our social worker workforce, has been working with our partners on transforming and integrating our assessment and care provision. We have launched a number of routine locality-based multi-disciplinary meetings, which are attended by a host of Council, NHS and Trust professionals and third sector partners with the aim to support individuals to make informed decisions about their care without having to tell their story repeatedly.

Student social workers are vital to the Council's vibrant workforce. The Council works proactively with the University of Essex (Southend), Anglia Ruskin University and the Open University to recruit students to undertake placements in Southend. We also offer opportunities for our more experienced staff to consolidate their learning and practice experience by undertaking specialist qualifications such as the Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP), the Best Interest Assessor (BIA) and the Practice Educator course.

The Council hosted two spectacular events for student social workers and Council practitioners to celebrate social work. These events (the World Social Work Day in March 2017 and the Practitioners' Event in October 2017) were made possible with the support and strength of our partnerships. They were supported by the University of Essex- Southend, the Southend and District Soroptimists, Essex University Partnership Trust and Southend CCG. During the Practitioner Event, the Council also welcomed Lyn Romeo, Chief Social Worker for Adults.

**Oral Health:** Southend Borough Council, in partnership with Southend Clinical Commissioning Group (Southend CCG) facilitated some interactive workshops for care home and domiciliary staff across the borough to support and promote effective oral health. The sessions, led by the NHS Community Dentistry Service, were well received and gave care staff the opportunity to explore the importance of achieving good oral health and its impact on nutrition, pain management, physical health and dignity.

**Post Falls Guidance:** The Council also collaborated with the CCG and care providers to produce '*Post Falls Guidance*', which supports providers and families with advice and tips to support someone who has experienced a fall. This guidance is useful to work through to ensure that the person receives appropriate first aid and medical treatment to try to reduce the risk of undetected injury.

**Covert Medication:** Led by Southend CCG, the Council contributed heavily towards the development of the *Covert Medication Flowchart*, which has been issued to all primary care providers, specialist nurse providers, care home and domiciliary providers as well as social work and nursing staff. This guidance, read in conjunction with the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Mental Capacity Act procedures, supports the person administering medication to do so safely whilst safeguarding the person's human rights.

**Herbert Protocol:** Southend-on-Sea Borough Council continues to support Essex Police to implement a national scheme locally, which aims to help reduce the time taken to gather vital information when a person with dementia goes missing.

The [Herbert Protocol](#), named after war veteran George Herbert who lived with dementia, encourages carers, friends and relatives of people with dementia to fill in a [form](#) which could help authorities find their loved one quicker in the event of them going missing.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council continues to work with Essex Partnership Trust, Essex Police, Essex County Council, Thurrock Council, and the Alzheimer's Society and our various providers to encourage and support the completion of the form which can then be passed to the police in the event someone with dementia cannot be found. The form records all the vital details in one place including medication required, mobile numbers, places previously located or attended, a photo, details of daily routine etc. In the event someone goes missing a completed form saves vital time allowing officers the ability to get on with searching rather than gathering basic information.

### **Modern Slavery and Forced Marriage:**

In December 2016, Southend Borough Council, in partnership with Southend Safeguarding Adults Board, Southend LSCB, Essex Police and the University of Essex-Southend, held a symposium for professions. This conference was supported by Stop the Traffik, the Salvation Army and the Essex and Kent Constabulary. To support the success of this conference, additional multi-agency training continues on a rolling basis commissioned by Southend Borough Council, open to all partners, on modern slavery and trafficking responses and responsibilities. This training is facilitated by Stop the Traffik with input from Essex and Kent Police Constabulary.

### **Keep Safe**

Children's Services and the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safeguarding Children's Boards continued to fund the Keep Safe Scheme for 2016/17. Keeping Safe is a scheme to support people aged 16+ who have a learning disability and access the community independently. The scheme operates in Southend and due to its' success, has rolled out to Leigh-on-Sea as well. The scheme is facilitated by SHIELDS Parliament, a self-advocacy group. Local businesses are signed up to the scheme by agreeing to provide use of a telephone in a public area for a person who may be experiencing an emergency or who is in distress. Participants in the scheme would look for the yellow and black telephone sticker in the shop window. Using the emergency number card or fob provided, the person themselves would call their carer or parent. If required, the shop would assist or call the police if needed.

The scheme supports people to reduce the feelings of fear or agitation in accessing the community alone. The Keep Safe scheme is being championed by Southend SAVS and Essex Police and we are working in partnership to launch this initiative.

## **Domestic Abuse:**

Southend Borough Council - Adult Social Care is a key partner in the delivery of domestic abuse support in Southend. Adult Social Care has a duty to support adults at risk with care and support needs who may be experiencing domestic abuse, which may occur alongside a myriad of other social needs. Adult Social Care is represented in the work of the Southend Domestic Abuse Strategy Group, which delivers against the Southend Domestic Abuse Strategy.

During 2015/16, the Safeguarding Adults Manager worked collaboratively with the Joint Domestic Triage Group to support and develop the administrative process until the introduction of the Southend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Team (MARAT).

From July 2016, Adult Social Care is an embedded member of the Southend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Team (MARAT). Council practitioners and operational SAB partners receive standard and advanced training from Essex Police to ensure that workers appropriately risk assess victims using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment tool. Since July, Adult Services has deployed a qualified social worker into the joint team to add skill, leadership and knowledge of the adult framework. This move signals our commitment to safeguarding children and adults and working collaboratively with our partners to this end.

Adult Social Care is working to continuously review the provision of domestic abuse training to ensure that practitioners have the required skills to support people experiencing harm.

## **Workforce Development:**

The Safeguarding Adults Service Manager works closely with the Council's Workforce Commissioning Team to ensure that the training and continuous professional development commissioned for providers and practitioners is appropriate and informed by national and local learning.

During 2016/2017, the SAB/LSCB Workforce Development Subgroup continued the rolling programme of quality assuring and approving all Safeguarding and Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS) training programmes.

The Council, in partnership with the NHS, Essex Fire and Rescue Services and Essex Police, recently delivered a conference for providers of care to adults. The conference covered a range of topics from flu prevention and vaccination, hospital admission and discharge pathway, the Herbert Protocol, to advice about fire, safety and safe application and use of emollient creams.

The Council continues to commission a range of training and continuous professional development opportunities for the workforce, many of which are free. The Southend Training Network covers a range of topics, inclusive of safeguarding: <http://www.southendtrainingnetwork.uk/Communication>

## **Areas for Development**

Southend Borough Council is currently working with our Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding Adults Working Group colleagues on revising or development a number of procedures and guidance. Some of these include updating the SET MCA and DOLs policy, procedure and assessment forms, launching the SET Local Area Designate Officer process, and doing more joint work around explore the understanding of the public and workforce regarding exploitation.

The Council continues to move strongly forward with partners, working collaboratively with our community to shape future service design where autonomy, self-determination and choice are the key drivers. To assist our practitioners to continue enhance their competency, no matter what stage they are in their career progression, Southend Borough Council is reviewing our supervision and audit processes. With the knowledge and support of industry leaders such as Community Care Informs and Skills for Care in this work, the Council is looking positively towards the future.

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# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)  
to  
Cabinet  
on  
9th January 2018**

**Agenda  
Item No.**

Report prepared by: Diane Keens, Group Manager,  
Placements Resources and John O'Loughlin, Director of  
Children's Services

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**Journey of the Child Bi-Annual Report and updated  
Statements of Purpose for Adoption & Fostering  
People Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Councillor James Courtenay  
*A Part 1 Public Agenda Item***

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## **1. Purpose of Report**

To report on the activities of Children's Services, 2016/17 and for the first 6 months of 2017/18 and to review the updated Statements of Purpose for Adoption & Fostering in line with Standard 18.3 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards and Standard 16 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards.

This is the first report of this nature and covers an 18 month period. Future reports will be provided on a bi-annual basis.

## **2. Recommendation**

1.1 That the Bi- Annual Report, as at Appendix 1, is noted.

2.2 That the updated Statements of Purpose, as at Appendices 2 & 3, are approved.

## **3. Background**

2.1 The provision, standards and operations of the adoption service is governed by:

- The Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2003 (updated 2005);
- The Adoption Agencies regulations 2005 (updated 2013 & 2014);
- The Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (amendment ) regulations 2011;
- The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential amendments) Regulations 2012;

- The Adoption Minimum Standards 2011.

3.2 National Minimum Standard 25.6 states that the Executive side of the Local Authority should:

- a) receive written reports on the management and outcomes of the agency twice a year;
- b) monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;
- c) satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

3.3 Fostering National Minimum Standard 18.3 requires that that the Executive side of the Local Authority formally approves the Statement of Purpose and reviews it at least annually.

The provision, standard and operations of the Fostering service is governed by:

- The Local Authority Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (updated 2013)
- Fostering minimum Standards 2011 and the
- Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 4, 2011

3.2 National Minimum Standard 25.7 states that the Executive side of the Local Authority

- a) receive written reports on the management and financial state of the fostering service every 3 months
- b) monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the service is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users
- c) satisfy themselves that the provider is complying with the conditions of registration.

3.3 Members annually receive a number of reports from children's services regarding the outcomes for children and families in Southend through the variety of services provided. For 2017/18 a new report has been developed which will allow members a much clearer overview of the services and how they work together to support children and their families. It is intended that this will be a bi-annual report and will combine the following reports:

- Adoption Annual Report
- Fostering Annual Report
- Sufficiency Strategy
- Marigold Annual Report



- Work of the Virtual School (although a more detailed report will be provided in this area)
- Private Fostering Annual Report

3.4 Alongside the above formal reports, the new report will cover all areas of Children's services including the Independent Reviewing Officers; Early Help; Statutory Child Care Services; Audits and financial management.

3.5 The aim of the new Report format is to help members to see the "Journey of the Child" and to be able to more easily challenge senior managers, with all information being in one place.

#### **4. Other Options**

4.1 The other option is to continue to present a number of independent reports to meet the statutory requirement for fostering and adoption services to present a report to the Executive twice yearly and to update the Statement of Purpose annually.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendations**

5.1 The new format will allow for Fostering and Adoption regulations to be fully met, whilst ensuring that members have a clear overall picture of children's service in Southend and how these two services are embedded in the wider service.

5.1 The Adoption and Fostering Statements of Purpose have been updated and require cabinet approval.

#### **6. Corporate Implications**

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

The new Bi-Annual Report provides evidence of the annual activity of children's services which directly supports the delivery of the Corporate Priority to 'Improve Outcomes for Vulnerable Children'.

6.2 Financial Implications

If children's service does not work efficiently there will be significant financial impact for Southend Borough Council. The format of the new report allows members a much clearer overall picture of the service and the areas of financial pressure

6.3 Legal Implications

It is a statutory requirement to present a report in respect of the adoption & fostering to the Executive twice yearly and to update the Statements of Purpose annually. This new format ensures that this statutory requirement is met whilst embedding the work of these services solidly within the whole of children's services.

#### 6.4 People Implications

The new format will ensure a clearer picture as to any pressures within children's services and implications arising from this. At present there are no implications identified as a result of this report.

#### 6.5 Property Implications

None

#### 6.6 Consultation

Consultation across children's services is addressed within the body of this report. Over coming reports this element of children's services will be strengthened to ensure that the voice of the child and their families are clearer heard and addressed in service development. This will ensure that the experience for children and their families remains at the centre of all that we do.

#### 6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Sufficiency planning in fostering and adoption has identified the need to target families for children from Eastern European countries as well as those willing to care for children with additional needs and those who are older at the point of placement. Changes in demographics will be closely monitored within this bi-annual report and changes more clearly evidenced throughout.

#### 6.8 Risk Assessment

No significant risks identified.

#### 6.9 Value for Money

The format of this report will allow members to have clearer overall picture of the service offered and how value for money remains a high priority. Developments within individual services will highlight areas where there is the development of income generation and where national policies impact on the ability to deliver both value for money and savings.

None

#### 6.11 Environmental Impact

None

### **7. Background Papers**

## **8. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Journey of the Child Bi-Annual report

Appendix 2: Updated Statement of Purpose- Adoption December 2017

Appendix 3: Updated Statement of Purpose - Fostering December 2017

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# **Appendix 1**

**Children's Social Care**

**The Journey of the Child**

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**Bi-Annual report to Members**

**October 2017**

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## **Introduction**

This report highlights activity in Southend Children's Social Care in 2016/17 and outlines our priorities moving forward. Reporting to members to date has been through a number of individual reports and the aim of this report is to begin to bring together various reports to show the journey of the child and their family in a more holistic way. Reports will in future be provided in January and July each year. This report incorporates updates on all service areas and includes our six monthly adoption report, annual looked after children report, quarterly fostering report and annual private fostering report.

Elected councillors have a crucial role to play in setting the strategic direction of Council services and in determining policy and priorities for the local community. All elected councillors share a responsibility to safeguard children and young people within the borough. This includes a corporate parenting responsibility towards the children the Council looks after. Councillors champion the cause of looked after children and care leavers when carrying out their duties, keeping themselves apprised of important national issues and developments in policy and practice.

Recent reports, including "No good options: Report of the inquiry into children's social care in England" (March 2017) and Improving Social Care Services (2016) highlight the need to develop frameworks to drive practice improvement and for this to be effective, challenge to Children's Services by elected councillors is vital. In 2015, the Casey report stated that *"Challenge means setting aspirational targets, knowing how far to stretch the organisation, asking searching questions, drilling down into information and data, ensuring targets are kept to and agreed actions implemented"*.

This report is produced to support councillors in discharging their responsibilities towards children and families in Southend. The report will be tabled for discussion at the Corporate Parenting group, Cabinet, Full Council, People Scrutiny Committee and the Southend Local Safeguarding Board.

## **Southend Corporate Parenting Group**

The role of Corporate Parenting requires ownership and leadership at the most senior levels. In Southend the Corporate Parenting group is chaired by the Director of Children's Services, John O'Loughlin and the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor James Courtenay. The group plays a key strategic role in ensuring that the Council and its partners meet their corporate parenting responsibilities.

Throughout 2016/17 the Corporate Parenting group has focused on a number of important topics: safeguarding of looked after children, including from child sexual exploitation; foster carer recruitment; educational attainment of looked after children; the work of the Foster Family Community and the work of the Improvement Board.



The Corporate Parenting Group has had a particular focus this year on hearing from young people and their families about their experiences of working with Southend Children's Social Care and how the changes made to service delivery have impacted on their lives.

*For more information see Corporate Parenting annual report 2016/17*

## **National Context**

Southend continues to contribute to shaping national policy and debate related to Children's Social Care. Senior Leaders are regular members of the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS). The ADCS is the national leadership association in England for statutory directors of children's services and other children's services professionals in leadership roles.

Key topics that continue to receive attention nationally include the cumulative impact of welfare reform on children and families; child sexual exploitation, children leaving care and the Regional Adoption programme. Many of these issues are covered in more detail in this report.

### *Adoption*

There has been a drive over the past two years to move towards Regional Adoption Agencies, to widen adoption recruitment; improve support for adopters and to place more children with adoptive families within shorter timescales. This has been driven by the DfE in conjunction with the Adoption leadership Board, a national board with a remit to drive significant improvements in the national adoption system of England. Southend are members of the Eastern Region Adoption Board. The Regional Adoption Board brings together Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies and adopters, with the purpose of creating more opportunities for children within the region, to have timely access to secure permanent homes and to provide children with the best possible life chances.

In addition, Southend are working closely with Essex, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Luton and Adoption plus and Barnardo's (Voluntary adoption agencies) and Adopter Voice to form a Regional Adoption Alliance (Adopt East). It is hoped that this will create a larger pool of approved adopters with whom to match children. The Education & Adoption Act 2016 gives the Government the power to force 'failing' authorities to take action to merge services

Further information about adoption in Southend is included on page 56

### *Troubled Families Programme*

On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 the Expanded Troubled Families Programme was launched nationally; the Expanded Programme increases reach to children living in families across the age range who are in need of help through a broad range of criteria including domestic violence, parents or children with health needs, including mental health. The programme continues the existing criteria for parents and children involved in anti-social behaviour, school attendance and young people and adults who are out of work. The Troubled Families

Programme was initially named “Streets Ahead”, however as part of the service transformation when services were integrated in April 2016, this programme was incorporated into the Early Help offer.

*Information about Troubled Families programme in Southend is included on page 9.*

### *Revised 2017 Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance*

*Working Together to Safeguard Children* is the key statutory guidance for professionals working with children in England. It sets out how organisations and individuals should work together and how practitioners should conduct the assessment of children. The guidance was revised in February 2017, updating the previous versions published in 2013 and 2015.

The new version is not a major review but adds a definition of child sexual exploitation.

### *Extremism and Radicalisation*

In the working together to Safeguard children 2015 guidance local authorities were required to establish channel panels from April 2015 to assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and to arrange support to those individuals identified as high risk. Panels must include the local authority and the chief officer of the local police. Southend’s Channel Panel has been in place since autumn 2015, in line with the Council’s Prevent strategy.

### *OFSTED Joint Targeted Area Inspection Framework*

In September 2013, Ofsted launched the single inspection framework (SIF) for the inspection of services for children in need and protection, children looked after and care leavers. A number of thematic inspections were run alongside the SIF inspection programme.

In January 2016 updated inspection framework and guidance was published for Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI). This framework was further updated in August 2016 & April 2017.

JTAIs are carried out under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. They are an inspection of multi-agency arrangements for:

- the response to all forms of child abuse, neglect and exploitation at the point of identification
- the quality and impact of assessment, planning and decision making in response to notifications and referrals
- protecting children and young people at risk of a specific type (or types) of harm, or the support and care of children looked after and/or care leavers (evaluated through a deep dive investigation into the experiences of these children)

- the leadership and management of this work
- The effectiveness of the LSCB in relation to this work.

Inspectors will evaluate children's experiences against the full range of the criteria, looking for strengths, areas for development and examples of innovative and effective practice. Inspections have continued under the existing Single Inspection Framework whilst the new framework is evaluated through several pilot inspections.

## **Children's Social Care in Southend**

Children's Social Care works with families to support safe and effective parenting where, without the support, the welfare and safety of a child would be compromised. The aim of Southend is to help families to help themselves and to always work with families at the right level at the right time, promoting early help services. The core focus of the service is child protection, supporting families where children are on the edge of care, securing positive long term life chances for children permanently looked after by the Council and supporting care leavers.

Southend are currently developing a clear model of practice for Southend based on a restorative approach, to ensure that we can improve the lives of children and families cost effectively and intervene with families at the right time and at the right level. Southend's leadership team are working pro-actively towards implementing and embedding the new approach across social care and partners. The leadership team are specifically recruited to drive forward improvement; balance risk and have an ability to manage the complex issues that this brings.

Whilst we continue to develop our ways of working, there are some key principles and beliefs that continue to underpin our approach. These include:

- That children are best cared for within their families wherever this can be safely achieved
- That in investing in providing services that are able to promote change within families is more effective and efficient in general than removing children and placing them in alternative care
- The restorative approach of working with families ('doing with' rather than 'doing to') is more likely to be effective in sustaining long term change than more directive interventions
- That in most cases decisions about interventions should be made by those who understand the child and families/carers best, which will normally be the practitioners who are working with them. However, responsibility for decisions that have life-long implications for the child (for example the decision to remove a child from the care of their family) should always be held by senior managers
- That social work is a skilled and highly responsible task and that to perform well, practitioners need to feel well supported within their work setting and to have

opportunities for regular supervision and reflection on their interventions with others

- That having a multi-agency perspective on a situation enhances assessments and helps to mitigate risk by ensuring that alternative viewpoints are explored

Over the past year, significant changes have been made to the structure of Children’s Social Care to ensure a more seamless journey for children and their families. These changes are at this stage too recent to be able to fully evaluate their impact for those families with whom we are working.

#### Financial Performance

Over the last 3 financial years Children Social Care has contributed £3m to reduce on going budgeted revenue expenditure through planned efficiency savings in service delivery. Whilst recognising this saving contribution to the budget- as referenced in the Budget Setting Cabinet reports for 2017/18 – January and February 2017. Due to the volatility of Children Social Care pressures both nationally and locally, a children Social Care earmarked reserve of £2M was approved. The Children Social Care Budget for 2016/17 closed the financial year with a £0.65M overspend compared to funding levels, and after the required use of the £0.5M drawdown from the Children Social Care reserve.

As part of the budget setting process for 2017/18, £1.2M of savings were agreed and put forward. As financial pressures emerged during 2016/17 with increased looked after children numbers, the Children Social Care department has opened the 2017/18 financial year with considerable financial pressures. Due to the size of these financial pressures, it is likely there will be a requirement to draw down further from the children social care reserve in order to minimize pressures on budgeted funding in 2017/18.

Children Social Care- Direct Expenditure and Income	Gross £M	Income £M	Net £M
2017/18 Latest Budget	22.0	3.5	18.5
2016/17 Actual	23.4	3.3	20.1
2015/16 Actual	22.5	3.0	19.5

Children Social Care Budgeted Savings	£M
2017/18	1.2
2016/17	1.0
2015/16	0.8

The increase in PVI commissioning costs has been driven by an increase in care numbers and a consequent rise in the number of relatively more expensive independent fostering and residential placements required in the past 18 months. Alongside this, due to reduced capacity nationally within the private sector and a national increase in demand, we have seen an unprecedented rise in external costs for many of these placements.

Southend has supported a fee paid fostering team in-house for a number of years. This was fully reviewed and updated in 2015 to allow more carers to become fee paid in line with private agencies. Whilst this has increased the unit cost of an in-house carer, it remains significantly less expensive than private provision.

Expenditure on residential and secure placements has increased due to an increase in average cost from £3,183 per week in February 2016 to £3,809 per week in July 2017, while the number of children supported in this type of placement has remained fairly stable, rising slightly from around 18-21 children.

The children in need service has experienced a pressure on its Section 17 budget for the past few years, mainly resulting from increased accommodation costs and providing support to families with No Recourse to Public Funds

#### Service Area Trends

Over the past year, there has been significant changes to the structure of children's services teams and their responsibilities within the overall structure. These changes have been made in line with our vision of being able to provide the right service, to the right child, at the right time. This joined up approach enables proportionate and timely decisions about the type and level of services children need and facilitates timely access to resources.

In April 2016 the two front doors (Early Help and Family Support and the statutory First Contact team) co-located to help to drive forward the above vision. Since then a review has been undertaken with staff and partners into Child in Need Services and the Staged Model of Intervention, for the delivery of children's services. The results of this review should be agreed and implemented by the end of 2017.

#### ***Early Help Family Support and Youth Offending Service***

After The Early Help Family Support and YOS Service, Integrated Locality and Streets Ahead Services came together under the single line management in October 2015 and fully integrated in April 2016 the service has grown from strength to strength. In the first financial year (2016/17), 2918 referrals were received through the Single Front Door with 96% of these being directed to the appropriate team and 95% achieving a desired outcome.

The service aims to enable all Southend-on-Sea's contributors to Early Help to: act before the needs of children and families escalate; focus on achieving priority outcomes for those

children, young people and families who need it the most; give every child the opportunity to reach their full potential; and to have flexible services that provide the right support, at the right time and at the right level.

Building on existing best practice and processes, it provides:

- A single, integrated system and 'front door' for the identification, referral, assessment, and monitoring of Early Help.
- A core offer to schools, early year's settings and GPs to support them to fulfil their statutory duties with regard to Early Help.

The Early Help Family Support & YOS Team is underpinned by the following principles:-

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of us all.
- Early Help spans a wide spectrum of services, provided by a wide range of agencies to meet a wide range of needs.
- We work with families at the earliest opportunity to prevent needs from escalating.
- All children, young people and families' needs are met by universal services wherever possible.
- Families are encouraged and supported to identify their own issues and solutions.
- We build resilience and the capacity to achieve by having a joined up approach to families' needs.
- We improve the identification of children in need and in need of protection through increased understanding of the impact of an adult's needs on a child's life.
- We have an honest, open and transparent approach to supporting children and their families.
- We operate a multi-agency/disciplinary approach to both assessment and intervention.
- A traded service to provide additional Early Help support to individual schools, particularly with regard to improving school attendance.
- A specialist whole family support service to meet complex needs.
- An offer of support and guidance to all providers of Early Help services to children and young people.

### *Troubled Families Programme*

The Troubled Families Programme was initially named "Streets Ahead", however as part of the service transformation when services were integrated in April 2016, this programme was incorporated into the Early Help offer.

The Troubled Families programme initially intended to change the repeating generational patterns of poor parenting, abuse, violence, drug use, anti-social behaviour and crime in the most troubled families in the UK. Troubled families are defined as those that have problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector. The aim is to provide partnership support via a dedicated key worker to enable families to turn around and in particular to:

- get children back into school
- reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour
- put adults on a path back to work
- reduce the high costs these families place on the public sector each year

Due to outstanding success of the Southend Troubled Families service in Phase 1, particularly achieved in 2014-15, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) accepted us as an early Starter in Phase 2, funded for five years, giving more than 1,480 families the opportunity for support and a better quality of life. The DCLG broadened the selection criteria to now meet 6 key issues; adult and youth Crime/Anti-social Behaviour (ASB), Education attendance/behaviours, Unemployment, Domestic Abuse, Children who need help and Health.

Furthermore, EHFS in the community is (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's Troubled Families service) is an innovative approach to family work, providing opportunities for families to access resources in their communities.

The programme supports positive change and also prevents families who are on the periphery of the EHFS criteria needing intensive intervention by working with communities to strengthen communication, co-operation and take up of services. Evidence suggests that families who live in flourishing communities experience improved emotional health & wellbeing which reduces long term dependency on services. Our community workers ensure that projects are sustainable and delivered with the involvement of the local community and Streets Ahead families with their aim being to empower, up-skill and foster community cohesion and family resilience, not to create unrealistic expectations or dependency.

This allows for most family issues to be addressed and early help to be provided, preventing later issues and producing cost savings for all partner agencies.

Phase 2:

During Phase 2 we have been able to generate income via Payment by Results outcomes as follows:

216 Significant and Sustained Progress

21 Adults went into continuous employment (over 26 weeks)

From its commencement to end of March 2017 there have been 736 cases opened to Troubled Families element of Early Help.

There were a total of 1010 outcomes achieved during 2016/17

## Domestic Abuse

The Southend MARAT is a multi-agency team, established in June 2016, which seeks to transform how high risk domestic abuse (DA) is responded to within Southend through partnership working. The team includes representatives from social care, health, police and Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services and works alongside representatives from National Probation service (NPS), CRS, housing, substance misuse and domestic abuse support projects.

Prior to the team being set up, all high risk incidents of DA in Southend were managed via the Essex Community MARACs. However, due to volume of cases, there were significant delays which resulted in many of the action plans produced by a MARAC being ineffective, as life had moved on for the victim and the family by the time a plan to reduce risk levels had been agreed.

The Southend MARAT process does not change the expectations of all agencies in Southend in relation to safeguarding children and adults; each agency continues to follow their safeguarding procedures and take necessary action on high risk DA cases to ensure there is no delay in offering interventions to protect and support the children and adults involved.

Partner agencies make a referral to MARAT when there has been a high risk incident of DA. This is often via a Police referral but other partners can also refer when a disclosure of a high risk incident is made to them directly – this should be assessed using the DASH risk assessment tool. The Southend MARAT will

- Research the information known about the family within their agency
- Share information together that is proportionate and relevant to the incident,
- Support the formation of a safety and action plan to reduce risk and seek to protect the victim, children, vulnerable adults and family members and also members of the community.

The aim is for all victims to have an action plan agreed at a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) within 14 working days of the referral to the MARAT. By working collaboratively and sharing appropriate information, the Southend MARAT can improve timely risk identification and safety planning for victims and their families, which is co-ordinated via the multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC). These are held weekly.

The Southend MARAT representatives and key partners (listed above) attend the weekly multi-agency conference (the MARAC). In addition, where other key agencies or individuals are working with a victim and family they may be invited to attend a MARAC when the safety and action plan for that victim is being discussed and agreed.

In the first 9 months of the process, MARAC considered 449 cases. In the first 6 months 55% of referrals were heard within 14 working days. Since January 2017, however, this has much improved with 95.5% being heard within 14 working days. In the first 5 months of 2017/18 a further 177 referrals were received in to the Southend MARAT. Evaluation of the impact of



the service evidences that social work staff have become more able to effectively and confidently engage perpetrators and support victims. The skill and knowledge base of social workers undertaking statutory assessments in families where domestic violence is a serious issue has been strengthened and this has helped to reduce the number of repeat domestic violence incidents in families. The co-location in the Southend Police Station has promoted timely decision making in respect of managing risk related to domestic violence and facilitated early access to support and preventative measures which contributes overall to the effectiveness of safety planning and positive outcomes for children living in those households.

The MARAT has undertaken training in PREVENT and in Honour Based Abuse and having developed the relevant processes, is now taking referrals for both of these areas of concern.

### *Child Sexual exploitation*

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) remains a key priority for Children's Social Care. In the past 2 years there has been significant work undertaken to increase the understanding of the profile of CSE in Southend and to prevent, identify and tackle the problem. 2016/17 saw a move to new classifications in accordance with the revised CSE risk assessment tool, making the identification of risk easier to achieve and taking into account the presence of a perpetrator.

104 young people had CSE concerns raised during 2016/17. Overall at the end of March 2017 there were 76 young people in Southend identified as being at risk of CSE, 19 of these were looked after at the point of identification. Considerable work has been undertaken over the past year to clarify the links between CSE and missing and the increased risk that this poses for Southend children.

At the end of March 2017 92.1% of children identified at risk of CSE had completed CSE risk assessments and the remainder were in process of completion.

### *Children missing from home and care*

Ensuring that Children's Social Care and partner agencies provide the most appropriate safeguarding response for children who go missing from home and care remains a priority in Southend.

In 2015 The Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) Procedures were updated and a protocol for children missing from school, home and care was developed. The Southend LSCB has fully adopted these procedures. The protocol focuses upon raising awareness and increasing accountability amongst partner agencies, prevention of missing episodes and reducing repeat missing episodes through collaborative multi-agency working.

Southend have a small team of workers who undertake Independent Return Home interviews with children who have recently returned after being missing from home or care. This is in line with statutory guidance published by the DfE in 2014. These visits help to identify associated risks such as child sexual exploitation and themes within the Southend

area such as gang activity and patterns of missing episodes for those who regularly go missing.

Southend Children's Services track all children missing from home or care to promote a robust response. The Group Manager for Placements & Resources provides the Director for Children's Services with regular updates on all children missing from care. Those at highest risk are referred for Risk Management Meetings, where a multi-agency approach to managing the risk is taken and where clear action plans are developed to identify potential interventions to reduce risk.

*Children missing from home and care*

	May 16	Jun 16	July 16	Aug 16	Sept 16	Oct 16	Nov 16	Dec 16	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Apr 17
Number of episodes	84	82	68	58	71	67	62	51	42	49	45	25
Number of children	54	46	36	34	35	34	38	31	23	37	33	21

*Number of missing episodes by Children's Social Care Episode*

	May 16	Jun 16	July 16	Aug 16	Sept 16	Oct 16	Nov 16	Dec 16	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Apr 17
LAC	28	20	34	22	28	34	26	21	16	19	22	9
CPP	6	4	3	2	12	5	4	4	9	2	4	1
LAC/ CPP	9	7	1	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	3	2
CIN	9	17	14	8	16	10	12	8	1	6	0	2
Early Help	27	22	13	16	11	13	11	13	16	22	15	9
Other LA	5	12	3	8	2	4	8	3	0	0	1	2

*Looked after children missing by placement type*

	May 16	Jun 16	July 16	Aug 16	Sept 16	Oct 16	Nov 16	Dec 16	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Apr 17
Foster Placement	8	9	6	7	10	15	12	7	9	6	18	10
Supported Residential	4	3	8	7	8	8	10	6	6	5	5	1
Children's home	25	15	21	10	12	12	5	10	1	8	2	0

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, 76.3% of young people were contacted within 3 days of being found following a missing episode. Those deemed at highest risk are being closely tracked with additional safety and risk plans running alongside any care plans to ensure a structure and measured approach to the risk associated with both missing and CSE.

### *Looked after children from other local authorities placed in Southend*

In 2015 the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) led on the development of a national resource with information about services for looked after children in every local authority in the country. Southend's letter was circulated to every local authority in England informing them of Southend's offer to looked after children from other areas placed in our Borough. As well as this information that is provided to social workers when children from other areas are placed in Southend, the Virtual School and health services work closely together to ensure that all young people in Southend have their needs met in the best way possible.

### *Family Group Conferencing (FGC)*

FGC is a core component of restorative approaches. It is a decision making approach based on a well-developed model which involves the extended family in making plans for children. Despite national variations most FGC adhere to themes such as taking and sharing responsibility for solutions, culturally competent practice, empowerment and private family time.

During 2016/17 FGC was delivered within Fieldwork Services. There was limited capacity and the approach was only being used with families where care proceedings were issued or likely to be issued. Within the model the use of FGC will be expanded to include children in need and children in need of protection. The service will be formally implemented from September 2017 with a focus on cases where there are significant child in need concerns or at ICPC stage. This is additional to our on-going FGC activity within Fieldwork and EHFSS.

### *Young Carers*

Young Carers are children and young people under 18 who provide regular or ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.

A young carer may do some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping
- Physical care, such as lifting, helping a parent on stairs or with physiotherapy
- Personal care, such as dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions
- Administering medication
- Looking after or 'parenting' younger siblings
- Emotional support and/or
- Interpreting, due to a hearing or speech impediment or because English is not the family's first language.

A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, impacting on his or her emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement and life chances.

Our priority for young carers in Southend-on Sea is to ensure that they are safeguarded from inappropriate caring and that they are able to enjoy and achieve in line with their peers and to have time away from their caring role. .

All young carers referrals now come through the EHFS &YOS Single front door, ensuring the family and the young carers have the appropriate support, The young carers worker continues to work with various other organisations, schools, health professionals, and teams within the EHFS&YOS, we have supported the development of Young Carers groups in Milton Hall School and Prince Avenue School.

Working closely with the data team we have improved our database and now have an up to date and current system with 345 Young Carers; 24 Primary Young Carers (7%) and 321 Secondary Young Carers (93%). 167 Male young carers and 178 female young carers.

Young Carers trips/events have taken place in the current year, which have included Bowling, Cooking Workshops to Waitrose; Tropical Wings, Colchester Zoo, all young carers who attend our programmes have had the opportunity to take part in these events. 3 older young carers also had the opportunity to have a week away during the summer with the Cirdain Trust Sailing group, with the LAC programme. The young carers attending SYC&MORE and COOL continue to work on their Children's University passports with over 20 of them having achieved to a Bronze/Silver standard and attended a graduation ceremony.

### ***First Contact Front Door***

Co-located with the Early Help Front Door is the statutory social care front door. By being co-located referrals to either front door can be discussed quickly to ensure that the needs of the child and family and met in the most appropriate way, ensuring safeguarding of all children. This ensures children are quickly allocated resources to meet their needs or safeguard their welfare, working to a principle of right service, first time.

The table below outlines the average weekly contacts to Children's Social Care between 2015/16 and 2017/18 at this point. This data solely reflects contacts to the First Contact front Door.

#### **Average weekly contacts to Southend Children's Social Care**

<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
55	70	89

The volume of average weekly contacts received has increased year on year from 55 in 2014/15 to 89 in 2016/17. In the first four months of 2017/18 we have seen a drop to an average of 61 contacts per week, which seems to evidence the impact of the front door changes embedding and partners beginning to understand the changes.

The co-located front doors continue to support understanding and awareness of the Southend framework of intervention across the partnership.

The First contact Front Door aims to ensure that only those children meeting thresholds for statutory assessments are progressed as referrals to Children's Social Care. The ratio of contacts to assessment referrals in 2016/17 was 43.7% (5,050 contacts were received in 2016/17 and 2,209 assessments were started in 2016/17) compared with 38.8% in 2015/16 (3,860 contacts were received in 2015/16 and 1,499 assessments were started in 2015/16).

#### 16 and 17 year olds

In 2016/17 the First Contact service undertook 12 homeless assessments of 16/17 year olds, following which 3 young people were provided with accommodation by the Council. The remaining young people either returned home or were supported to live with wider family members or friends. This has been achieved with the support of the Edge of Care Team through a strong focus on restorative practice to help in the reparation of family relationships when teenagers are facing exclusion from the family home and family life and by facilitating access to parenting support at the point of referral as well as close working with the Southend Housing Team to ensure joint assessments.

In the coming year we will be formally introducing a Family Group Conference service to support practitioners in this work.

It remains our strong belief that children and young people achieve better outcomes when they remain living within their families. In addition to the Family group Conference Service, in 2017/18 Southend will conclude the work being undertaken in a formal reunification process for children looked after which will work jointly across the Fieldwork Teams; fostering; Edge of Care, Volunteering Matters and the Marigold Assessment Plus Service to ensure that where a young person can safely return home, this is done both in a timely manner and with strong support services in place to achieve stability in families, thereby reducing the risk of the young person re-entering care.

#### Out of hours Social Work Service

The Out Of Hours Social Work Service, or Emergency Duty Team (EDT), forms part of a 24 hour and seamless front line child protection service delivered to Southend children and their families. The service is commissioned through Essex County Council and meets the local authorities out of hours statutory social care responsibilities in safeguarding the welfare of children.

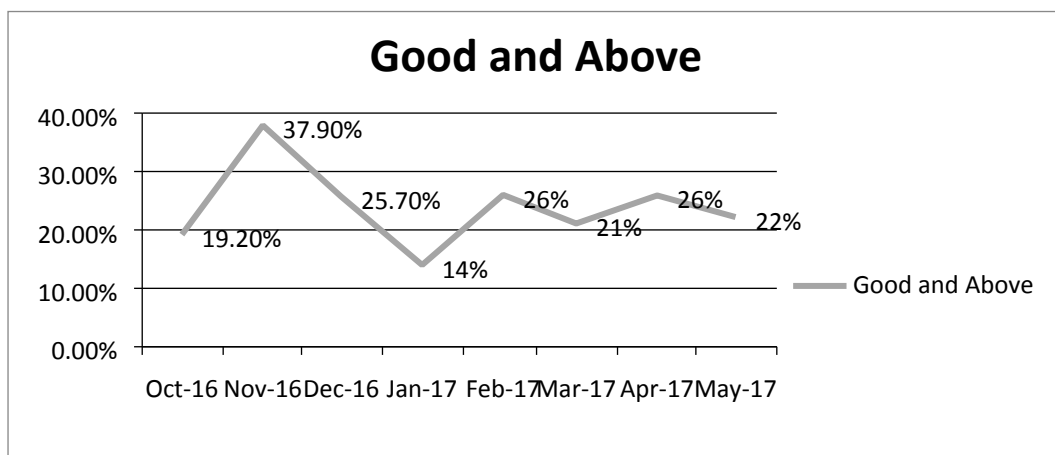
Demand for the service can vary considerably from day to day. On average between 140 calls from Southend are logged each month. Referrals usually require extensive liaison with children and their relatives in addition to a range of other individuals and organisations

including friends and neighbours, foster carers, residential establishments, police, hospitals, other local authorities, housing providers, solicitors, courts and voluntary sector providers. The service provides advice in both simple and complex situations and also initiates child protection investigations and/or proactive services including admission into care.

### Assessment & Intervention

The assessment & Intervention team alongside the Front Door team undertake all statutory Children Act child protection investigations and child in need assessments for new referrals to Children’s Social Care. The service has struggled over the past year with changes in management, however there are now two strong managers in place offering consistent and strong leadership. The workforce has been quite transient over the past year, but it is hoped that with strong management now in place, over the next six months we will be able to evidence a more stable workforce.

Audit and inspection have consistently evidenced those cases deemed Requires Improvement as quite stable however those rated Good and Above have proven more volatile on a month by month basis.



There has been good feedback from partner agencies regarding the co-located front door and the static duty team. Partners have felt that they have been able to begin to develop stronger relationships with the duty team and feel able to discuss referrals and more easily access the service best able to respond to the identified need.

2012 statutory social work assessments were completed in 2016/17 which is higher than the number completed in the previous year: 1458 in 2015/16. However, as noted in the table below, the percentage of re-referrals has decreased and remains slightly lower than the

national average. Southend's lower than average repeat referral ratio is indicative of consistently high quality assessments and timely access to appropriate support.

The higher volume of children requiring statutory assessments can be partly attributed to improved information sharing at the front door achieved with the development of the co-located front door. The increase in assessment numbers will remain subject to monitoring and analysis.

#### Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of a previous referral

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	21.4%	19.9%	16.4%
Stat Neighbours	25.7%	23.4%	Not yet published
England	24.0%	22.3%	Not yet published

In 2016/17, 55.11% were completed within timescale which was a decrease from 93.6% recorded for 2015/16. In the first half of 2017/18 this percentage has increased to around 57.78%. The average length of assessment in 2016/17 was 41.7 days which is an increase on the 27.6 average recorded in 2015/16. For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 the average length in days to complete an assessment was 47.8 days.

#### Percentage of assessments held within 45 working days

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	01/04/2017-31/08/2017
Southend	96.3%	96.4%	63.8%	62.8%
Stat Neighbours	73.8%	76.9%	Not yet published	Not yet published
National	81.5%	83.4%	Not yet published	Not yet published

#### The Children in Need Service

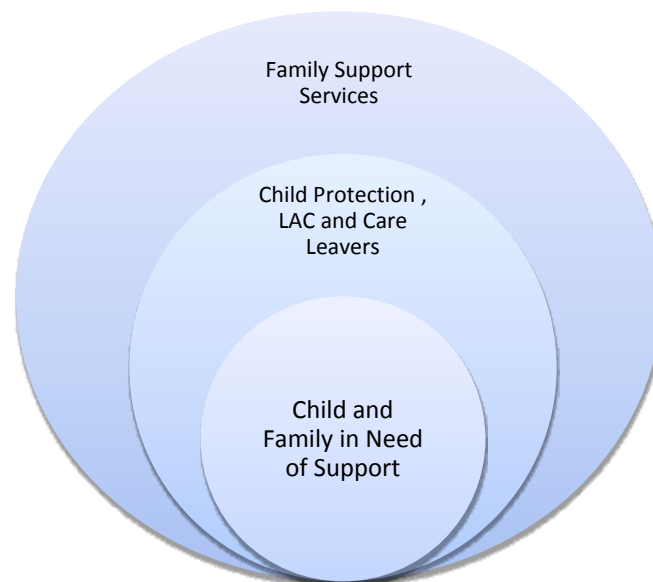
Southend has for a number of years worked with a staged model of intervention across early help and child in need, with children and families deemed to be at the highest risk being supported through child in need procedures.

We have reviewed how we deliver services to children assessed to be in need under Section 17 Children Act 1989 so that we can meet need at the earliest possible opportunity, reduce escalation of need and reduce the amount of time families need to access direct service

provision from SBC children’s services. The model of delivering services in the future will be underpinned by restorative practice and will improve the experience of children and families.

We know that if the anxieties and concerns held in the professional networks are listened to and partner agencies feel supported, then they will be more confident about working with complex families and holding a level of risk within a CIN/family support process. Some partner agencies described feeling their professional judgement is not being valued and listened to anymore and that, when they raise concerns or challenge decisions, they are not heard or discussed but simply ‘shut down’ with a reference to thresholds or process. We believe that the move to a more collaborative way of working, underpinned by a restorative approach, could have a significant positive impact on working together in the best interests of children and families.

The planned changes would move Southend from the current 4 tiered model of intervention to a circular model. This depicts children and families being placed at the centre of services surrounded by the range of family support, child protection, LAC and Care Leavers services. A version of this model is presented, as follows (figure 1):



The implementation of ‘The Southend Model’ is overseen by a project board and formal ‘go live’ is expected to around January 2018.

### Child Protection Plans

Children deemed at risk of significant harm are presented to an initial Child Protection Conference to determine the need for a Child Protection Plan.

A Child Protection Plan is made following a multi-agency Child Protection Conference and assessment that a child is at continuing risk of significant harm or impairment of health and development.



#### Number of Child Protection Plans (at 31<sup>st</sup> March)

2015	2016	2017
184	189	220

#### Rate of Child Protection Plans per 10,000 (at 31<sup>st</sup> March)

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	48.1	49.2	56.8
Stat Neighbour average	53.0	53	50
National	42.9	43.1	43

As at March 2017, there were 220 children subject to a Child Protection Plan, an increase of 31 from 189 in March 2016. The rate of Child Protection Plans in Southend in March 2017 was 67.9 children per 10,000. This was much higher than in 2016. As at July 2017, this figure had dropped to 42.9 per 10,000 (159 children).

#### Duration of Child Protection Plans

Monitoring of Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more is used to indicate the effectiveness of the Child Protection Plan in eliminating or significantly reducing the risk of significant harm. The percentage of children subject to Plans for more than 2 years has decreased over the last year to 2.7% at 31 March 2017, from 4% at 31 March 2016. As a result of the increase in Child Protection Plans over previous years a robust monitoring process has been developed to quality assure planning in all cases and this has resulted in a significant drop in the number of children subject to child protection plans for more than 2 years. At July 2017 the figure had increased slightly to 3.8% (6 children within 3 families).

#### Duration of Child Protection Plans, as at 31 March

Duration of Child Protection Plans	2015/16	2016/17
Under 3 months	24%	23.6%
3-6 months	30%	25.9%
6-12 months	21%	27.3%
1-2 years	21%	20.5%
Over 2 years	4%	2.7%

It is evident that in 2016/17 many children and families were moving through child protection interventions in a timely manner with 49.5% of cases remaining on Child Protection Plans for less than six months, a slight decrease from 54% at the end of 2015/16. The decrease in the percentage of children on Child Protection Plans for less than 6 months is likely to be as a result of an increase in the number of children becoming subject to Child Protection Plans during the first six months of the year including a number of larger families. This indicator will continue to be monitored closely.

#### Children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time

This measure indicates whether a Child Protection Plan was successful in effectively reducing risks over time in comparison to the necessity for a further Child Protection Plan. In practice, this is determined by work undertaken with parents and children through the plan, the quality of the assessment of risks of significant harm, and the provision and accessibility of any support services subsequent to the child protection plan. For this performance indicator, a low score is generally seen as indicative of good performance.

The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time increased from 19 % in 2015/16 to 29.3% in 2016/17. The national average for this indicator has steadily increased over the last three years, however the large Southend increase is being closely monitored.

#### Percentage of children who became the subject of a child protection plan during the year ending 31 March who became the subject of a plan for a second or subsequent time

	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	19%	29.3%
Statistical neighbours	19%	22%
National	18%	19%

#### Private Fostering Update

A child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) who is cared for, or proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, person with parental responsibility or close relative for 28 days or more is described as being privately fostered. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child. They may also be from extended family such as a cousin or great-aunt.

Local authorities do not approve private foster carers in the same way as general foster carers, but are required to assess and say whether or not they agree and accept a private fostering arrangement to ensure that the welfare of privately fostered children is being safeguarded

and promoted. To fulfil this duty local authorities must take a pro-active approach in partnership with other agencies and other key professionals in raising public awareness of requirements regarding notifications of private fostering arrangements.

*Overview of activity April 2016 to August 2017.*

At the end of March 2017 there were 8 children known to be in private fostering arrangements in Southend. This was a slight increase from 6 in March 2016. Of these, 2 were new arrangements which started in 2016/17. The majority of these children were born in the UK (6-8). Since April 2017, there have been a further 3 notifications of new placements and 3 placements have ceased.

**Total number of children whose private fostering arrangement began between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017, by age**

<b>Age (at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017)</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
Under 1	0
1-4	0
5-9	0
10-15	8
Total	8

Southend has a formal Private Fostering Panel which considers all initial and final assessments in addition to annual reports where required. Statutory checks are completed in line with the checks which are undertaken for any local authority foster carer. This panel ensure quality assurance and safeguarding issues are followed. All privately fostered children in Southend are deemed to be “Children in Need” and as such have an allocated children’s social worker and a formal child in need plan. Since 2013, 4 households have been formally prohibited from privately fostering following presentation at the Private Fostering Panel.

Due to intelligence gathering amongst agencies, prohibitions offer a layer of protection for other young people not just the privately fostered child. Should an individual who has been prohibited allow another young person to reside in their care, this will remain a criminal offence and allow the police to act swiftly and accordingly.

Private Fostering has been included in September 2017’s “The weekly newsletter” which is posted on the Southend Learning Network and is a high profile document for schools. This is also distributed internally to those who work with schools and therefore hits a higher target audience.

Regular briefing sessions are held for Student Social Workers placed in Adults and Children’s services and for the NQSW group. Further sessions will be held in the Autumn of 2017 to ensure that new entrants to Southend are fully aware of the issues and processes involved in respect of Private Fostering.

Bi-Annual reports are presented to the Southend local safeguarding board to monitor both compliance and the multi-agency approach to safeguarding these vulnerable children and young people.

#### The Family courts

The Family Justice Review Report (FJR) was published in 2015 in an attempt to significantly reduce delay within the family courts and in care proceedings. In June 2013 when the review was first commissioned, the national average length for the completion of care proceedings was 46 weeks. As a result of the FJR, the expectation was that all care proceedings should be completed within 26 weeks. In exceptional circumstances, cases can be extended for a further 8 weeks.

The duration of court proceedings in Southend has improved year on year since the changes were implemented in 2015 and averaged 23 weeks over the 4 quarters of 2016/17.

*"The Social Worker was excellent. The judge stated that in evidence that she was one of the best Social workers she had ever come across and she could not have done more for the family. She stated that she had gone above and beyond."*

*This was reported by the Judge in her judgment in respect of a CWD case, May 2017*

The public law outline (PLO) is a process that all local authorities have to follow in their conduct of care proceedings. The current PLO accommodates the changes brought in following the Family Justice Review. It puts a much greater emphasis on pre-proceedings work.

For care proceedings to run smoothly and efficiently, it is essential that as much work as possible is done in the preliminary stages before care proceedings are issued. The family courts expect that a Family PLO meeting must have been held prior to issuing care proceedings. The role of this meeting is becoming increasingly important in care proceedings. Prospective family members who may be considered as an alternative long-term carer for a child must be identified at the earliest possible stage to ensure assessments commence in a timely manner.

Data shows that during 2016/17, pre-proceedings agreements were initiated for 106 children and 96 ended. 14 children remain subject to an active pre-proceedings process as at the end of August 2017, an improvement from 37 at the end of March 2017.

Recent data received from CAFCASS (the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) shows that the number of court applications in Southend has increased from 70 in 2015/16 to 79 in 2016/17. In the first 6 months of 2017/18, 23 further applications were made.

## Overview of care population

One of our key principles is that children are best cared for within their families wherever this can be safely achieved. We are always striving to improve practice in respect of care planning to ensure that we can say confidently which children need to come into care and identify which children's outcomes will be improved by entering the care system. We continue to have higher numbers of children in care per 10,000 population under 18 years of age than our statistical neighbours (other local authorities with similar profiles). This rate remained consistent between 2014/5 and 2015/16, but has increased significantly during 2016/17.

### Children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18

	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	68	73.34
Stat neighbours	66.4	68
National	60	62

### Number of looked after children at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	229	262	282

As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 Southend was responsible for looking after 282 children and young people, an increase of 18.8% compared to the same time in 2014/15. At the point of writing this report, those number have increased further to 291 an overall increase in that period of 21%. There has been a significant rise in the number of looked after children over the past 3 years, from 229 in 2015 to the current figure of 291. Key to understanding this rise is consideration of the profile of looked after children, including the age of children entering care and ages and reasons for leaving care.

### Age breakdown of children entering care during the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March,

Age	2015	2016	2017
Under 1	22(24.4%)	34(25.9%)	22(14.37%)
1-4	18 (20%)	30(22.9%)	41(26.79%)
5-9	11(12.2%)	24(18.3%)	32(20.91%)
10-15	17(18.9%)	33(25.2%)	40(26.14%)
16 and over	22(24.4%)	10(7.6%)	18(11.76%)
Total	90	131	153

The number of over 16's and the percentage of this age group within the total number of children entering care has reduced considerably since 2015. The percentage of children aged 5-15 years has however increased from 31.1% to 47.05%. There has been a recent trend in unaccompanied asylum seeking males aged over 17 years presenting for services, which has led to an increase in those over the age of 16 years rising from 7.6% in 2016 to 11.76% in 2017, however this is still a large reduction since 2015, down by 12.64%.

The table below includes an age breakdown of the total number of looked after children at year end which also illustrates the impact on the total number of looked after children between 2015 and 2017.

Age breakdown of total number of looked after children, at year ending 31 March

Age	2015	2016	2017
Under 1	19	22	17
1-4	30	38	41
5-9	30	41	49
10-15	90	94	113
16 and over	60	67	62
Total	229	262	282

Ethnicity breakdown of looked after children at 31 March 2017

Ethnicity	Southend LAC 2017	Total Southend under 18 population
White British & Other	88%	91.6%
Mixed	2.5%	2.1%
Asian or Asian British	2.8%	3.7%
Black or Black British	1.8%	2.1%
Other ethnic group	4.9%	0.5%

(Total under 18 population ethnicity breakdown from Southend 2011 census return)

When compared to the percentage ethnicity breakdown of the Southend population taken from the 2011 census, there is a clear disproportionality in the ethnic representation of the

looked after children population compared to the general population. Much research has been undertaken about disproportionality in the ethnicity of looked after children in the care system in England compared to the general population. Owen & Statham's report on Disproportionality in Child Welfare (2009) is widely referenced in relation to this issue and shows that children from black and mixed ethnic backgrounds are usually over-represented in the care system and in the children in needs statistics in England, with children from Asian backgrounds usually under-represented. Southend's population follows this national pattern, but also has under representation of children from white backgrounds.

The number of children leaving care during 2016/17 was 137. Of these, 29 (21%) were adopted; 14 (10.2%) were made the subject of a special guardianship order; 33 (24%) turned 18 and 38 (27.7%) returned home.

#### Returning home to family

During 2016/17, 52 children either returned home to parents or left care permanently to live with a relative under a Special Guardianship/Child Arrangement Order, against 50 in the previous year. This is a slight decrease but can be accounted for by an increase in the number of young people turning 18, several of whom returned home but do not show in the figures as they ceased to be looked after on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A child will usually return home as a result of changes that the family have made, either as a result of intervention by Children's Social Care or by the family making alternative arrangements for example by the making of a Special Guardianship Order/Child Arrangement Order. Positive changes may not always be sustained by families despite the support put in place, so if children are referred back again to Children's Social Care, any previous looked after child episodes are considered as a part of the assessment (as are prior Child Protection Plans) and any management decisions made would need to ensure children are not left in neglectful or abusive environments.

#### Reunification framework

As a part of the work undertaken through the Edge of Care team and Marigold Assessment Plus, alongside Fieldwork Services, during 2016/17 work has been on-going to bring together a clear reunification framework. As stated earlier in this report, one of our key principles is that children are best cared for within their families wherever this can be safely achieved. The reunification framework identifies the key stages in the process of assessing, deciding, and supporting (with interventions) a child or young person to return to the care of their parents or family members where there have previously been risks or concerns about the care that they are able to offer.

This process begins with the identification of a potential for reunification. The framework identifies the likely triggers that will initiate a conversation about whether there is a possibility of reunification, or taking steps towards reunification for a child. We are always

aware that risks change as a young person gets older and positive changes are often made in families over time.

However, it is proposed that reunification is only one part of a much broader approach that will facilitate improved outcomes for children, providing a commitment to strengthening family relationships for all looked after children whether there is a prospect of reunification or not. There is a continuum of parental/family involvement ranging from improving the quality of a very small amount of contact, to increasing opportunities for increased/unsupervised/staying contact, to returning home part time basis and then reunification. It is believed that the above approach will facilitate both improved outcomes for children as well as proactively working with families to create opportunities for reunification, rather than awaiting for 'triggers' to be evident. It is important that services that support this are accessible in a timely way.

The process is based around the NSPCC model for reunification (Wilkins M. and Farmer E. (2015) Reunification: an evidence-informed framework for return home practice. London: NSPCC & Wilkins M. (2015) How to implement the reunification practice framework: a checklist for local authorities. London: NSPCC) and also using the Return Home from Care Report (DfE 2015).

Where it is decided that now is not the right time to initiate an assessment for reunification, there will always be consideration of what work can be undertaken to strengthen the relationships for a LAC child with their family, with a view to considering the appropriateness of reunification to birth family at a later stage in their life.

During 2017/18, a small number of staff will be recruited to drive forward reunification plans alongside Edge of Care and the Marigold Assessment Plus Service. In future reporting, we will be able to evidence the impact of the new service on the lives of young people and their families.

#### Marigold Assessment Plus

This is the overarching term for a range of services that includes Contact Services, Parenting Assessment and Support Services; The Rise Project, Targeted Family Support Services such as Theraplay and MIM's assessments, alongside a range of other family support services. The service offers a high quality assessment and support service, complementing the core social work and early help offer and additionally providing targeted support for families where their children are looked after or within Child Protection (CP) and Public Law Outline (PLO) processes.

Families may first be referred to the service for assessed contact, which then may move to a parenting assessment, with or without a support programme (reducing the tendency for these programmes to be requested as a recommendation of the assessment and causing further delay for the child) and then, depending on the outcome of the assessment, move onto a Back Together Programme, supported contact or life story work.



*A Polish family, who came to UK in 2008. The three primary age children were subject to Child Protection plan for neglect and physical abuse. The mother suffered with a genetic syndrome meaning she had no intellectual impairment but limited emotional understanding. Birth father had a physical impairment. The children were removed and placed into foster care. The family were referred to Marigold Assessment + service for a parenting assessment. Interviews and parenting observations took place supported with a translator. The mother had suffered with post-natal depression and subsequent depressive episodes but was unable to access help because of the language barrier. One of the children also had a disability but the parents could not access benefits again due to the language barriers. A parenting assessment helped the family to access appropriate mental health services for depression and provided a teaching element for appropriate nutrition, and support was given to access benefits for the child with a disability. Marigold also supported the parents in attending English lessons. Reunification was recommended and a back together programme implemented, including frequent visits to the home and a therapy programme. The children returned home and the family have not come back to local authority's notice.*

## Parenting Assessment & PAMS assessments

The service integrates for families the assessment, intervention and supervision elements of parenting assessments. Staff in the different areas of the service work together to ensure that information is collated, and that parenting assessments give a holistic view of a family's abilities and potential for development and change.

Within the service there are three senior practitioners, who lead on parenting assessments, assisted by the Children & Family workers who have expertise in various areas such as Therapy.

Between April 2016 and April 2017, 63 parenting assessments were completed within time scales of between 2 (addendum assessments) and 12 weeks, including PAMS compliant assessments, specially designed to support parents with any level of learning disability.

The majority of assessments are completed between 8 and 10 weeks and where issues arise during the process, interventions are added to support parents to start to make the changes necessary for them to parent their children into the future. All assessments are completed within Court directed time scales.

The standard of parenting assessments is such that a considerable amount of compliments were received from the courts during the year.

### *Contact services*

The Marigold Assessment Plus Service provides contact for looked after children and their birth families. The integration of contact and assessment services reduce delay, ensuring that court deadlines are met, with services streamlined and making sense to service users and stakeholders.

Between April 2016 and April 2017, 152 children between the ages of 0 and 16 living in foster care were provided with contact sessions of between two hours twice a week, once a month or school holidays only, either at the Centre or out in the community, and supported by highly trained and qualified contact facilitators. Life story work and positive parenting is incorporated in contact where appropriate. Assessed contact may move to supported contact where reunification is the plan or where children in foster care have on going contact with their birth families.

The Allan Cole Contact Centre received its enhanced accreditation in December 2013 as the first local authority to be accredited by the National Association for Child Contact Centres. This allows the centre to offer a contact service for families within private court proceedings with referrals being made via Solicitors, CAFCAS and other local authorities.

“The Marigold Centre has been really supportive, contact has been good ....they’ve been excellent” (parent during LAC forum October 2016)

“Dear staff.. Just sending this post card to thank you for everything... thank you for never judging me, thank you for supporting me and specially thank you for making my 2 hours a day with my baby away better. I have no words to express how real you are all to me and my family. Thank you”

### *Back Together Programmes including positive parenting (based on the Triple P enhanced Positive Parenting Programme), including Parent-Child Game interventions*

Where a decision has been made that a child can safely return home after a period of time in foster care, research indicates that a programme of robust support is helpful with this transition, through rebuilding attachment and support parents in resuming their parenting roles. Theraplay and the Triple P based positive parenting programme forms part of the

support offered to families. The service works closely with other support teams in preventing further family breakdown and this will be extended during 2017/18 to inform and support the formal reunification service.

David and Ward (2012) found that parents participating in the Triple P based positive parenting programmes made significant improvements in the management of problematic situations.

This programme can also be implemented as part of contact sessions to enhance the quality of contact between looked after children and their parents. The Parent-Child game intervention is particularly effective in helping parents to manage their children's behaviour and develop a more nurturing relationship.

Between April 2016 and April 2017, 10 Back Together and Positive Parenting Programmes were completed successfully, with no further separations for the families who benefited from these programmes.

#### *Marschack Intervention Method and Theraplay*

Davies and Ward (2012) reporting on the outcomes of Interaction Guiding (an intervention based on the same principles as Theraplay) state that "A significant decrease in disrupted communication was found between mothers and infants in the interaction guidance group".

The intervention can be offered to birth parents, as well as foster carers/adoptive parents, Special Guardians to build up attachment between parents/carers and the children in their care.

Between April 2016 and April 2017 the service delivered the Principles of Theraplay programmes to 7 families with many of the parents/carers reporting a real improvement in their bond with the children.

Theraplay assessment of attachment sessions (MIM) are also used to inform parenting assessments and between 2016 and 2017, 72 MIM sessions were completed. Over the past year the service has developed as a core support for Special Guardians, who often struggle in the early stages of placement.

*"We are grateful for the excellent support offered by the Allan Cole Centre. "(Special Guardian April 2016)*

*"Both C and H enjoyed it immensely ...and our house has slowly become a more harmonious place since then... it is bringing about an overall change; so thanks very much" (Special Guardian 28/7/16)*

### *Thames Valley Partners Programme*

This is a programme which runs for female partners of men attending the Sex Offender Treatment Programme, who may in some capacity have children in their care who are potentially at risk. Within this programme, 'partner' is defined as being in a current or recent relationship. The group is also appropriate for women who have been in a relationship with men where there has been an allegation of sexual abuse against a child that could make their children vulnerable to sexual harm. The term partner can also apply to women who have relationships with the men, such as mother or sister, who would benefit from information and support to keep children safe and to reduce the risk of men re-offending against children in the future.

The group aims to:

- Assist in making and maintaining informed decisions about their relationship with the offender and their children's safety.
- Assist partners who remain in a relationship with an offender
- In protecting children from sexual abuse by him or another offender
- In contributing to the offenders' new life plan, including monitoring the relapse prevention plan and supporting him in a positive future lifestyle
- Assisting partners who choose not to remain in a relationship with the offender in protecting themselves and their children against any other sex offender
- Help the partners to understand and deal with the effects of their partners' abuse on themselves; the child and the family as a whole.

In the past year there have been 2 programmes completed within the centre, each spanning 18 weeks and supporting 9 women.

### *Sexual Risk Reduction Programme/ Sexual Risk Consultations*

In addition to the above programme, this programme and associated consultations, work with young offenders to both assess future risk and to support in a change in lifestyle and behaviour.

Between April 2016 and April 2017, 4 males have worked with specialist staff allowing for better informed decision making about the safety of an offender living with their families as well as supporting reunification of families where sexual risk was a factor in separation of juvenile offenders.

### *Life story work/books*

Every child who is placed for adoption and many who are in long foster care are provided with a life story book to help them to make sense of their past as they grow up. For younger children this is a book completed which gives clear information about the child's birth family and their journey through care. For older children, the book will be completed jointly with

the child to help them to understand why they are in care and unable to return to the care of their birth family.

Between April 2016 and April 2017, 41 books were completed and direct work took place with 11 children.

*“You have done an amazing job; very age appropriate” (adoptive parent about child life story book) April 2017)*

#### *Look At Me Programme/wishes and feelings.*

This programme (LAMP) is designed to help children who are showing behavioural difficulties with their carers/parents. The children referred often have unresolved feelings of grief and anger about their past and/or current situation.

The programme aims to support the child to express his/her feelings and to provide the child with strategies to cope with overwhelming feelings without having to resort to behaviours which create difficulties.

Between April 2016 and April 2017 a service was provided for 7 children.

#### *Just Right State*

To build on the above some of the staff has been trained to run the “Just Right State”. This is a programme designed to support children to self-regulate their behaviour and has in the past year been run jointly with our education and adoption partners. A group for five children and their carers took place in August 2016 and one child and their carer were offered an individual programme because of the complexity of the child’s needs.

#### *The Rise Project (based on the Pause Project)*

The Rise Project. This is a project for women who have had 2 or more children removed and who are caught in a cycle of short interval pregnancies and subsequent care proceedings. The project is based on similar services provided by other authorities (Hackney, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) and apart from reducing the cost of recurrent care proceedings achieves a break in the cycle of deprivation and child abuse. Women are supported to use long term reversible contraception and have the benefit of a dedicated support worker to help them make them make positive changes in their lives before embarking on parenthood again.

In early 2017 the team met with Pamela Cox, Professor of Sociology and Danny Taggart, Psychologist, from Essex University about the Rise project. Both were impressed with the project and commented on the unique nature of the Southend service. They will be helping

with the 12 months evaluation of the project, create further hubs and workshops and support the team in further funding requests. This will enable us to formally evaluate the impact of the project for the mother's involved.

### **Educational attainment of looked after children and young people**

The Virtual School for looked after children works with children and young people from early years to the age of 18. It prioritises the individual learning or training needs of a child or young people in care, identifies the skills necessary for participation in an education, training or work environment and supports young people to acquire and adapt these skills for learning and for life. The Virtual School have developed and closely monitored the Personal Education Plans for all looked after children to ensure that the actions identified drive forward these priorities.

The educational outcomes for looked after children in Southend rely on established integrated partnership working between the Virtual School, social workers, schools and carers. This is supported by the provision of additional targeted support together with the understanding of how the day to day realities of being in care can affect a young person's capacity to learn and participate.

A breakdown of the educational data for summer 2016 for Southend looked after children at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 was presented in the Autumn of 2016 as part of the Virtual School annual report. Attainment figures for summer 2017 were not available at the point of completion of this report.

#### *Early years*

Children in reception class are assessed in the Early Stage Foundation stage. Schools report this data to the Department for education but they are not a part of the national indicator set for looked after children. In order to track the educational progress and attainment of our youngest children, the Early Years Team collects data in a number of areas. The children are judged against the criteria of emerging expectations, meeting expectations and exceeding expectations. The area in which data will be collected in 2017/18 will be:

- Personal social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Communication and language
- Maths
- Literacy

The Early Years Team ensure that the children's identified needs are being appropriately supported using the early years pupil premium and raise any issues directly with the Virtual School.

During 2016/17 there was an increased focus on supporting carers to provide quality educational activities in the home. Carers have been supported with resources and home visits with a particular focus on early reading skills.

The fostering service and social workers for the children have been actively ensuring that when appropriate, children are accessing the 15 hours of free nursery that they are entitled to. This is a valuable additional resource that supports the holistic education of the child.

### *Key Stage 2*

Pupils in year 6 receive support from the Virtual School according to need. Pupils are identified for additional teaching support according to their academic level.

All Looked After Children 2015/16 academic year:

14 pupils were included in the cohort for all looked after children at KS2. Southend pupils were the below the national average in all subjects.

- In reading, 21.4% achieved the expected standard in the tests, compared to 40.8% nationally
- In writing teacher assessments, 21.4% of the cohort achieved the expected standard, against 45.9% nationally
- In the maths tests, 21.4% achieved the expected standard in the tests, compared to 41.9% nationally.
- In grammar, punctuation and spelling 28.6% of Southend's LAC achieved the expected standard, compared to 44.3% nationally.
- In the combined reading, writing and maths measure, 14.3% of the cohort achieved the expected standard in all 3 subjects, compared to 25.7% nationally.
- In terms of pupil progress, on average, LAC pupils in Southend had negative progress scores in reading, writing and maths meaning that they made less progress than the national average for pupils with similar prior attainment. Southend's scores were not deemed statistically significant due to the small size of the cohort – therefore we cannot say with certainty that the results were below the national average.

### LAC Greater than 12 months

Looking at pupils who were looked after for at least 12 months as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, the cohort reduces to 10 in Southend. Southend's results were below the national average in all subjects for attainment. The outcomes were also below the published figures for all statistical and regional neighbours in each subject. However, the progress outcomes were more positive, although the results were not deemed to be statistically significant.

- In reading, 30% of the cohort achieved the expected standard compared to 41% nationally. In writing, 30% of the cohort achieved the expected standard compared to 45.7% nationally.

- In maths, 30% of the cohort achieved the expected standard compared to 41% nationally.
- In grammar, punctuation and spelling 30% of Southend's LAC achieved the expected standard, compared to 43.7% nationally.
- In the combined reading, writing and maths measure, 20% of the cohort achieved the expected standard in all 3 subjects, compared to 25.1% nationally. This was in line with our regional neighbours in Essex and Norfolk but below the other published figures for our statistical and regional neighbours.
- LAC pupils made positive progress in reading with an average score of +0.8. This was higher than all but one of our statistical neighbours and above the national average for LAC pupils (-0.5). The writing progress score was -0.5, indicating negative progress on average, but above the national average of -1. Pupils also made positive progress in maths with a score of +0.6, the highest of all our statistical and regional neighbours.

All pupils are offered support for transition to secondary school. Links with designated teachers are made before the children transition to their new school and wherever possible a member of the Virtual School will attend their first Personal education Planning (PEP) meeting.

#### *Key Stage 4*

Pupils in key Stage 4 are offered additional support in line with need including where required additional one to one tutoring in maths and English in both years 10 and 11. Their progress is monitored throughout by the Virtual Head Teacher who provides individual targeted support for the young people ensuring clear and effective communication between schools, carers and any other relevant professionals.

The Virtual school ensures that all pupils have access to a laptop to support them with their studies and the Virtual School carefully monitors progress towards a young person's GCSE targets. In 2016/17 and the current 2017/18 there have been a high number of students in the cohort with significant learning issues and subject to an EHCP which has impacted significantly on achievement.

The Virtual School has looked carefully at the cohort to identify how long they have been looked after; the stability of placement; school attendance prior to becoming looked after and identified special needs to ensure that attainment is in line with expectations given individual situations and that young people are encouraged to strive towards stretch targets.

All year 11 pupils receive support to identify appropriate pathways once statutory schooling has ended, and when necessary, are accompanied to college open days and interviews by a member of the Virtual School where appropriate and wherever possible by their carers.

2 new headline measures were introduced in 2016: Attainment 8 and Progress 8.



- designed to encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a focus on an academic core at key stage 4
- reward schools for the teaching of all their pupils, measuring performance across 8 qualifications
- Every increase in every grade a pupil achieves will attract additional points in the performance tables
- Progress 8 is now the main accountability measure for schools, replacing the old 5+ A\*-C measure.
- Progress 8 is calculated for individual pupils solely in order to calculate a school's Progress 8 score

*The DfE state that schools should continue to focus on which qualifications are most suitable for individual pupils, as the grades pupils achieve will help them reach their goals for the next stage of their education or training.*

#### All Looked After Children

30 pupils were in Southend's cohort for all looked after children at KS4 in 2016. 14 of these pupils had special educational needs. 4 pupils had more than 8 placement moves whilst in care. Southend performed in line with the national average for LAC in terms of attainment, but the progress outcomes were below national. However, 2 of the cohort did make positive progress compared to the national average for all pupils with similar prior attainment.

- In the Attainment 8 measure, Southend's cohort achieved an average score of 20.0, compared to the national average of 20.9 for LAC pupils.
- In the Progress 8 measure, Southend's score of -1.81 indicates that on average, Southend's LAC pupils made less progress than their peers who had similar prior attainment. This is also true nationally where the figure was slightly above Southend's (-1.46). Southend's results were statistically significant.
- 10% of the cohort achieved A\*-C in English and Maths, compared to 15.9% nationally.
- 10% also achieved 5 or more A\*-C including English and Maths (the old headline measure at KS4), compared to 12.1% nationally.

#### LAC Greater than 12 months

Looking at pupils who were looked after for at least 12 months as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, the cohort reduces to 21 in Southend. 10 of these pupils had special educational needs. Southend performed well in terms of attainment but not in the progress measure.

- In the Attainment 8 measure, Southend's cohort achieved an average score of 23.8, above the national average of 22.8 for LAC pupils. Southend was ranked 57<sup>th</sup> in the

country in this measure. This was also above the average for our statistical and regional neighbours.

- In the Progress 8 measure, Southend's score of -1.69 indicates than on average, Southend's LAC pupils made less progress (over 1.5 grades lower) than their peers who had similar prior attainment. This is also true nationally for LAC pupils, where the figure was above Southend's (-1.14). Southend's results were statistically significant and the lowest of all our statistical neighbours.
- 14.3% of the cohort achieved A\*-C in English and Maths, compared to 17.5% nationally.
- 14.3% also achieved 5 or more A\*-C including English and Maths (the old headline measure at KS4), compared to 13.6% nationally.
- 85.7% of the cohort achieved any qualification, above the national average of 77.1%.

### *Attendance and exclusions*

The results published for the last academic year shows a slight increase on the previous year in the percentage of looked after children classed as persistent absentees to 19%. This figure is higher than the average for our statistical neighbours and the national average published for the previous year.(2016/17 not yet available)

#### **Percentage of looked after children classed as persistent absentees at 31<sup>st</sup> March**

	2016	2017
Southend	15.1%	19%
Stat neighbours	7.1%	Not yet published
National	4.9%	

\*A low percentage represents better performance

The Virtual School have implemented the monitoring of attendance through Welfare Call. The focus is to engage foster carers and schools to identify issues before they become a problem and implement a plan to support future improved attendance.

The percentage of young people who have had fixed term exclusions has decreased by 1.8% in the 2016/17 academic year, to 13.8%.

Pupils who received more than one exclusion have all been supported by the Virtual School. Alternative education provision has been provided through agencies such as Figure of Eight to minimise the disruption to their education and Edge of Care have offered significant support to foster care placements which often struggle when a young person is at home during term time on a full time basis for any length of time.

There have been no permanent exclusions during the 2016/17 academic year.

### Pupil Premium

Young people are eligible to receive full Pupil Premium of £1,900 per year from their first day in care and the Virtual Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this is distributed and used in line with a robust educational support plan. Use of this includes a range of interventions including maths and literacy additional support programmes, tutoring, additional equipment and books and counselling.

The Virtual School was also able in both 2016/17 and again in 2017/18 to provide GCSE revision guides for all young people taking their exams to support their final year academic success.

#### Looked After children awards

The looked after children awards continue to be celebrated on an annual basis.

In 2016/17 the awards took place to celebrate the achievements of Southend's looked after children and care leavers. Children and young people were nominated for a range of reasons including improved performance at school, achievements in specific areas of the curriculum and having a positive attitude in spite of difficulties like changing school or placement.

Care leavers were recognised for outstanding performance and effort including academic success at University.

A total of 43 young people were nominated for an award in recognition of their hard work and commitment to their education.

#### *Examples of some of the nominations:*

*"I would like to nominate Jamie for a LAC Award. Jamie has worked hard to conquer his emotional and social issues with his peers and continues to work extremely hard in lessons and is currently having transitional lessons in S Band with the hope he will make the move across permanently from the Achievement pathway he is currently placed in. Jamie has willingly and diligently worked with his mentors who have offered him lots of support and interventions to help him manage and regulate himself appropriately allowing him to form positive relationships with his peers. Academically Jamie is on target or above in most subject area's."*

*"I would once again like to nominate FC for the LAC awards – he has managed year 6 with excellent academic progress – exceeding expectations and managing transition to secondary school very well. His resilience has been excellent over the change in setting and leaving primary school – I hope that he has started at Secondary school successfully and will continue with this success."*

*“I have another young person who has made exceptional progress since going into a residential school. He is non-verbal and his communication has improved vastly. Also his willingness to engage in academic work has progressed enormously.”*

### Education, employment and training

The virtual school supports young people, alongside the 16+ service, who have left statutory care at the age of 18, into education, employment and training opportunities.

The consistent support offered has again resulted in a low number of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training).

The number of young people without any qualifications has decreased. At September 2017, 121 (61.4%) of care leavers were in education; 18 (9.1%) were in training; 23 (11.7%) were in employment and 8 (4.1%) were on apprenticeships.

### Percentage of 19, 20 and 21 yr olds that are in Education, employment and training

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	57%	60%	52.3%
Stat Neighbours	46.9%	50.9%	49%
National	48%	49%	50%

The numbers of young people successfully engaged in education, employment and training as at March 2017 was 52.3%. This has increased in September 2017 to 86.3%. The figure for young people not in education, employment or training at September 2017 was 14.2% a reduction on the same point last year. This is a fairly consistent trend as some young people that have signed up for courses in September may drop out by the end of the summer term and will by late autumn be deemed NEET.

### Higher education

Southend’s performance has been consistently strong for a number of years with 5.6% of care leavers enrolled on degree courses.

Southend continues to successfully support young people to attend university and at September 2017 there were 11 young people attending University.

### Health of looked after children

The Southend looked after children health service is provided by North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) and Southend University Foundation Trust Hospital. They are commissioned to provide: all statutory health entitlements in a timely manner; an up to date health care plan for all looked after children, designed in partnership with the child where appropriate; and a range of health based interventions, health promotion, advice and information are offered to looked after children and their carers.

Southend Hospital is commissioned to provide initial health assessments for children and young people coming into care.

Looked after children and young people have the same health risks and concerns as their peers. However, they are known to have a higher vulnerability as they often enter into care with unidentified health issues as a result of receiving poorer parenting, histories of abuse or neglect, having an unknown health history and higher levels of social mobility. Therefore they have poorer long term health outcomes than their peers. The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) reported in 2013 that about 60% of children and young people who are looked after in England are reported to have emotional and mental health problems and a higher proportion experience poor health, educational and social outcomes after leaving care.

It is a requirement for children and young people coming into care to have an initial health assessment within 20 days of becoming looked after and subsequent review health assessments every 6 months up to the age of 5yrs then annually thereafter.

% of children whose initial health assessment was within 20 working days of them becoming looked after at the end of March

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	44.2%	41.7%	27.4%

Whilst only 29.1% of young people met this target in 2016/17, when we look at those where the medical was undertaken within 25 working days, the percentage increased dramatically to 44.1%

We continue to work closely with our health colleagues to identify barriers to achieving this target and have a clear action plan in place for 2017/18. At the end of July 2017 the % achieved within 20 working days had increased to 48.7% however the figure for July only was 66.6% showing a gradual improvement.

% looked after children whose health checks were in time at 31<sup>st</sup> March

	2015	2016	2017
Southend	90.6%	92.1%	84.0%
Stat neighbours	91.2%	89.6%	

National	89.7%	90%	
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78.7% of children and young people had their review health assessments completed at the end of July 2017, a decrease from the previous year. This is however closely monitored and it is clear that there are currently a high number of older young people (18) who are refusing to attend for formal medicals and where the health team are looking at better ways to engage these young people. Southend also has a high number of young people placed for adoption outside of the Borough and due to reliance on external health authorities to undertake this work and provide details once complete, these medicals often take additional time to be undertaken and received.

Concerted efforts have been made by the health team and social care to work collaboratively to improve performance on this indicator. There will as stated above also be a small number of young people who do not attend or refuse a health assessment. The looked after nurse follows up all non-attendance and attempts to arrange further appointments at venues convenient for the young person.

% of young people whose immunisations are up to date at end March

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	74.1%	76.4%	63%
Stat Neighbours	87%	88%	Not yet available
National	88%	87%	Not yet available

65.9% of children and young people had received the appropriate immunisations for their age in 2017, again reflecting the challenge for looked after children. By the end of August 2017 this had dropped slightly to 62.4%, however this is due to the number of young people placed for adoption where medical reporting is delayed due to reliance on external health authorities. Many young people who enter care have not received the relevant immunisation programme and take time to establish this once entering care. Work is ongoing to improve the immunisation uptake both those looked after and more generally across Southend.

The looked after children health team co-ordinates the health needs of looked after children, providing a clear framework through universal and targeted services for children and young people to promote optimal health and wellbeing. Comprehensive initial health assessments and developmental reviews provide opportunities to identify and address any developmental delays.

Where particular health needs are identified the child or young person may be supported by the looked after children health team or where necessary referred on to specialist services. An SDQ (Strength and difficulties questionnaire) is completed on all looked after children over the age of 7 years to assess their emotional wellbeing status. Where at any stage emotional needs are identified, these are referred to the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental

Health service (EWMHS previously CAMHS) for more specialist clinical assessment and intervention.

### Placement activity

The indicators in this section are important measures of the stability of care that a child has experienced. On the whole, stability of placement and care is associated with better outcomes for children. Proper assessment of the child’s needs and a sufficient choice of placements to meet the varied and specific needs of different children are essential if appropriate stable placements are to be achieved. Inappropriate placements tend to break down and lead to more frequent moves for a young person.

#### % of looked after children with three or more placements in one year at end of March

	2015	2016	2017
Southend	13.2%	11.5%	9.5%
Stat neighbours	10.8%	10.8%	Not available
National	10%	10%	

For this indicator a lower score is indicative of good performance. Performance in Southend is in line when compared to statistical neighbours and the national average. The criteria for this indicator has changed over the past few years. Previously when a child returned from a missing episode this was classified as a new placement, even if a child returned to the same placement. These are no longer included in this indicator. The percentage of looked after children with three or more placements in one year has remained fairly stable over the past few years. It is expected that the % may increase slightly during 2017/18 due to the high numbers of children being placed for adoption and where the making of an adoption order is being delayed through changes in the level of court challenge.

Percentage of looked after children aged under 16 looked after continuously for at least 2 ½ years who have been living in the same placement for at least 2 years (or placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement lasting for at least 2 years) as at 31<sup>st</sup> March.

	2015	2016	2017

Southend	58%	64.7%	65.6%
Stat neighbours	69.7%	69.7%	Not available
National	68%	68%	

For this performance indicator a higher score is indicative of good performance. Instability for children is associated with poor outcomes, often disrupting children’s education, their access to services and threatening friendships established in a previous placement or prior to entering care. It is important that placements are sufficiently matched to children’s needs, are of sufficient quality, and are well supported, if placement breakdown is to be prevented.

Southend’s record has remained fairly stable over the past few years at around 70% and is similar to our statistical neighbours and against national figures. Most placement moves have been carefully planned, with most children then remaining in placement for at least 12 months. This provides evidence of well thought through care planning and good support for placements. Southend has over the past 18 months had a large number of young people turn 16 years who no longer count within this indicator, but do however remain in their long term stable placement.

#### Placement location and type

There are many reasons why some looked after children are placed away from Southend. Whilst availability of placements is a factor, some young people need to live out of area to help to keep them safe from harm or from dangerous influences closer to home. Others may need specialist care that is not available locally, or may be placed further afield but with family kinship carers.

Over the past 18 months, there has developed a national shortage of placements both fostering and residential which has led to challenges locally to ensure that placements are well matched. For most of 2017 In house fostering services have been running at around 118% capacity, which leads to pressures within fostering families. The support of the Edge of Care Team has been invaluable to carers during what has been a challenging time.

#### *Foster carers feedback:*

*‘Edge of Care taught me how to de-escalate situations. YP would not still be in my care without Edge of Care team’*

*‘Edge of Care has been a revelation for us with our young person. We needed support and it was never at a convenient time. We need people who can work with our young person and us as at the same time and protect the placement and that’s exactly what Edge of Care do. The fact they are available at all hours is a total life saver for us and makes us feel valued and not alone. We felt no-one understood how hard it was and we’re frequently at the point of giving up. Now that is not going to happen as Edge of Care are there to protect the*



*placement from breaking down. This can only be a good thing as these young people need stability and a secure base.'*

*Young People's feedback of the work of the Edge of Care Team:*

*"Thank you for picking me up and being on time. You are such good listeners and I like how you talk to me like I am a person not just a kid"*

*"You always listen to me and try to understand how I am feeling. It would be better if you could sort out school for me a bit more and get school to listen to me"*

*"I don't like having lots of different people with me"*

*"Thank you for supporting me no matter what"*

*"It's excellent, because they take you out as I haven't been going to school. You get to meet new people. It's better than other services I have worked with in the past as they spend time with you, make it more fun, and actually talk about what's going on for you.'*

This issue of supply and demand has also shown an increase in external prices (this was addressed under financial performance).

Of the 286 children looked after by Southend at March 2017, 187(66.4%) were placed with in house carers and 82.5% were placed less than 20 miles from their home. The majority of those children in placements classified as 'at a distance' were placed in Essex or local authorities bordering Essex or were placed for adoption.

It is recognised that children placed away from their home area may need additional support and the quality and impact of care and support that they receive is carefully planned and closely monitored. Where young people in any form of residential care, the placements are monitored through the multi-agency Acute and Complex Placement Panel to ensure that their health, including mental health, education and care need are appropriately being met with clear exit plans in place.

Number of looked after children by placement type as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017

Placement Type	Number of looked after children
Foster placement (including kinship)	215 (73.6%)
Placed for adoption	22 (7.5%)
Placement with parents	9 (3.1%)
Residential childrens home	13 (4.5%)
Secure unit	2 (0.7%)
Youth offender institution*	0
Residential school	2 (0.7%)
Semi independent	27 (9.2%)

Foster to adopt	2 (0.7%)
Total	292

\*Since December 2012 all young people remanded to custody automatically become looked after children (under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012)

The vast majority of looked after children are in foster placements (73.6%). Southend has a low number of children in residential children's homes with approximately 15 children in such placements at any one time. This is in line with the use of this type of placement over recent years. The use of residential placements is linked to the number of older young people coming into care, some with very concerning behaviour who struggle to adapt to living in an alternative family environment and for whom it is very difficult to find the right accommodation. Southend makes a conscious decision to only use residential care where we cannot offer a placement in a family setting or where to do so would not be in the best interests identified for the young person. Where a residential placement is considered the 'best fit' for a young person, the service aims to move them on as soon as possible through careful care planning with a long term ambition for family life (at home or within a foster placement). The use of residential placements is constantly scrutinised and monitored both by senior managers and as stated earlier through the multi-agency acute and complex placement panel.

At the end of July 2017 there were 2 young people placed in welfare secure accommodation. Both had very complex needs and were placed in secure accommodation for their own safety and to reduce the risk of absconding; CSE and gang activity. During this time the service continually plans for their next placement to match their complex needs.

#### Placement costs

Placement type	2015/6 average weekly cost	2016/17 average weekly cost
In house foster placement	£180 allowance per child but average one off fee of £213	£184 allowance per child but average one off fee of £213
PVI fostering placement	£700	£900
Residential and secure placements	£3,100	£3,800

The table above shows the difference in the average weekly costs in payments for in-house foster placements, independent foster placements and residential and secure placements. The figure for in house includes the average fees and allowances paid to in house foster carers, compared to the payments made to external agencies for placements. Costs over the past year for new external placements have risen sharply placing pressure on the external purchasing budget. A comprehensive recruitment strategy has been developed to attract more in-house foster carers.

## Comparative analysis of actual spend in the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years

Looked after children	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Placement activity	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn
In house foster care	2,183,248	2,476,583	2,816,946
PVI foster care	2,129,900	1,412,435	1,447,431
Residential care	2,980,788	2,776,360	3,244,487

### Foster carer recruitment

Southend has continued to be able to rely heavily on in house fostering provision against PVI (private, voluntary and independent) provision. Financial restraints mean that there is growing pressure to continue to recruit more in house carers which, as well as having significant financial benefit also facilitates better coordination of support to children.

14 mainstream households were approved by Southend in the year 2016/17, alongside 10 kinship (family) carers. In the first 5 months of 2017/18 a further 7 general carers have been approved alongside 3 kinship carers.

In order to meet the challenge of recruiting foster carers, a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy has been developed. This has a number of strands and has been amalgamated with the Southend adoption recruitment programme. Southend's fees and allowances structure was reviewed in 2015 which enabled more carers to move into a fee paid status, to match and challenge private agencies who traditionally have paid much higher fees than local authorities. Whilst there remains a discrepancy between the two, it has allowed Southend to begin to compete in the market place.

The marketing strategy to recruit foster carers is continuing to develop, with improved usage of social media, targeted recruitment campaigns and drop-in sessions supported by existing foster carers and members of the fostering service. Our marketing officer continues to gain feedback from applicants as to the recruitment activity and it is positive that many say that they have approached Southend through word of mouth. The support over the past year of the edge of care team has been cited as a positive reason in a number of cases where word of mouth has been the vehicle.

A further successful avenue over the past two years has been in gaining carers from the independent sector through our campaigns and particularly through word of mouth. Local authorities were able when care numbers were stable, to begin to use less and less PVI carers which further encouraged a move to the local authority, Southend does however

need to continue to support at a high level if we are going to prevent carers from moving away from the local authority in the future to the private sector, now that the demand for PVI placements is nationally beginning again to increase.

The Corporate Parenting Group monitors fostering recruitment closely and detailed information is regularly presented to the group. From sufficiency research locally, Southend needs to increase its core number of carers by at least 5 households annually if we are to begin to increase the number of young people able to remain in-house. If however care numbers continue to rise at the levels that they have over the past 18 months (263 April 16; 282 April 17; 294 July 17) then we will need to increase our core numbers by nearer to 10-15 carers annually just to stand still. This remains a real challenge.

Southend's extensive foster carer training is highly valued by in-house carers and this has been extended to Special Guardians over the past year. Training includes sessions by the Virtual School and various therapeutic sessions; attachment and self-harm; first aid and behaviour management; safeguarding and understanding risk; Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing; awareness of gangs and drugs. Some training is delivered face to face, but much is now on line at the request of carers. The service will continue to develop its training programme to meet the changing needs and issues in society.

#### Additional support for looked after children

An independent visitors and advocacy scheme is available in Southend, commissioned through NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service). At the end of March 2017, 4 young people were matched with an independent visitor and 3 new referrals were received by the service since January 2017.

The independent visitor service recruits volunteers who befriend, support and advise looked after children and young people. A careful matching process takes place to understand the interests of the young people and the independent visitor so that both the young person and independent visitor may share a hobby sport or interest. The project provides induction, training and supervision for the volunteers.

Social workers refer the young person to the service when they think a young person would benefit from developing a supportive relationship with an independent person. The service is explained to young people and it is the young person who makes the final decision about whether they would like to be matched with an independent visitor. The matter is raised by the independent reviewing officer at all looked after reviews where it is felt that such a service could benefit the young person.

Independent visitors usually have contact with a young person at least once a month including telephone calls; text message conversations and face to face contact.

"I'm not sure I could have kept going with this without you"

"The volunteer looks fantastic"

"Thanks it's been really helpful"

Young people comments on the NYAS service

Many of the young people currently matched with an independent visitor are teenagers. Most matches last a few years and usually come to a natural end point as young people get older and lead more independent lives themselves.

The NYAS service also offers an advocacy service for looked after children, where it is felt that maybe they are struggling to have their views and wishes heard.

There were 68 referrals for advocacy services during 2016/17. The main theme of these referrals was generally issues regarding placement moves, however in the last quarter of 2016/17 this shifted slightly to requests for support to attend the young person's Lac review. All referrals were picked up by NYAS within 24 hours and contact made with the young person within 72 hours.

### *Clinical Services*

Southend Children's Social Care receives clinical services through the Emotional Welfare and Mental Health Service (EWMHS, previously CAMHS) which is provided through North East London Foundation Trust and is jointly commissioned with Essex and Thurrock.

The clinical service operates on an outreach basis in order to promote accessibility for families, and in the year 2016/17, of 1111 referrals received, 43 were identified as being looked after children in Southend and 37 subject to Child Protection Plans.

During 2016/17 there were some key developments with the children and young people emotional well-being and mental health services, such as the development of the community eating disorder service, the review of the Suicide Prevention Toolkit for the Health and Wellbeing Boards and an increase in access to services with extended working times up to 9pm daily.

At the end of March 2017, 631 children and young people completed treatment, 26.94% in under 4 weeks; 20.13% in 4-8 weeks; 19.81% in 8-12 weeks and 33.12% in over 12 weeks. All children and young people presenting at A&E were assessed within 4 hours.

*Information from the Success for All Children Group annual report for April 16 to March 17*

### The Children with disabilities Service

The Children with disabilities Service is a Children's Social Care resource which offers a universal/plus targeted service for all children with disabilities who require additional support. The service focuses on providing the additional support required by families with disabled children and is based on the criteria of SEND provision and works closely with our partners in health and education to ensure a full wrap around service for some of our most vulnerable children and their families. The team also has a small number of children placed in statutory care and other residential provision.

The team currently support 122 children and young people and their families. Of the 122 children, 42 are female and 80 are male.

**Age and disability breakdown for cases open to the Children with Disabilities service Aug 17**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
Under 5	10
5-9	27
10-15	54
16+	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>

<b>Type of disability</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
Multiple	52
Autism/Asperger's	28
Hearing	2
Learning	5
Mobility	1
None	14
Other DDA	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>

**Personalised budgets**

Personalisation, which is about giving service users choice and control over their lives, particularly in how their needs are met, is an approach that continues to gain popularity as many families choose to take on more control over their lives and the opportunity to choose their own provision to meet family circumstances when it best suits them.

The Children and Family Act 2014 advocates the use of personal budgets, which means that rather than receiving services like accommodation and personal care, disabled people are supported to be able to plan and spend their budget as they choose. This gives families more control over how they use their budget to buy the service that makes sense to them at times that benefit them.

At the end of March 2017 there were 143 children receiving direct payments through Southend.

## Short Breaks

Short breaks are defined as any service or activity outside of school hours which gives the family of a disabled child or young person a break from their caring responsibilities, and gives the disabled child or young person an enjoyable experience. Eligible provision therefore includes both targeted and specialist provision and mainstream activities outside school hours, for example holiday play schemes, after school clubs or one to one outreach support. Southend currently commissions around eight short break providers including providers such as Eco Wings and Marvellous Minds.

Excluding those families who access short break provision through direct payment, there are an additional 50 children who access the Short Breaks provision. Where families use their direct payments to access short break provision, they will usually seek support from the children with disabilities team to help to tailor packages to meet their child's specific needs.

## Transition

During 2016/17 17 young people transitioned from children's to adult's services as they reached the age of 18. The Children with Disabilities team ensures that referrals are made to Adult Services as early as possible and joint meetings take place to ensure that the transition period is as smooth as possible for families and the young person involved.

If a young person is not likely to be eligible for support from Adult Services then the Children with disabilities team will link the family with transition health services to provide other support.

## Special Educational needs

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced significant changes to the special educational needs system that came into effect from September 2014, replacing educational statements with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The team have worked closely with the SEN service to ensure a smooth transition and ensure an integrated approach for disability and special educational needs, where social care relates directly to special educational needs.

## Acute and Complex Placement Panel

The aim of the Acute and Complex Placement Panel (ACPP) is to ensure that children with very complex needs, their families, and the universal services they access have the necessary support to, wherever possible, maintain their care at home and their education in the community. If it is not possible to maintain care at home, to ensure that children and young people presented to panel are provided with the opportunity to remain within their community, supported by creative and flexible multi-agency packages of support which will address their care, educational, health and leisure needs.

The panels' strategic function is also to monitor local services and identify gaps in provision in order to inform the development of a range of local provision that is geared to meeting the needs of children and young people. For example:

- a. Consider outcomes of Disruption Meetings
- b. Investigate and report on quality concerns
- c. Report on external placement activity
- d. Initiate strategic discussion

If children and young people are unable to stay within their local community and if it is not possible for them to be placed within a family setting, in some cases they may require a time-limited experience of support within a residential environment or school. Wherever possible these placements should enable young people to maintain links with their community, friends and family networks. The panel ensures that placements, wherever possible, are planned rather than made in crisis, and to avoid crisis decisions which may have long term negative outcomes. It aims to make full use of the monitoring and review of placements, in tandem with Looked after Reviews and Annual Reviews of EHCP plans, in order to ensure

- e. Best value
- f. A needs-led approach
- g. A focus on outcomes

The ACPP also ensures that young people, either with disabilities or who are Looked After, who will require an ongoing service into adulthood, are reviewed and brought to the attention of the responsible agencies in a timely fashion (at age 14)

The ACPP meets on a monthly basis and includes Social Care; Continuing Health; Commissioners from Individual Placements; EWMHS; Virtual School and SEN.

### Leaving Care Services

The Leaving Care service ensures that young people are supported to develop independent living skills, offered career advice and training and educational opportunities, and supported to reach their full potential in all aspects of their life. The local authority keeps in touch with care leavers until they are aged 21, or to the age of 25 and beyond if they are engaged in a full-time course of education, for the duration of the course or have a disability. (In 2018 this will rise to 25 for all young people).

The leaving care service currently supports 187 young people. They provide support to care leavers working closely with colleagues in other service areas to ensure a good transition at the age of 18, when a child's "looked after" care status ends. Leaving care support in Southend is provided by a mixture of qualified social workers and personal advisors, ensuring that young people receive a high quality professional service.

An information leaflet for care leavers regarding financial entitlements and other useful information was developed in 2014/15 in collaboration with young people from Southend.



The leaving care grant remains at £1500 to help young people purchase required items for their permanent home, including white goods and furniture when they eventually move on to full independence.

Housing is a significant issue for care leavers and the Leaving Care Service has been active with commissioners to ensure that young people are accommodated in a suitable provision. A young person's Pathway Plan enables the key-work support to be tailored to the needs of the individual young person.

### Staying Put arrangements

When a young person reaches the age of 18, they are no longer considered to be "looked after". Foster carers play an important part in ensuring that young people are prepared for the move to independent living if this is what they choose, or by continuing to support them after the age of 18 through schemes such as Staying Put, where a young person's foster placement can be extended beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The transition to adulthood is complex for all young people, and staying put arrangements enable young people to experience a transition from care to independence and adulthood that is more similar to that which most young people experience, and is based on need and not on age alone.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the duty on local authorities in England to facilitate, monitor and support staying put arrangements for fostered young people until they reach the age of 21, where this is what they and their foster carers want, unless the local authority considers that the staying put arrangement is not consistent with the welfare of the young person.

Southend has been successful in driving forward the use of "staying-put" since 2014. The number of care leavers able to make use of this service has continued to rise with currently 35 young people remaining in stable family placements post 18 against only 15 in 2014. Changes to the local authority responsibilities in 2018 will show the age for staying put rising to 25 across the board. This does place a further increasing financial burden on the local authority which will only rise further with the age increase in 2018, but has a positive impact for our looked after children and a sense of security for many as they reach 18. Staying put to date costs around £400K per annum.

### *Special Guardianship Orders*

The percentage of looked after children exiting care to a special guardianship order increased by 1% in the eastern region between 2014 and 2015, but remained generally static in 2016. In 2015/16 within the region, four out of eleven local authorities had a higher proportion of children exiting care via a special guardianship order including Southend. In 2015/16, 19% of children left care through the special guardianship route. During 2016/17, 18 children and young people became subject to a Special Guardianship Order the same as in the previous year. A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) means that while parental responsibility remains with the parents, a carer (including foster carers) or relative can apply for the child to live with

them, and make day to day decisions on behalf of the child. The Special Guardian is given over-riding parental responsibility for the child.

Southend work with all SGO families for three years following an order being granted (where the families agree to support) and where appropriate undertake review needs and financial assessments of families to ensure that wherever possible they are able to meet the needs of the young person throughout their childhood. During 2016/17 the specialist worker for SGO in conjunction with the adoption team and Marigold Assessment Plus set up a new preparation training day for prospective special guardians to help them to take stock of the impact on them and their families of a Special Guardianship Order. In addition training for staff was completed in respect of the assessment process; support plans and highlighting the key areas of pressure for families involved.

The Southend SGO panel continues to act as a quality assurance panel, advising the local authority on final care planning options. SGO support in Southend continues to develop. The SGO support group continues to thrive, within which training and advice has been available to anyone in Southend holding an SGO. Proactive support is offered where placements are seen to be under pressure and close links with Marigold Assessment Plus have been forged during 2016/17 to ensure parenting support and advocacy work where required. In 2016/17 Southend paid £372,767 in SGO/Residence Order allowances to support Southend children.

A concerning trend during 2016/17 has been the higher disruption rate in SGO placements and the short timeframe where these have occurred. In several cases where disruption has taken place, concerns were raised as a part of the assessment process, however despite this, court orders were granted in favour of the special guardian. It has become more evident that many Special Guardians did not envisage the level of disruption to their lives that the making of an order created.

*"I wouldn't change it for the world....but" is a common sentiment*

*"I should be the naughty nanny but instead I am having to be the strict parent whilst my daughter is able to be 'the fun parent'. I have totally lost my role"*

*"My friends are starting to enjoy their lives; going out; going on holiday and I am having to sort out school uniform"*

*"I don't want to start to resent her....but"*

*"What if I can't do this"*

*"Thank you for the support group. It helped me to realise that I am not alone in how I feel and there is help out there".*

*Comments from special guardians*

Work is on-going with partners and the judiciary to review the use of Special Guardianship to attempt to reduce the level of disruption and ensure that orders are only granted where it is in the child's best interest to do so.

## Adoption

### Children placed for adoption

In 2016/17 a total of 28 Southend children were adopted an increase from 25 children adopted in 2015/16. This increase was despite a number of Adoptions being carried over to 2017/18 as a result of court adjournments. At the end of July 2017 (4 months into the New Year) 9 children have already been adopted and there are a further 23 children placed for adoption but not yet adopted and a further 23 children where the primary plan is adoption and we are either currently family finding or awaiting court agreement to the plan.

Number (and percentage) of looked after children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Southend	17 (15.7%)	25 (24.3%)	28 (18.3%)
Stat neighbours		15.5%	
National average		15%	

Of the 28 children in Southend in 2016/17, 12 were girls and 16 were boys. An age breakdown is included below of the children's age at the time of the adoption order being granted (this will be different from the age when the children were placed with their adopters).

Age breakdown of children's age at the time of the adoption order being granted in 2016/17

Age in years	Number of children
Under 1	10
1-2	8
2-3	6
3+	5

As at the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017, there were 23 children placed with their adoptive family but an adoption order had not yet been granted. 23 children had a formal plan for adoption but had not yet been placed with an adoptive family, where either family finding is on-going or

we are awaiting the courts ratification of the plan. A further 20 had a potential plan for adoption whilst also having other parallel plans for permanency.

*"I Just wanted to voice my appreciation of the support your team offers. As a family we do need help and I believe that my two have been able to learn and grow with the teams support.*

*Thank you for your liaison with Prince Avenue, my hope is that this can really begin to benefit the children from a place of understanding.*

*Unluckily for you, we cannot afford to holiday every half term, so we will be there!"*

*Adopter*

*26<sup>th</sup> October 2016*

*Post adoption Just Right State and Residential weekend*

#### Adoption scorecard

The adoption scorecard aims to show how swiftly children are placed for adoption in each local authority. The local authorities' performance is measured against key indicators which are applied to the number of children who have been adopted over a period of three years. As the numbers of children adopted each year in Southend remains relatively small, one child's journey through the system can have a large impact on the average figures for a number of years.

The average time between a child entering care and moving in with an adoptive family has continued to decrease in Southend from an average of 505 days (2011-14) to 386 days (2013-16) in the latest scorecard. This is well below the national average of 558 days and shows a continuous downward trend. It is expected that average timescales will begin to rise in 2017/18 due to national court delays from adjourned appeals.

Whilst we will continue to work to reduce the average time between a child entering care and moving in with an adoptive family, our approach will always be to take the necessary time to find the right families for our children.

Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (3 year average)

	Adoption Scorecard Outturn 2013/16
Southend	386 days
Southend's ranked position	4 <sup>th</sup> of 149
England Average	558 days

Southend continues to do significantly better than the national average in the time taken to match a child to an adoptive family once a court decision is received with an average of 120 days against a national average of 226 days. This shows a continued reduction from 144 days in the previous scorecard.

Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (3 year average)

	Adoption Scorecard Outturn 2013/16
Southend	120 days
Southend's ranked position	8 <sup>th</sup> of 149
England Average	226

#### Recruiting adopters

14 adoptive families were recruited in 2016/17. In the first 5 months of 2017 a further 3 Families have been approved. As at the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017 there were 11 Families approved but not yet matched or linked with children. All other families currently being supported by the adoption team have either had children placed with them or are linked to children and are waiting for the placement to be approved at panel.

Recruiting the right adopters for children remains a challenge for all local authorities and the situation in Southend is no different. Considerable work has been undertaken to attract prospective adopters to Southend which has proven very successful of late, with 13 families at the end of July 17 attending training in September and a further 9 currently under assessment. In addition there are a further 10 families attending a forthcoming information event.

Since 2015, Southend has been working jointly with a number of agencies to consider forming a Regional Adoption Agency (Adopt East – more information later). There has been increased activity through this group which includes local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies to ensure the best recruitment across the region of prospective adopters. Our profiles of children have been developed considerably and are well designed, up to date and use good quality dvd's and professional photographs. Responses to requests for information about children are made in timely way and the team are creative in the way that the matching process is managed to be most effective for individual children.

Support for adoption is currently mostly delivered in house by a highly trained team. Services are brought in and funded through the adoption support fund where needed. Given the size of Southend, decisions for support are able to progress in a timely manner and decisions made into services to be provided without any delay. Due to this, Southend has had no adoption disruptions for nearly 10 years.

## Adoption support

Adoption support was brought back in house several years ago and since that time has developed greatly in speed and quality of the offer. Support for adoptive families is a major event in the life of a child and it has lifelong implications for all of the parties involved. The adoption team recognises that all parties may need support at different stages of the adoption journey.

The adoption service provides support to adoptive parents, their children and birth family members to enable them to remain in touch after an adoption order is granted. The letterbox administrator supports a regular indirect exchange of information between birth families and adopters. The team also provides support to help to maintain direct contact arrangements for adopted children and their birth relatives where this is in the child's interests.

Financial reviews are provided to families in regard to adoption allowance/support payments provided by the service, and adoptive families' needs are assessed when there is a change in circumstances. Ongoing therapeutic support is provided for adoptive families before and after the adoption order has been granted and the team will intervene whenever necessary to prevent the disruption of an adoption. The service works alongside the Marigold Assessment Plus to undertake life story work, offers support to adopted adults to access their records and works as part of intermediary services with birth families and adopted adults.

Adoption support is generally provided within the team and therefore is undertaken by staff who have already developed a strong relationship with the adoptive families; the service is diverse in the services offered and support is developed on an individual basis to meet the very individual needs of each child and their family.

Southend adoption team continue to run two post adoption groups. One is a post approval group, for all approved adopters who have not yet been linked with a child. This allows the team to offer ongoing training and to share profiles of children at an early stage. The Southend post adoption group continues to go from strength to strength and is very much adopter led with training and speakers as requested. The post adoption group continues to allow the team the opportunity to identify stresses within certain placements at an earlier stage and to pick up and undertake direct work with the family before a placement disrupts.

Where preschool children are placed for adoption in Southend families are encouraged to attend SPARKLES. SPARKLES is a group in which adopters are shown and encouraged to play with their own child using theraplay techniques, a therapeutic approach that promotes the development of attachment relationships. SPARKLES has added benefits for adopters who have often gone on to develop supportive relationships and networks.

The need for families to be supported post placement continues to be on the increase as families seek to re-parent children impacted by the trauma experienced in their early childhoods.

In addition to Southend's on-going sparkles group and adopter training programme during 2016/17 over 30 families requested additional post adoption support many of whom continue to engage and access this service. In reality this means over 60 children are receiving on-going support. This has continued to increase with more children being brought into Southend and families seeing the impact of the support offered.

The Southend adoption team have continued to optimise access to the government Adoption Support Fund Scheme accessing over £48K in 2016/17 despite reduction in availability within the fund. Of this funding additional services are purchased but a significant proportion funds the skilled work the Adoption Team itself is able to provide.

In addition to this 14 families participated in a preventative therapeutic programme which was launched at the adoption residential weekend in October 2016, again funded through the grant.

Recognising that most adoptive families will require additional support at different times throughout their child's own journey in this project the Adoption Team is seeking to be proactive and preventative before major crisis occur aiming to minimise the risk of any disruption. This year's therapeutic residential project was ambitious as it grew in size with over 50 adults and children attending, and captured those families with younger children. The weekend offered a range of therapeutic activities including 'The Just Right State' course, therapeutic drama workshops, creative play as well as a range of physical activities from adventure courses to fire building. For the families as a whole there were mindfulness workshops and a family disco which was engaging and fun. The wide ranges of activities available were aimed to develop confidence, self-esteem and capacity to connect and engage with others. Something we know is often a challenge for adopted children.

For the parents we launched a NVR (non-violent resistance) support group, supported by Partnership projects.

*Children commented:*

*"I loved the weekend because it was super fun and I made new friends"*

*"I used to be scared of heights until I did the high ropes, I got to do things I have not done before"*

*"I liked making a den and everyone was really friendly"*

*"I loved it all, it's way better than normal weekends"*

*"I want to come back again!"*

*Parents Commented:*

*"It was reassuring to hear that other families experience the same issues and emotions"*

*"the NVR course was very intuitive, I can't wait to learn more"*

*"time with other adoptive families was just awesome"*

*"I did not know what to expect but felt comfortable to share our journey, the highs and lows and picked up a lot of hints and tips – thank you"*

*October 2016*

The letterbox contact system continues to develop, currently supporting approximately 250 contact plans, in several cases including direct contact arrangements.

As young people are themselves approaching maturity it is recognised that the need for them to consider how their own history integrates with their experience of adoption is more prominent. The Southend adoption team seek to support adopted young adults who have been adopted. Before a young person reaches the age of 18, there is a review of the information exchange and direct contact made with the adoptive parents and young person. The numbers of young people reaching 18 is beginning to rapidly grow due to the increase in adoptive placements made over the past few years. It is recognised that just because a young person is reaching the age of 18 they may not be at a point in their lives where they wish to trace their birth family or request access to their adoption files. The team believe however that it is important that they know what services are available to them as young adults. In 2016 the adoption team directly supported four individuals to access their adoption files and facilitated contact between two adopted young adults and birth family members.

Southend Adoption Service recognises that when a child joins an adoptive family it is not only the immediate family that are impacted, but also their extended families and networks. The team regularly hold information sharing evenings for this group, to raise their awareness of the challenges adoption can bring and to explore practical support they may in turn be able to offer. The groups are well attended and have already proven a great success in supporting placements where difficulties arise and allows the team to tap into the extended support with training to give them the understanding to help. Where families have large support networks or where a child being placed brings additional complexities individual events for families are arranged.

Southend adoption service recognises it can be a challenging and difficult time for existing children within a family who are approved to adopt to wait for a child to be placed in their family. In July 2016 the team ran a group for 6 children aged between 6-8 years. The group gave the children an opportunity to share their feelings, ask any questions, make new friends and generally have fun together. Theraplay activities were introduced, which the children will be able to play with their new sibling, and help them to understand the importance of these simple games. The feedback from the children was very positive and is a group which the children have asked continue for both themselves and for new children in the same position. The children wanted this group to be called the "super Sibling Group". This will continue to develop over the next 12 months.

Southend continues to be successful in recruiting adopters and often being able to utilize these placements for children through the national register forming a positive funding stream for Southend. This is financially beneficial to Southend Council with over £382,000 income generated in 2016/17. This income helps to offset expenditure and over the past few years has exceeded expenditure considerably. It does however have an impact on the level of post adoption support required. Due to the ongoing development of the Regional Adoption Agency Programme, Southend are beginning to see a reduction in the number of families taking



placements through the national adoption register which is likely to have a negative impact on the funding stream during 2017/18. In August 2017, there is currently an expected deficit between income and expenditure for inter-agency costs of around £406,000.

### *Birth Parent Support Group*

Through 2016, Southend adoption team continued to run a birth parent support group which directly supports birth families who have been affected by adoption. The Birth parent group continues to meet on a monthly basis in a local community centre. Evidence has shown that the quantity and quality of letters received has continued to improve and has allowed some children to receive contact with birth families that they otherwise would have missed. The group seeks to offer birth parents a nurturing experience, eg they are offered warm drinks and toast and in turn they present as less defensive and more open to receiving support.

The group is advertised in local community areas to ensure that as many families as possible can be supported. The team have supported several young mums through a second pregnancy and have been able to continue to support several very vulnerable parents, post adoption. During 2016/17 the team successfully engaged with some birth parents who previously had no on-going contact with the Department, allowing their adopted children to receive information about their birth families and therefore to begin to really make sense of their backgrounds.

During 2016/17, Southend adoption team developed further joint projects with education regarding the “Just Right State” ensuring that a number of teachers across the Borough are now trained to run the programme. In addition NVR training has been run with a number of partner agencies to support further the work that is undertaken across the Borough. Several programmes were initiated in local schools where children both adopted, in foster care and some placed with their birth families joined together in the just right programme. Schools saw a real benefit in this for the children concerned. In 2016/17, the adoption team joined with Marigold assessment Plus to run similar programmes with the fostering service for foster carers and their foster children.

In 2016/17 the team developed further Mindfulness Meditation Training. This course recognises that in order to manage the continuous challenge of being parents the parents themselves need to be valued and develop strategies

### *Regional Adoption Alliance*

Southend continue to work with our partners towards the Adopt East Regional Adoption Alliance (RAA). We are working currently with Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Essex, Luton, Barnardo’s and Adoption Plus to form Adopt East.

During 2016/17 the management board have worked towards establishing a clear delivery model for the RAA and establishing a budgetary framework within which this will function. It was intended that this would follow a shared service model however practical issues arose

leading to a decision that a hosted model would likely work more efficiently across such a large area. There continue to be challenges in the developing of the RAA, not least in respect of IT issues and it clear at this stage that there are likely to be huge financial implications for each agency. Whilst at this stage no final decisions have been made, the DCS group have asked that an enhanced consortium model is considered alongside the hosted model so that a final decision can be made in October 2017. The two main areas which remain at the forefront for each DCS is that any model must be able to show improved performance and outcomes for our children at no additional cost. Whilst the RAA has benefitted from considerable financial support from the DfE in the developmental stage, at present, funding ceases in March 2018 at it is expected that at that stage the RAA will be in a position to become self-funding.

### Quality Assurance Framework

Children's social care is a complex system and we use many tools to understand learning opportunities, themes and trends within the service to enable the service to continue to adapt and change to new demands. This ensures that we are a responsive and learning service. The Southend Quality Assurance Framework was updated in October 2016. This Framework starts from a number of key principles and assumptions:

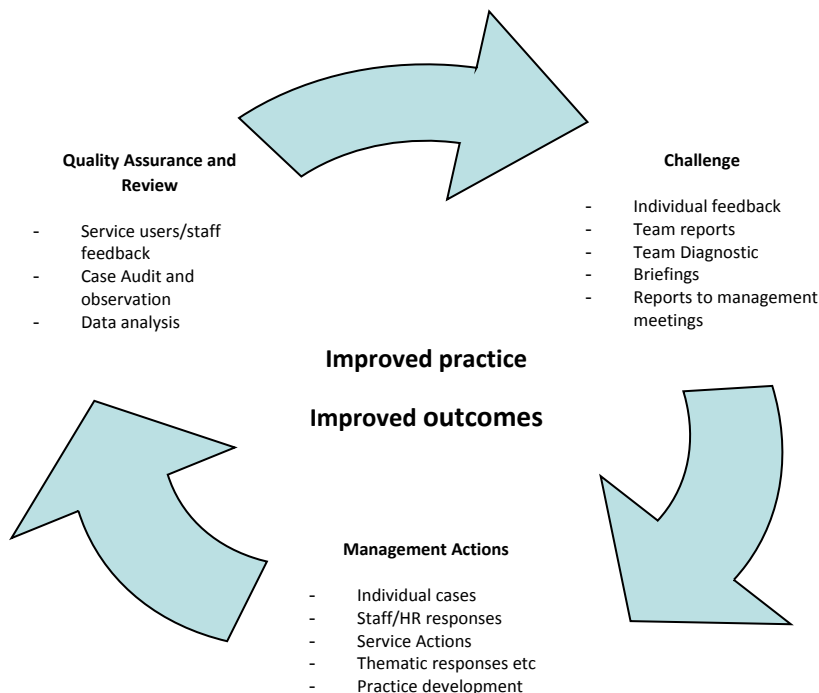
- Southend Children's Services are committed to delivering the very best outcomes for the children it works with;
- Ultimately, the delivery of good outcomes will always take precedence over a focus on process or outputs but all are important in the delivery of children's social care services;
- Outcomes for vulnerable children can always be improved upon and no service ever performs perfectly - social care services require a constantly questioning and interrogative approach to ensure their continuing safety and effectiveness;
- Ensuring an ever-improving quality of all we do is the responsibility of all staff but the prime responsibility will always rest with those who deliver front line services to children and their families;
- Safe and effective services depend on the existence of a healthy tension in the system between those charged with the delivery of services and those who have a scrutinising and oversight role. Managing the tension is part of the role of senior managers who need to ensure a balance is maintained between support and challenge and is always driven by the best outcomes for children.

An effective approach to performance and quality assurance must be characterised by four separate but related strands - quality assurance and review, challenge, management action and practice development:

- Quality Assurance and Review - those are the elements of the service designed to review and measure the extent to which the practice is successful, that work is meeting agreed standards and that children are being kept safe within the system and their welfare being promoted;

- Challenge - these are the internal and external processes and arenas which challenge the service to improve performance and outcomes for children based on the quality assurance and review work;
- Management Action and Practice / Practice Development - these are actions taken both to respond to deficits identified through the quality assurance, review and challenge processes and to ensure that performance improvement activities are constantly refocused to deliver the required changes. These set in place those elements which if properly embedded are designed to improve performance.

The Quality Assurance Framework sets out the quality assurance and review arrangements for the service and identifies how this is used to challenge the service and how this is linked to management actions and practice development with the overall aim to improve practice and improve outcomes for children. The service is committed to a model continual improvement (see below)



### *Management and audit oversight*

The audit programme for 2016/17 ensured that a number of activities took place within the Quality Assurance Framework to measure and review the progress of delivery of Children's Services linked to the Children Services Improvement Plan (CSIP). The quality assurance activities that have taken place to achieve this are:

- monthly file audits
- team development periods
- practice week observations

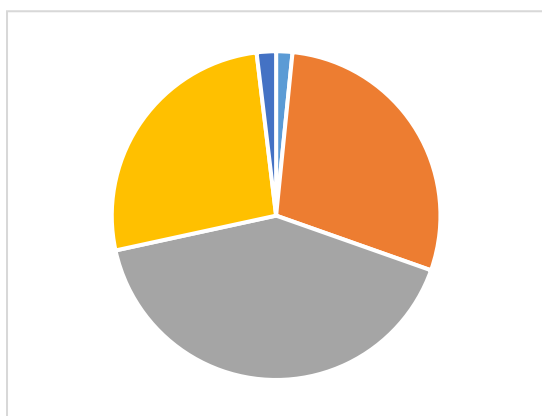
- observations by the practice lead and an external consultant social worker
- informal and formal involvement by the practice lead, with frontline staff and management over the last year
- Participation of young people and families

Audits were completed by senior managers within children’s services, however of the 313 file audited during the year, the majority were audited by external auditors. There has been an increased focus on themed audits completed within each service area. Trends identified are used to inform themes for future audits and case review days/training days and actions arising from the audits are incorporated into the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan to drive forward service improvement.

As a part of on-going organisational learning, during 2016/17, a Practice Lead was appointed to play a lead role in the quality assurance framework, challenging and supporting practice including mentoring; observing practice, identifying themes and trends and supporting a change in practice to address issues identified, by targeted training through team development periods and one to one support where required.

During 2016/17, of the 313 audits undertaken the following was found:

**Overall judgements on file audit ratings and findings**



Overall rating	Number	Percentage
Outstanding	5	1.6%
Good	90	28.8%
Requires Improvement	129	41.2%
Inadequate	83	26.5%
Not Applicable	6	1.9%

In the audit framework targets are set for overall file audit ratings as below:

- Good or above 65%
- Requires Improvement or above 85%

These targets have not been reached.

A key overall message is that there is inconsistency in practice and too many cases are still inadequate or requires improvement. There were particular concerns about the level of inconsistent practice in relation to the performance within the First Contact team and in work with Child in Need cases. Some specific issues include that there is a need to: ensure consistent management oversight on files; assessments being consistently of a high standard; plans consistently being SMART; that there are no delays especially in pre-proceedings work

and; that all child protection investigations were in timely manner. The period was also characterised by increased demand post OFSTED and high caseloads and structural changes.

It should be noted that the inconsistency does include some excellent practice demonstrated by staff and managers as well as some areas of concern. There has been evidence of outstanding and very good practice both in team and individual observations. The majority of staff say they feel supported by their managers and they remain resolute in the desire to provide an outstanding service for children and their families in Southend.

There has been significant activity to address the concerns including: a focus on recruitment and retention of staff and reducing caseloads; additional staffing; compulsory training in relation to assessment and decisions making; development of new services e.g. edge of care; structural and process changes to support good practice.

#### *Consultation with and participation of young people and their families*

The views of children and families using our services are collected in a variety of ways and there are a number of mechanisms in place to ensure that children are supported to represent their views. Children's social care commissions an independent advocacy service, National youth Advocacy service (NYAS), to work with children and young people to ensure they are able to communicate their wishes effectively to practitioners and managers and within the reviewing process.

#### *LAC Councils – Currently one group of between 4 and 8 young people.*

During 2016 the young people involved in the lac council decided that they wished to call the group YEGS – Young Experts Group. This group have been looking at ways in which they can influence change to the practice of social workers and other professionals they have involvement with and thus improve experiences of young people in care in Southend.

The group continues to develop the following:-

- Me Manual's – A booklet Template that can be given to all young people (age dependant of ability) that can be filled in by the child to talk about what is important to them, what they like, dislike, feel and think that they would like to complete with social workers when they complete visits. This manual should be shared with new social workers before meeting the child, to avoid being asked to repeat information many times.
- Social Worker Profile – A small card that tells a child about their new social worker, Likes, dislikes interests and a picture.
- Information Pack – Available to all children, irrespective of age, coming into care that will give them information about their rights, important information about reviews, contact, social workers, IRO's, PEP'S, Medical's, a video about care experiences from other LAC, a **membership card and lanyard** (very important to young people) Access

to a padlet (webpage for ideas) membership to the YEGS, a me manual and other important information.

- Stop Motion Animation Project – A variety of films that talk about children’s experiences of care, social workers and other social care interventions. This can be used for Social Worker, foster carers, IRO and other professionals within Southend training.
- Overhaul the Pledge and Promise to Children in Southend – Redesign. This new design will incorporate the stop motion animations already designed and produced by the YEGS.
- Questionnaires – Are we keeping our pledge? Pink and Yellow questionnaires – re-design; ask other questions, endorsed by the YEGS, Reviewing officers survey.

#### *Audit Visits and Young People’s views.*

Young People’s voices – Southend’s participation lead ensures that random home visits are completed to young people to gain their views about various themes focused on within audits, enabling them to say how they feel they have been treated and what has been good and bad about their social care involvement. 20% of all audited cases each month will be visited and the voice of the child will be fed back to the Practice Lead.

#### *Wider Forums for Young People on CP and CIN plans or have had involvement from social care.*

A steering group has been developed with the wider professional network around Young People known to social care.

This steering group is made up of CSE leads; Youth offending; Education: - Seabrook, Shoebury High; Housing Providers; Stanier House and YMCA, Edge of Care Team; Young Carers Group; Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Team (YPDAT); Early Intervention Officers and social care (16+, CM Teams and FCT).

Vulnerable Young People have been identified and so far 18 young people have agreed to participate in a forum in 2017/18 for developing risk assessments, interventions designed to include the young people, safe areas recognised by children, and ways in which to work with those young people that they would like.

#### *Young Persons Participation within CWD and the wider SEND team.*

This is an area of consultation under development in 2017/18. Visits have been arranged to the four main specialist schools, St Christopher’s, St Nicolas’s, Lancaster and Kingsdown. These schools currently offer wider participation groups and parents advisory sessions and it is intended to tap into these current resources. Further discussions with the SEN Adviser, School Improvement is taking place in 2017/18 so that wider SEN areas can also be included.

A specialist plan will be developed with support from the children with disabilities team to ensure that young people with specific communication difficulties will still have an opportunity to engage wherever possible.

#### *Forums for the parents of CP and LAC children in Southend*

Two consultation forums run on a quarterly basis for parents of child of children looked after by Southend and those subject to child protection procedures. These are led jointly between the Placement & Resources Teams and Volunteering Matters. Issues raised are fed back to practitioners and managers. Feedback is then given at following meetings to evidence the impact on service delivery and therefore the impact for children and their families.

*At the first CP forum, parents expressed a concern that they did not feel prepared for an initial child protection conference (ICPC). Volunteering Matters took this challenge on board and trained a small number of volunteers who will visit families prior to ICPC when requested, to ensure that the families understand the process and feel empowered to share their wishes and views. These volunteers will also attend the ICPC with the family if requested to do so.*

*Feedback from the group has been positive*

Themes arising from these meetings are around clear communication; sharing information and reports in a timely manner; clear explanation about the processes involved and where to gain independent advocacy services.

Children's Take-over days have taken place in Southend for the past couple of years which has been positively received by those who took part.

#### *Independent Reviewing Service*

Participation of children in their review meetings is essential to ensure that children are able to have their say in plans for their lives. Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) must ensure that the views of children are known before care plan decisions can be made.

100% of children (aged 4 and over) participated in their reviews during 2016/17. Approximately 43% of children attended their reviews in person, which is a slight decrease on the previous year. The remaining children contributed to their meeting either by completing a consultation form or by giving their views to the IRO, their advocate, or other person they identify to speak on their behalf. From April 2017- July 2017, 100% of children (aged 4 and over) participated in their reviews and 62% of children attended their reviews in person.

The IRO Handbook makes it an expectation that the IROs to speak with the child privately before their first LAC review and thereafter as part of the process. In 2016/2017, 62.5% of children were personally consulted by their IRO (compared with 88.7% in 2015/16).

The expectation that IROs speak with children is well embedded for reviews, however, there is still a challenge for IROs speaking with children before their first review meeting when they become looked after. In 2016/17 IRO's met privately with 38.5% of children before their first LAC review, a slight decrease from the previous year. This will be an area of focus for 2017/18.

Where children are not able to communicate their views verbally to their IRO, their IRO will visit them and use observations or other means of communication to form a view of the child's response to their placement.

*Children and young people were asked what difference has their IRO made to their life. They said:*

*She does lots and is nice and always asks me what I want and checks out if I am happy and I am. I am ok cos I like it where I am. I got nothing else to say.*

*She just makes sure everyone does what they say and I am safe and that's good. She makes me happy*

#### Workforce development

The provision of high quality services for families and the delivery of improved outcomes for children and young people can only be maintained and improved upon through the continued efforts of a committed and skilled workforce. Children's Social Care is proud of the standard of recruited staff and the culture of learning which has developed. The continued recruitment of high quality qualified social workers has become a challenge over recent years and this is an area closely monitored and extensive work is being undertaken to ensure that Southend remains at the forefront of practice and development to encourage the best applicants to its service.

There is an aim within Children's Social Care to, as far as possible, 'grow our own' social care workforce, providing a clear progression route, if staff wish to progress within the organisation.

Southend during 2016/17 and 2017/18 is introducing a new model of practice, using the Restorative Practice Model. The model of practice for children's services has been developed to improve the experience of children and families who have contact with the service. It forms part of the response to the findings of Ofsted in April 2016 and is contained in the children's services improvement plan. It supports our aim as described in the improvement plan:

*Our aim for all children in Southend is that they achieve good outcomes, and exceed their goals, wherever they live in the borough, whichever school they attend and however long*



*they have lived in Southend. We believe this should be irrespective of a child's circumstances, ability or additional needs*

The model's reach is the whole of children's services; statutory social work services, early help services, family support services and the youth offending service.

Restorative practice is an approach which is being used successfully in Leeds and supported them in moving from a service judged as Inadequate to one which is Good. The approach is one of high support and high challenge. It places responsibility for determining need and finding solutions with families, with support from practitioners. Using a restorative approach will result in children's services working **with** families rather than **for** them or doing things **to** them.

Restorative practice will be implemented across all service areas within children's services in the autumn of 2017.

### Compliments and Complaints

Children's Social Care monitors compliments received from children and families, external bodies and internally. 20 compliments were received in 2016/17, in comparison to 65 in 2015/16. These compliments are utilised to identify excellence in practice, promote achievements and share learning from good practice across Children's Social Care.

Children's Social Care has a statutory duty to respond to complaints regarding services offered to children and families under the Children's Act 1989. Children Act complaints are an opportunity to learn about what is not working within the service and to implement change and improve practice. Those received in 2016/17 represents an increase in both the number of complaint-related representations received and the percentage that did not progress to become formal complaints. Reasons for representations not being pursued as formal complaints include the issue was resolved through early intervention, the issue was outside of statutory remits and timescales, or the complainant no longer wished to pursue the matter.

The major of complaints in 2016/17 came from parents or guardians. There has been a year on year decrease in complaints made by advocates on behalf of children or young people.

A total of 89 new Children Act complaints, were received in 2016/17

In 2016/17 we continued to focus on early resolution of complaints wherever possible. Of 89 completed stage 1 complaints 5 were progressed to Stage 2. Of 5 Stage 2 complaints in 2016/17, 3 progressed to Stage 3.

Lessons learnt from complaints are shared with managers and staff which shows positive impact with the low numbers progressing to stage 2.

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**Southend Borough Council**

**Statement of Purpose**

**Southend Adoption Service**

Civic Centre  
Victoria Avenue  
Southend-on-Sea  
SS2 6ER

**December 2017**

Telephone: 01702 212938

Website: [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

The following Statement of Purpose is intended to set out clearly the aims and objectives of the Southend Adoption Agency as required by Schedule I of the Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2003 (amended 2005, 2013 and 2014) and the Adoption Agencies regulations 2005, amended by the Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential amendments) Regulations 2012 and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011. As required under these Regulations, the Statement of Purpose will be presented to the Council's Cabinet for endorsement and will be reviewed and updated annually.

The Statement of Purpose will take into account the following:

- ❖ The Southend Adoption Agency Policy Document
- ❖ The Adoption Act 1976 as amended by Adoption & Children Act 2002
- ❖ The Local Authority Adoption Agencies (England) Regulations 2003 (amended 2005 & 2013 & 2014)
- ❖ The Care Standards Act 2000
- ❖ The National Minimum Standards for Local Authority Adoption Services in England and Wales 2011
- ❖ The Adoption and Children Act 2002
- ❖ The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 – amended 2011
- ❖ Children and Adoption Act 2006
- ❖ Any relevant Local Authority Circulars and Good Practice Guidance
- ❖ Adoption Scorecard
- ❖ Outcome of Adoption Inspection 2012
- ❖ Outcome of Safeguarding inspection 2012



## The Aims and Objectives of the Local Authority in Relation to the Adoption Service

Southend Sea Borough Council Adoption Service aims to provide a comprehensive range of adoption services to children requiring adoption, birth families, adopters and those who have already been adopted. In meeting its aims and objectives, the Adoption Service will work within the relevant policies of both Southend Borough Council and the Adoption Service.

The objective of Children's Services is for every child to remain with their birth family and every reasonable effort will be made by the Authority to enable and support the birth parents, or the wider birth family, to provide a permanent home for the child where the child's needs can be met within a safe environment. However, if this is not possible then the child is entitled to grow up as part of a loving, adoptive family that can meet their needs during childhood and beyond. At all times the child's best interests come first with their welfare and safety being paramount.

The Adoption Service aims to recruit sufficient adopters to ensure that children can be placed with a family that not only meet the child's day to day needs but also the ethnic, cultural, religious, physical and emotional needs of the child. However, no child should wait indefinitely for an ideal placement.

The Adoption Service recognises the importance of a child retaining some form of contact with their birth parent(s) or birth family. Any decision about the possibility, type and frequency of contact will be based on the needs of the child and what is in the child's best interests. Where a child is of an age to understand, the child's views and wishes in relation to adoption will be considered when making plans for the child.

The Adoption Service aims to provide anyone enquiring about adoption with full information on the adoption process so that they can make an informed judgement about whether or not to proceed with their application. This will include those wishing to adopt from within the United Kingdom and from overseas, foster carers wishing to adopt a child already in their care and step-parents and relatives wishing to adopt a child from within their family.

Prospective adopters will be welcomed without prejudice and will be provided with clear eligibility criteria. They will also be given information on children waiting and what is required to meet the children's needs. The adoption provision aims to provide a service to birth parents and birth families that takes into account the lifelong implications of adoption and treats each individual fairly and with respect.

Birth parent(s) and birth families will be given information on local and national support groups, and where an adult adoptee requires information from their birth records, the adoption service aims to provide a supportive and informative service at all times.

The Adoption Service aims to provide information, help and support for all those who have been affected by adoption whether prior to, or after, the making of an Adoption Order. The Adoption Service also aims to protect all the information held and will provide security and confidentiality for all records, including those to be held for 100 years from the making of the Adoption Order.

The Adoption Service will maintain management information systems in order to monitor and evaluate the service provided and ensure all work is undertaken with the requirements of the National Minimum Standards, current legislation and Regulations, current policy statements and accepted good practice in mind.

## Where can I see this Guide

Written copies are available at the Adoption Team. If you would like a written copy please contact the Adoption Team Manager at the address above or by contacting [johines@southend.gov.uk](mailto:johines@southend.gov.uk)

The guide is available on the Southend Borough Council website

The statement will be translated into other languages or made available in a format that is right for someone with physical, sensory and learning impairments and communication difficulties, upon request.

## The Service Values

Southend's Success for All Children's Group has the following shared vision

'We aim to make sure that all children and young people who live in Southend are able to take advantage of the opportunities which are here now and to enhance these opportunities for the future. It is to

- Help them raise their aspiration and achievement
- Ensure they have the opportunities they need for inclusion
- Facilitate their participation in decision making that affects their lives
- Strive for excellence in the services we provide

The Adoption Service's values include:

- Being child centred; their best interests being paramount
- Focusing on outcomes for children
- Being outward looking, flexible, adapting to new ideas and ways of working and being responsive to individual need
- A commitment to learning
- Listening to children and their families
- Ensure that the services promotes equal opportunities and does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, religion or culture
- Developing and enrich partnerships with other local, regional and national agencies to improve standards and offer a complete service, taking every opportunity to share best practice as openly as possible
- Improving standards of practice and service continuously to respond to changes in law and challenge poor practice
- A commitment to Children Services Practice Priorities

## How will this happen?

These Aims and Objectives will be achieved by:

- Providing placement choices that reflect:  
Equality  
Diversity

Individual and personal needs  
Social and cultural background preferences

- Delivering local Consortium placements wherever possible and appropriate to allow ongoing appropriate levels of post-adoption support
- Active leadership that delivers clarity of purpose to the adoption service
- Clarity about the purpose of individual placements
- Matching placement availability to requirements
- Providing access to support services (e.g. health, therapy) for children, and adopters.
- Facilitating the maintenance of valued relationships, where appropriate, especially with siblings and anyone identified by the child and birth family where possible.
- Avoiding drift and working with time scales that meet the child's best interests
- Designing and managing effective processes and ways of working
- Joint working and partnership
- Ensuring that staff are trained and motivated to deliver a child centred service
- Learning in order to deliver continuous improvement through:
  - The assessment and review of the service
  - Responding positively to complaints and feedback
  - Learning from any placement disruptions
- Involving children in policy and decision making
- Ensuring that children's wishes and feelings will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages
- Taking corporate responsibility within Childrens Services for the effective management, quality and support of placements
- Being vigorous in challenging poor practice and addressing problems effectively
- Providing appropriate and pro active guidance and support to birth parents
- Undertaking ongoing quality assurance and consultation to ensure that the service focuses on outcomes for children

## The Policies

There are detailed adoption policies and procedures to guide the way in which the principles are practiced. These cover children, adopters, birth families, adoption support, and non-agency adoption and inter country adoption.

New staff and panel members are given a copy of the adoption policies and informed of any changes.

A written copy can be obtained as above in 'Where can I see this guide?'

There is also a complete range of more general Southend Borough Council's policies which all staff first access as part of their induction.

## The Structure of the Service

The Service is committed to monitoring the quality of its services and the outcomes of placements and collects data that measures the service's performance. The Group Managers for 'Placements and Resources' and for 'Specialist Resources and Quality Assurance' are responsible for the quality standards of the services and the Adoption Panel also plays a key role in this.



Staff with relevant qualifications, usually a CQSW, DipSW or Degree in Social Work, are appointed by interview in accordance with equal opportunities, good practice and human resources recruitment policy. Copies of staff qualification, references and checks are kept on Personnel files for inspection and oversight by the appropriate inspectors and managers. Regular supervision, training and annual employee development appraisals are conducted.

The core Adoption Team currently consists of 1 Team Manager/service manager, 1 Senior Practitioner, and 4 Social Workers. Administrative support is provided by 2 Adoption Administrators. All social workers within the team are suitably qualified with experience in varying degrees of children and family social work and fostering or adoption itself.

The Adoption Team is part of the Department for People. The Director of Children's Services is John O'Loughlin, who is also the Agency Decision Maker and the Deputy Chief executive is Simon Leftley who also acts as Deputy Agency Decision Maker. The Adoption Service is part of children's services which is managed by the Group Manager Placements & Resources (see below and attached structure chart)

- John O'Loughlin is Director of Children's Services and ADM. He holds a Dip SW; Dip HE and Msc (distinction) in Public Sector Management. John has worked in the public service for over 30 years across Health, Education and Social Care.
- Diane Keens Group Manager Placements & Resources since April 2011 and is Registered Manager of the Adoption Service. Diane was manager of an Adoption Team from 2002, joining Southend in September 2007 as Adoption Team Manager and has worked within Children and Families Service for over 30 years in Essex and Thurrock. Diane gained a Certificate Qualification in Social Work in 1985 at Chelmer College, Essex; a Bsc Hons Degree in Social Work (1<sup>st</sup>) in 2000 at Anglia Polytechnic University, Full PQ award and a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Management) in 2006 at Anglia Ruskin University
- Jo Hines, Service Manager and Adoption Team Manager from May 2011 has extensive adoption experience having worked previously in the Adoption Service in Essex since 1997 and as Senior Practitioner in the Southend Adoption Team since 2007. Jo has a particular interest in Theraplay in which she holds level 1 & 2 training, which brings an added dimension to the Team. She has level 2 Dyadic Development psychology; levels 1&2 Sensory Attachment Intervention and foundation & level 1 Just Right State.
- Faye Khraud, (since July 2012) part time. Faye gained a BA in Social Work at the University of Essex in 2010 and worked in the Care Management Teams in Southend prior to joining the adoption team. She has level 1 Dyadic Development psychology; levels 1&2 Sensory Attachment Intervention and foundation & level 1 Just Right State and level 1 & 2 Theraplay.
- Diane Bowden, social Worker holds a BA(Hons)Social Work obtained in 2013; level 1 Dyadic Development psychology; levels 1&2 Sensory Attachment Intervention and foundation & level 1 Just Right State and commenced working for the adoption service in July 2013.
- Aimee Fossett, Senior Social Worker, was a student social worker in the team in 2009 and joined the team on a permanent basis in 2010 having gained her Degree in Social Work at Southend University. She has level 1 Dyadic Development psychology; levels 1&2 Sensory Attachment Intervention, level 1 & 2 Theraplay and foundation & level 1 Just Right State.
- Lauren Chittock (Newly Qualified)
- Anne Caine - holds an NNEB Nursery Nurse Examination Board (Distinction) Child Development. Higher National Diploma in Child Care and Education and a Social Work Degree 2:1. In September 2007 after qualifying as a social worker she worked in First Contact Team as a front line social worker. In August 2013 she moved to the Southend Adoption Team. Anne holds level 1 Sensory Attachment Intervention and foundation & Level 1 Just Right State.
- Anna Harris, Part time - completed her BSc in Applied Psychology and Sociology at Surrey in 2007, and an MSW at Kingston University in 2012. She has undertaken training in Motivational

Interviewing, Pervasive Neglect, Using the Assessment Framework, Theraplay level 1, Working with sex offenders in child protection work, and Suicide and Self harm.

The System(s) in place to Monitor and Evaluate the Provision of Services to ensure that Services provided are Effective and the Quality of those Services is of an Appropriate Standard.

Statistical records are kept of the adoption service's activities, these are analysed to evaluate and monitor the service and to ensure children's plans are moving forward within timescales that meet their needs, and that adopters are being assessed and approved within the timescales of the National Adoption Minimum Standards. Monitoring is also undertaken to provide information on the needs of the children requiring adoption, the numbers of adopters required, and to ensure sufficient staff are available to provide an effective and efficient service.

The Government introduced an Adoption Scorecard in 2012 which set priorities for all Adoption Services. Southend uses this as an additional tool to monitor and evaluate the provision of services within the Agency.

Following approval, adopters are reviewed every year and are referred back to the adoption panel if they have not been linked within two years of approval.

Statistical records are also kept of all post adoption activity.



The following systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the service given:

- ❖ Preparation courses, the value of the training, information and preparation given.
- ❖ Case work supervision and performance management of staff.
- ❖ Quality assurance of papers going to the Adoption Panel.
- ❖ Adoptive applicants attending panel are asked to provide feedback on their experiences.
- ❖ Feedback on cases presented by members of the Adoption Panel.
- ❖ Review of how members of the Adoption Panel fulfil their functions.
- ❖ Following the making of an Adoption Order, adopters are asked to complete an evaluation form so that the service they have received can be monitored, and where necessary, improved.
- ❖ Various consultation exercises undertaken into specific areas of the service
- ❖ Southend participation survey
- ❖ File audits as part of the corporate audit process

Systems for providing feedback and evaluation from the following groups are in place. These include:

- ❖ Initial information given to enquirers and the time taken to respond to Adopters' experience of introductions, placement and the information given on the child.
- ❖ Adoption Panel attendance feedback
- ❖ Birth parent(s) and birth families and the service they have received.
- ❖ Where they are of an age to understand and communicate, the views of children placed for adoption.
- ❖ Inter-country adopters and the service they have received.
- ❖ Non-agency adopters, e.g. step-parents and relatives, and the service they have received.
- ❖ Schedule 2 users (birth record counselling and adult adoptees) and the service they received.

## The Services Provided

The Service is part of the developing Adopt East Regional Adoption Alliance. The Team covers all areas of adoption including recruitment, assessment and training of prospective adopters, preparation of children for placement, counselling of adopted adults, step-parent adoptions, birth parent counselling, post adoption services and inter country adoptions.

## Who receives Adoption Services?

- ✓ Children requiring adoption
- ✓ Birth relatives
- ✓ Prospective adopters
- ✓ Approved adopters
- ✓ Children and their adoptive families who need adoption support
- ✓ Adopted adults and members of their birth families



## What services are provided?

The Adoption Service provides adoptive families for Southend and local partners as well as the National Register. The Agency offers placements with adopters who have been approved and who are provided with comprehensive support and training.

The Adoption Service offers a therapeutic service for young people through the local EWMHS, and where needed with adjoining EWMHS services, where adopters live outside the boundaries. The Marigold Assessment + also undertakes life story work with children.

Specialist education support is available through the Looked after Children's Advisory Teacher and Virtual Head Teacher, until the making of an adoption order and beyond if the family reside in Southend.

Specialist Health support is available through the agency's Looked after Children Nurse and Consultant Paediatrician service.

Adopters are supported through the process of adoption by the allocation of an adoption Social Worker, usually the worker who has completed their assessment with them. They visit regularly (at least six monthly pre placement and more frequently as needed post placement) and have telephone contact in the intervening period. They are responsible for advising on the linking & matching of placements, practical support and advice to adopters, acting as a key liaison person with the child's social worker and completing reports for the Court.

A post approval group meets on a quarterly basis for approved adopters awaiting placement to offer ongoing training and to share profiles of children needing adoption.

A Southend post adoption support group meets on a quarterly basis, which looks at issues such as managing difficult behaviour, the effects of separation and loss, first aid and life story work as well as offering a Christmas Party and other social events throughout the year.

Family events also take place at least twice a year enabling adopters and their children to meet and integrate with other such families within their immediate and wider networks, further seeking to normalise adoption for all and strengthening the links developed between them further.

A Theraplay parent and toddler group for adopters with pre-school placements to support the development of secure attachment. (Sparkles) and thus improve outcomes for children placed for adoption.

Non Violent Resistance and Just Right State groups run throughout the year as does a new group supporting other children in a family approved for adoption.

A Birth Parent support group runs on a monthly basis to support birth parents with issues regarding adoption and to support the ongoing development of letterbox contact. This aims to help maintain contact between adopted children and their birth parents in a meaningful way.

Any family living in the Southend area whose lives are affected by adoption are able to apply to the Southend Adoption Service and request an assessment of need. This will be undertaken by a qualified adoption social worker to identify support required and available to the family or person concerned. A Support Plan will then be drawn up and agreed by the Adoption Support Services Advisor.

Southend also has close links with Adoption Plus, to help advise on the most complex cases.

## Recruitment of Adopters

Any person expressing an interest in adoption is invited to one of the local open events.

Adoption information is also available on the Southend Borough Council website. The team also have an active Facebook page which gives information and activity news.

#### Key Aims of the Recruitment Strategy;

- Recruit a variety of adopters to meet the ever-changing needs of children in Southend requiring placements.
- Attract adopters from black and ethnic minority communities, those interested in taking older children, those with disabilities and larger sibling groups.
- Increase stability of adoptive placements through appropriate support packages
- To provide a choice of placements to match the needs of children and young people thereby decreasing the possibility of disruption
- Make adoptive families available to the National Register in a timely manner.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to attend one of the monthly information sharing events run by Southend. Following this, applicants are encouraged to explore their interest in adoption further and to inform us if they wish to proceed with Southend.

As soon as we are in a position to pick up the application, a Registration of Interest Form is sent. Once received, they will be notified within 5 working days as to whether Southend will proceed with their application and statutory checks are then started. The applicants then enter stage 1 of the process which is completed within 2 months. Southend allocate an agency advisor to support the family through stage 1. At the end of stage 1 there will be a formal interview after which applicants will be invited to formally apply and a written agreement completed.

At this point applicants begin stage 2 of the process. A decision re the suitability to adopt must be made by the Agency within 4 months of the acceptance of the formal application – 6 months in exceptional circumstances.

If the preceding processes follow each other without a gap, it will be the aim to complete the whole process within eight months from start to finish.



## Placements for Children

Placements for children are considered on the basis of seeking carers from within the child's family first (Connected Persons). If this is not possible, placements from within the Borough's own resources (adopters) or those available within the agencies involved in the developing RAA will be sought, unless this is not in a child's best interests. If this is then still not available, an external resource will be located by the Adoption Team. This is achieved in a variety of ways including

through linking with the National Adoption Register, Adoption Link, advertising in specialised publications, featuring children via exchange events and through continually developing links with other adoption agencies throughout the country.

The Adoption service receives requests for placements for adoption from the child's social worker. The request is provided in writing and outlines the reasons for placement, care needs, ethnicity, religion and language and intended timescales, legal status, forum in which the decision for adoption or foster to adopt was made and any other key information that enables a suitable match to be found.

An Adoption notification meeting then takes place to clarify what information is required for the Agency Decision Maker and by when and who will take responsibility for this.

Prior to the "preferred option decision", a worker is allocated from the Adoption Team to link up with the social worker and begin family finding and hopefully direct work with the birth family. This support they can continue for as long as it is required and certainly until the making of the adoption order.

Once a child has been referred for adoption, a child's permanence report and adoption placement report are prepared. During this work it is ensured that:

- Children are carefully listened to where they are old enough.
- Children's views about their situation, in particular, who they live with in the future and who they continue to have contact with are recorded and actively taken into account at each stage.
- Children should receive support services that meet their assessed needs
- Children should receive proper preparation for placement and support after placement.

(For more information see Adoption Agency Policy Statement)

Birth families views about placements are sought and taken into account.

Every effort is made to find a placement, which meets the child's emotional and developmental needs. This takes into account their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability. However, no child should have to wait indefinitely for the ideal placement. Placements that cannot meet all these needs, but are sympathetic to them, can be considered.

The child is provided with a full and realistic family history and helped to maintain their heritage. A letter for later life is prepared and includes information about the child's birth and early life, and provides up-to-date information about themselves and their situation. The child's social worker writes this letter to be read by young adopted people when they reach their teenage years.

Social workers, foster carers and others staff work to prepare children for adoptive placement. Work is undertaken with children in regard to their wishes and feelings about adoption and the kind of family they would ideally like to live with.

When a family has been matched, children are given appropriate information about their new family in a format they can understand. This often includes welcome books including photos and DVD's, prepared by the prospective adopters.

## Adoptive Applicants

Adoptive applicants from all sections of the community: married people; couples living together, single people, same sex partnerships and members of the diverse ethnic, cultural and religious groups, are sought in order to meet the diverse needs of children in this area.

People who are interested in becoming adoptive parents will be welcomed without prejudice, responded to promptly and given clear information about recruitment, assessment and approval. They will be treated fairly throughout the adoption process.

(For procedures, criteria and more detailed information see; Adoption Agency Policy and Information for Adopters leaflet)

Adopters will need to show that they can:

- ✓ Learn from their experiences
- ✓ Cope with stress
- ✓ Meet the ethnic, cultural, health and educational needs of the child needing adoption
- ✓ Offer consistency of care
- ✓ Work with children's social workers and other agencies to secure necessary services for the child
- ✓ Build and sustain close, intimate and reciprocal relationships
- ✓ Understand other people's points of view and their feelings
- ✓ Be in touch with sad and angry feelings
- ✓ Resolve past wrongs or losses
- ✓ Build secure attachments and share difficulties

At all stages of referral people are informed about a wide range of people who can adopt. These include:

- ✓ Families from all types of backgrounds
- ✓ Couples with or without children
- ✓ Couples who are married or not; heterosexual or gay
- ✓ Single people
- ✓ People from all ethnicities
- ✓ People with disabilities
- ✓ People who are not 'perfect'
- ✓ People who have had problems in the past
- ✓ People who rent their houses
- ✓ Some overweight and older people and smokers (subject to medical advice)
- ✓ People whose infertility treatment has ended.

Further explanation is available for each bullet points. For instance, when discussing weight, smoking and age this is qualified by explaining that adopters need to have the likelihood of maintaining the health and vigour needed to meet the many and varied demands of children throughout their childhood and into adulthood.

Adopters are clearly told that if they smoke they are unable to adopt a child under the age of 5 years. They are also told that they are not deemed to be a non-smoker until they have given up for a period of twelve months.

Further information is given about the qualities needed to adopt, which are:

- ✓ The ability to see the child as he or she is, not how you would like them to be
- ✓ Acceptance, commitment, flexibility, stickability, sensitivity and openness.
- ✓ The ability to cope with a bit of a mess and disruption
- ✓ Ability to ask for and accept help
- ✓ A sense of humour.

The information for the assessment is brought together in a format known as the PAR (Prospective Adopters Report). An adoption social worker visits applicants in their own home. They are seen

together and separately if there is more than one applicant. Applicants are invited to make their own written as well as verbal contributions to their assessment. Work with the adopters own children is also undertaken if appropriate. Other members of the household are also interviewed. Significant relatives and referees are seen at this stage, also ex-partners. The assessing social worker will analyse the information and make a recommendation about the suitability of the applicants to be adopters.

Applicants see the completed Prospective Adopters Report (PAR) and are asked to sign to say that they agree its contents. Prospective adopters are invited to attend the adoption panel where their application is considered.



## Post Approval

The Agency will review approved adopters every twelve months whilst on the register and continue to provide advice, support and counselling. After two years the assessment will be updated and represented to panel.

Every effort will be made to match the applicants with a suitable child or children. Applicants should be clear however that our priority is to find appropriate families for children. Approved adopters will be informed of the National Adoption Register, and Adoption Link arrangements.

Prospective adopters receive preparation for a child being placed when they attend the preparation course and during their assessment.

When a link with a particular child or children has been agreed at the linking meeting, the adoption social worker and child's social worker will tell the prospective adopter about the child and give some written information too. If the prospective adopters wish to proceed, they will receive further detailed information including the child's permanence report. The child's foster carer and the two social workers will also visit them.

All prospective adoptive parents have the opportunity to meet with the medical advisor prior to the matching adoption panel, but particularly where children have special needs.

Where the child's case has been considered by court, leave of the court will be sought to disclose specialist written reports about the child that may help adopters.

The agency is committed to developing a comprehensive range of services aimed to support adoptees, both as children and adults, prospective adopters and adopters in the periods before placement, after placement and post adoption. An Adoption Placement Report is prepared prior to the full adoption panel to make clear what support will be offered to the child and their new family. This will include services such as financial support, payment of legal expenses where agreed; referral



to specialist local services; letterbox contact, ongoing training and a telephone helpline.

Following approval of the match at the full adoption panel, a placement planning meeting will be called. The Adoption Team Manager or senior practitioner will chair this. The meeting includes the adopters, their social worker, the child's social worker, foster carer and the foster carers supervising social worker.

The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that the adopters have all the relevant information available about the child. We provide the prospective adopters with a copy of the child's permanence report, matching report and adoption support plan. An introductions programme is devised in consultation with the adopters.

After the child is placed with the adopters, the child's social worker and the adopter's social worker continues to support the placement. Where more in-depth work is needed, the child and prospective adopters can be referred to services both in house and by other agencies as part of the adoption support plan.

Reviews are chaired by an independent reviewing officer until an adoption order is made. The review first considers the child's progress and then the adoption support plan and whether changes need to be made to it. Adopters are informed that they can make contact with the agency at any time in the future if they wish the adoption support plan to be reviewed.

## Financial Support and other Support Arrangements

For placements arranged through Southend Adoption Agency, the Agency is able to pay introductory expenses and will meet costs of legal expenses where the adoption is contested or particularly complex. Applicant's court fees for an adoption application are paid.

At the point of matching, all children must have an adoption support plan, which highlights any financial implications. Adopters are provided with a leaflet setting out what benefits they may be entitled to. When all possible benefits have been claimed and if there is still a financial need, the Agency assesses whether it should assist. The adoption support plan must be agreed by the Adoption Services Support Adviser (the Group Manager Placements & Resources) and with the adoptive family before being presented to the Adoption Panel.

Subsequently, the child and adopters circumstances will need to be reassessed before any help is offered. Where there is a specific need for financial help related to the placement for adoption and subject to means testing (which is required by government regulations). Southend will consider assisting adopters before and after the child is adopted. This support is available to any adopter living in the Southend area, whether the child has been placed by Southend or not.

Unless the circumstances are exceptional, most financial help given will be in the form of a one off rather than regular payments. One exception is where existing foster carers are adopting, where Southend Borough Council will agree to regular payments for a period of up to two years.

## Making, maintaining and reviewing Contact Plans

Southend Adoption Agency recognises the importance of children and young people having suitable contact with their birth families and other significant people. Such contact is entirely governed by the best interests of the children. Contact can vary from the annual exchange of written information to face-to-face contact with members of the birth family at intervals appropriate for the child. The Agency Decision Maker will review contact plans at the Preferred Option Stage and later as part of the matching process.

The agency operates a letterbox contact scheme for the exchange of information between adoptive families and birth families. Birth families are also supported in arrangements for letterbox and direct face-to-face contact with the child by adoption support social workers.

There are usually mutual benefits from holding at least one meeting between the child's birth parent and the adoptive parents around the time of introductions. Other significant birth relatives may also be involved.

After placement, contact arrangements continue to be revisited at each review, but not after an adoption order is made. If there are any issues that arise later, these are addressed through the adoption support social workers.

A birth parent drop-in is run on a monthly basis to offer birth parents support and advice in all matters relating to adoption, but in particular to support with contact arrangements.

The Adoption Agency recognises that the contact requirements in each individual case, vary and need to remain flexible in order to meet a child's ever changing needs, therefore when approached Southend Adoption Service seek to review any request, ultimately the child's new parents will make decisions according to what they feel is in their child's best interests.

## What happens if placements break down?

Very few placements for children do disrupt. However, where there is a disruption the Agency convenes a disruption meeting in order to try to understand the factors, which led to the breakdown of the placement. This helps in planning future placements. These meetings are chaired by an Independent Chairperson. A summary of the conclusions of this meeting are considered by the management team, and with the Adoption Panel to inform future practice.

## Birth Families

Birth parents and birth families are entitled to services that recognise the lifelong implications of adoption.

Birth parents will be informed and consulted at the earliest stage when the agency has decided parallel plans, which include adoption. They will have the opportunity to give their account of events and to see and comment on what is written about them in reports for the Adoption Panel and in information passed to adopters.

Birth Parents will be offered a worker from the Adoption Team to advise and support them throughout the adoption process. If requested, this service can be provided by another local authority or purchased independently.

The Agency will provide a service for birth parents that wish to relinquish their child for adoption, usually babies. When the agency is approached before the child's anticipated birth, as much preliminary work as possible will be undertaken with the birth parents before the child is born, to ensure that the decision to place for adoption is based on the fullest possible consideration of all the alternatives available.

All birth parents will be encouraged to provide information and contribute to their child's life storybook and letter for later life. The life storybook provides a simple and age appropriate explanation of what has happened to the child up until they join their adopted family. It includes pictures of important people and places in the child's life so far, mementoes and other information relevant to the child. The child's social worker usually does this work with help and advice from the adoption worker. (For more information see Adoption Agency Policy Statement)

A Birth Parent drop-in runs on a monthly basis to support Birth Parents with any issue relating to adoption and especially to support in the provision of letterbox contact.

## Step-Parent Adoption

The Service also provides advice, information and counselling for those who are seeking to secure the adoption of their partner's children. The same service will be provided for adoption by relatives.

Enquirers are sent written information about non-agency adoption within 2 working days. If having read the information provided, families wish to proceed, they are asked to apply in writing. Applicants are asked to complete the forms for statutory checks in line with agency adopters.

The adoption team will provide a detailed report for the court having considered all alternatives to adoption with the applicants. The Agency has a duty to only recommend adoption where it is in the best interests of the child for an order to be made.

In order to assess whether adoption is in the best interests of the child, it is necessary to seek the child's own views and the views of the birth parent who is not making the application. Similarly the views of wider family members will be taken into consideration where appropriate. (For more information see Adoption Agency policy Statement)

## Services for Adopted Adults

The Service offers counselling and acts as an intermediary with the birth family where adoptees over the age of 18 years contact the Adoption Service seeking information or seeking contact with their birth family. This includes those seeking access to their adoption records, referred to the team by the General Register Office.

This service is available both to those adults adopted through this Agency and those living in this area whose adoptions were arranged through other Adoption agencies. (For more information see Adoption Agency policy Statement)

Where adoptees are under the age of 18 and are seeking further information and possible contact with the birth family, the agency will offer counselling and act as an intermediary, taking into account the views of the adoptive family.

Support is offered to all young adult adoptees as they reach 18 regarding on-going information exchange and where appropriate the tracing of birth records and/or their birth parents.

### Birth Relative Initiated Contact

Requests from adult birth family members for help seeking information or making contact with adult adoptees, placed by the Agency, will be facilitated by the team, who will act as an intermediary, approaching the adult adoptee, where their whereabouts can be found.

Recognising the potential impact that this work may have upon the adopted person, their separated sibling and other involved people; the work will be guided by the following general principles:

- The welfare, safety, needs, current circumstances and wishes of the adopted adult and others involved will inform any work undertaken.
- The role of the Service will be to assist the individual to understand and accept the situation they are in and the choices open to them, not to advocate on their behalf.

(For more information see Adoption Agency Policy Statement)

### Applications for approval as an Inter-country Adopter

The Service believes that with inter-country adoptions, as with all other adoptions, the child's needs are paramount. The service will provide initial written information and counselling to applicants seeking to adopt a child from another country and offer advice on how further specific information regarding the legal and good practice arrangements for adoption in a particular country might be obtained. The team will apply the same standards as for domestic adoptions. (For further information see Adoption Agency Policy Statement)

### Equal Opportunities

The Adoption Team is committed to working in an anti-discriminatory way, incorporating the Authorities Equal Opportunities Policy in all its work. Ensuring services to children meet their individual needs such as racial and cultural identity, religious and linguistic needs, disability, gender and sexuality.

The service endeavours to make a positive commitment to address these needs and promote respect and celebrate difference.

## Child Protection

The Service complies with the SET procedures and Southend's Safeguarding Board policy in all areas of child protection and provides adequate training to its staff and adopters to ensure that children are safeguarded and protected at all times.



## Adoption Panel

Southend Adoption Panel is compliant with The Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amend 2011 & 2013) and relevant guidance. Terms of reference for this panel and panel membership are available within the Southend Adoption Agency Policies.

The panel consists of people with a wide range of experience and diverse backgrounds and operates at sufficient frequency to avoid delay in considering children for adoption, approval of adopters and matching.

The Adoption panel is set up in accordance with government regulations. The panel is there to make recommendations to the agency on two main issues -

- ✓ Whether to approve people as suitable adopters
- ✓ Whether a match for a child with a particular adopter is right for them

They also comment on –

- ✓ Adoption Support Plans
- ✓ Contact arrangements
- ✓ Issues of concern, which they feel the Agency needs to put right.
- ✓ Quality assurance matters

The Agency Decision Maker will then consider the panel's recommendations before making a decision. Whether a child should be placed for adoption is now the decision of the Decision Maker and is no longer presented to the full adoption panel apart from where a child is relinquished.

## Panel Arrangements

Southend has one Adoption Panel which usually meets monthly. The panel has been reconstituted under the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 – amended 2011 & 2013. There is now a central list of panel members who perform the functions of the adoption panel.

The panel ensures an independent chairperson. Southend appointed Panel Chair (Barbara Foster) in June 2014, and we have two independent Vice-Chairs who will stand in as required.

The main decision maker is John O’Loughlin, Director of Children’s Services in the Department for People. He has overall responsibility for services for looked after children and is Decision Maker in cases presented for Preferred Option. There is a deputy Decision Maker, Simon Leftley, Deputy Chief Executive.

## Involving people in Agency Decisions

Applicants to be approved as adopters are always invited to attend the panel where their approval is being considered and subsequently when they are matched with a child.

The panel always gives reasons for their recommendations. These reasons are recorded in the panel minutes. When applicants attend panel they are informed of the recommendation immediately in most cases, otherwise within 24 hours. Decisions are made within 7 days of the Decision Maker receiving the relevant minutes.

Individual decisions are made about when and how to tell children about agency decisions that adoption is right for them. The child’s age, maturity and understanding and what they are likely to understand is taken into account.

If the decision maker is minded not to approve an adoptive applicant or not to continue with their assessment, he will write to them setting out the reasons and giving them the chance within 40 days to ask for the decision to be reviewed by the Independent Review Mechanism.

## Placements with other Adoption Agencies

When children’s needs cannot be met locally, they will be placed with adopters approved by other adoption agencies. Similarly, adopters approved by Southend who do not match the needs of the local children are assisted to have a child placed with them from elsewhere.

## A Summary of the Complaints Procedure Established in Accordance with Section 26(3) of the Children Act 1989(A) and the Complaints Procedure Directions 1990 (B)

Complaints about adoption fall into two categories as follows:

1. Where the complaint is related to the service received, this is dealt with in accordance with Section 26 of the Children Act 1989, and the procedures on complaints for the Southend Borough Council’s Department for People.

A service user or somebody acting on their behalf can make a complaint by contacting:

Customer Services Manager  
Department for People  
PO Box 6, Civic Centre  
Victoria Avenue  
Southend – on – Sea  
Essex SS2 6ER

2. Where the complaint relates to the fact that the Agency Decision Maker decides not to approve the applicant, then the applicant will have the opportunity to have their case reviewed by the adoption service, or be referred to the Independent Review Mechanism.

The Independent Reviewing Mechanism is organised by the British Associate of Adoption and Fostering. The Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) is a review process, conducted by a panel, which prospective adopters can use when they have been informed that the Adoption Agency does not consider them suitable and does not propose to approve them as adoptive parents (or has withdrawn the approval).

More information on the IRM can be obtained from:

Contract Manager,  
Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)  
Unit 4,  
Pavilion Business Park,  
Royds Hall Road,  
Wortley,  
LEEDS  
LS12 6AJ

Telephone: 0845 450 3956

Fax: 0845 450 3957

Email: [irm@baaf.org.uk](mailto:irm@baaf.org.uk)



## Contact Addresses and Telephone Numbers

The Southend – on – Sea Borough Council Adoption Agency is registered with:

**OFSTED**

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

08456 404045

[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

**Southend** Adoption and Fostering, Floor 7, Civic Offices, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex

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[annaharris@southend.gov.uk](mailto:annaharris@southend.gov.uk)

## The System for Reviewing the Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually and presented to Southend Borough Council's Cabinet for approval.

For a copy of this document in any other format / language, or to order more copies, please call 01702 212938





**Southend Borough Council  
Statement of Purpose**

**Southend Fostering Service**

Civic Centre  
Victoria Avenue  
Southend on Sea  
Essex

**December 2017**

Telephone: 01702 212938  
Website: [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

### **Southend Fostering Service**

The Fostering Service is managed within the Department for People and is led by John O'Loughlin, Head of Children's Services.

### **Status and Constitution:**

The Southend Fostering Service is part of Southend Borough Council and is a 'Local Authority Fostering Service' as recognised within the Fostering Service Regulations 2011(amend 2013).

Southend Fostering Service is based at:

Civic Centre  
Victoria Avenue  
Southend on Sea  
Essex  
SS2 6ER  
Tel No: 01702 212180

### **The Service's Values**

Southend's Success for All Children's Group has the following shared vision

'We aim to make sure that all children and young people who live in Southend are able to take advantage of the opportunities which are here now and to enhance these opportunities for the future. It is to

- Help them raise their aspiration and achievement
- Ensure they have the opportunities they need for inclusion
- Facilitate their participation in decision making that affects their lives
- Strive for excellence in the services we provide

The success of this will be measured against the OFSTED guidance for inspection of:

- Gaining Children & Young People's views
- Value for money
- Helping children to be healthy
- Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them to stay safe
- Success for children
- Achieving economic wellbeing
- Helping children to make a positive contribution
- Promoting equality and tackling discrimination
- Helping children to achieve well and enjoy what they do

The Department for People believes that children and young people who cannot be cared for within their own family, whether that be for a short or longer period of time, are often best served by being cared for within another family. The Department for People has sought to develop a Fostering Service that can meet the physiological, psychological, emotional, ethnic, cultural and religious needs of children who are looked after by Southend Borough Council. The agency's primary aim is to provide safe, high quality family care for children and young people.



## Aims & Objectives

The overall aim of Children's Services is to provide safe, secure and effective services that enable all children to fulfil their potential, maximise their health and live successful adult lives. The aims of Children's Services are:

- To give all looked after children the same opportunities and benefits as other children to live in a safe, secure and stable environment.
- To enable children in care to reach their potential.
- To create a safe environment for looked after children.
- To ensure that looked after children are not disadvantaged or excluded by giving them a sense of belonging in their homes, schools and community.
- To develop and meet the emotional needs of looked after children.
- To provide looked after children with the ability to build and maintain stable relationships.
- To provide looked after children with life opportunities that will assist them to grow into autonomous healthy adults who will be responsible citizens and parents themselves.

In particular the Fostering Service's objectives are:

- To provide the best possible placements for children and young people to enable them to reach their full potential.

- To recruit, assess and support foster carers so they can provide a wide range of placements, which meet the diverse needs of looked after children and young people
- To ensure that the Children's Pledge and Foster Carer Charter are embedded into all work undertaken by the service.
- To ensure that sufficient resources are available through clear sufficiency planning, to meet the needs of our Looked after Children.

### **How will this happen?**

These outcomes will be achieved by:

- Providing placement choices that reflect equality, diversity, individual and personal needs
- Delivering local placements wherever possible to allow ongoing appropriate levels of support
- Active leadership that delivers clarity of purpose to the fostering service
- Clarity about the purpose of individual placements
- Providing access to support services (e.g. health) for children and foster carers.
- Facilitating the maintenance of contact and valued relationships
- Support Friends and Family Carers in the same way as any other Foster Carer
- Avoiding drift and working with time scales that meet the child's best interests
- Designing and managing effective processes and ways of working
- Joint working and partnership
- Ensure that there is a 'Staying Put' procedure in place so that when a young person reaches the age of 18 and they cease being looked after, they have the opportunity to remain with their current foster carer under a supported lodgings agreement.



**By working in partnership with foster carers within Southend-on-Sea to improve the quality of foster care.**

- The Agency and Fostering Families have established Southend Foster Families Community in partnership, which plays a key role in the strategic and operational development of the service.
- Provide a grant to the Southend Foster Families Community.
- Adopt and carry out our work as set out in the Foster Carer Charter and Pledge to Looked After Children

**To recruit, train, support and supervise foster carers the service organises:**

- Advertising, publicity campaigns and recruitment initiatives
- Initial visits to applicants
- Safeguard checks on applicants
- Fostering preparation courses
- Assessments of foster carers and Family and Friends carers
- Presentation of foster carers and Family and Friends foster carers to the Fostering Panel
- Post approval training e.g. De-escalation and Behaviour Management and Valuing Diversity Support to carers during the assessment process and post approval
- Monitoring and improvement of standards of care
- Annual Fostering Household Reviews
- Provision of adequate allowances to enable foster carers to purchase equipment and furniture required for the purpose of fostering
- Support to carers at children's reviews and in the preparation of reports
- Supervision of carers to develop and maintain good standards of practice

**To ensure the highest quality of care for Looked after Children:**

- Standards of care are monitored through regular supervision, including unannounced visits. Any concerns about standards of care are addressed by the supervising social worker.
- Annual household reviews are undertaken and take into account the views of service users.
- Unannounced visits at least annually and more frequent where concerns or difficulties arise.
- Where concerns are noted or investigations are commenced following allegations against foster carers, the Fostering Service will ensure that these are investigated and that the foster carers are supported through the process.
- Following any formal Section 47 inquiries, the Fostering Panel will consider the Fostering Service's appraisal of the foster carers continued capacity to care for children.
- Support and advice for carers is available 24 hours a day.

**To provide an in-house placement service for Looked after Children:**

- A duty worker is available during office hours to take referrals from the Fieldwork Service and match children with appropriate in-house foster placements.

- Details of carers willing to take emergency placements are provided to the emergency duty team when the office is closed.

**To promote a positive image of fostering for foster carers, the children of foster carers and children and young people placed with foster carers:**

- Build a positive sense of identify for carers and foster families
- Long Service Awards for foster carers.
- Positive media coverage
- Fund raising and promotional events
- Awards for looked after children
- Annual celebration event for sons and daughters of foster carers

**To create an environment of continuous improvement and innovation in everything we do:**

- Consult with carers and their representatives about the service and how to improve it.
- Consult with children and young people who are looked after
- Consult with foster carer's children
- Consult with service users and their representatives about the service and how to improve it.
- Consult with staff and their representative about the service and how to improve it.
- Consult with partner agencies about the service and how to improve it.
- Undertake reviews of the service.
- Ensure that staff are trained and motivated to deliver a child centred service
- Learn in order to deliver continuous improvement through:
  - The assessment and review of the service
  - Responding positively to complaints and feedback
  - Learning from any placement disruptions
  - Involving children in policy and decision making
  - Ensuring that children's wishes and feelings will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages
  - Taking corporate responsibility within Children's services for the effective management, quality and support of placements
  - Being vigorous in challenging poor practice and addressing problems effectively.

## Management, Staffing & Services

### **Management Structure**

The Fostering Service is part of the Department for People Children's Services. The Director of Children's Services is John O'Loughlin who is also the Decision Maker. The Fostering Service is part of Placements & Resources which is managed by the Group Manager Placements & Resources Diane Keens who is also the Registered Manager.

Quality assurance issues are managed by this Group Manager and the Group Manager Specialist Resources and Quality Assurance. It is also managed through the Fostering Panel.

## Staffing

- **1 Team Manager** - Emmet Perry (full-time)
- **4 Senior Practitioners** - Martelize Kinnear (Part-time)
  - Toni Bisaccia (full-time)
  - Phil Bugg (Full-time)
  - Sue Snoxell (Full time senior fostering worker for SGO and Private Fostering))
- **2 Placements Commissioning Officers** - Howard Cecil (full-time)
  - Magdalena Wach-Sowa (full time)
- **7 Supervising Social Workers**
  - Rebecca Sparrow (full-time)
  - Vacancy (full-time)
  - Caroline Dolby (full-time)
  - Jodie Wessell (full-time)
  - Suz Sawtell (part-time)
  - Lynn Hails (full-time)
  - Eunice Charangwa (Part-time)
  - Selina Fellows (Part-time)
- **1.5 Fostering Administrators** - Sally Andrews (part-time)
  - Loraine Little (full-time)
- **Marketing and Recruitment Officer** - Dawn Webb (part time)

- **1 Senior MH worker** – Karen Eves (Full Time)

The Team Manager and all supervising workers are qualified social workers, holding the Diploma/Degree in Social Work or an equivalent qualification.

## Services provided:

Southend Fostering Service exists in order to provide foster care for children and young people looked after by Southend Borough Council. The Fostering Service aims to recruit sufficient carers in numbers and range of skills to enable children and young people to be placed local to their families and other support networks. The agency offers placements with carers who meet National Standards and receive comprehensive support and training. There is the opportunity for career progression for foster carers through fee paid schemes. There is an arrangement in place for independent support in the case of allegations, by way of a partnership scheme between Southend and Thurrock fostering services.



## Placement Options

### Long term (permanent):

Duration: Until adulthood  
Purpose: Permanent, substitute care

### Task centred:

Duration: 1 to 2 years including preparation for independence  
Purpose: Provide substitute care where a lengthy piece of work is required, or for teenagers.

### Short term:

Duration: Up to 1 year  
Purpose: Provide substitute care while plans are formulated or a specific piece of work is carried out, e.g. assessment of parents.

### Parent and child:

Duration: Up to 1 year (occasionally longer)  
Purpose: Support parent, protect baby, and assess parenting skills.

### Respite:

Duration: 1- 28 days; may be one off, or a planned series of placements, not exceeding 110 nights per year.

### Remand and bail support:

Duration: Up to a year (very occasionally longer)  
Purpose: Provide a placement when a young person is remanded to Local Authority accommodation by the Court.

### Emergency:

Duration: Up to 28 days (may then evolve into short term or other type of placement)  
Purpose: Emergency substitute care at very short notice.

### Supported Lodgings

Duration: Ongoing until young person is able to move to independent living.  
Purpose: To provide a supportive home environment to aid transition to independent living.

### Short Breaks

Duration: No longer than 17 days in any one period and for no more than 75 days per annum

Purpose: To provide short term care and support for CWD and children in need

Staying Put

Duration : 18-21 years

Purpose: To provide ongoing support post 18 for care leavers within their foster placement



## Services Provided

Southend Fostering Service offers a therapeutic service for children and young people through the Marigold Assessment +, the Southend Emotional wellbeing Mental Health service (EWMHS) services, and where needed, with adjoining EWMHS services e.g. where carers live outside the boundaries of Southend on Sea.

We have a senior mental health worker, working directly with the fostering service, to support the emotional health and wellbeing of Looked after Children in Southend.

Specialist education support is available through the Virtual Head Teacher and Advisory Teacher for Looked after Children, who are based within the Civic Centre. Children with special educational needs are provided with services through the special educational needs service. Specialist health support is available through the agency's Lead Nurse for Looked after Children.

The Virtual School Headteacher's role is to co-ordinate services for looked after children and their families, so that all school-age children in the care of Southend Borough Council are receiving the best possible education. The Virtual School approach is to work with looked after children as if they were in a single school, liaising with the schools they attend, tracking the

progress they make and supporting them and their carers to help them achieve the best possible outcomes.

The Edge of Care Team has dedicated workers to support foster carers to prevent placement breakdown.

## **Children Placed**

The majority of children are placed with in-house foster carers. The remaining children in foster placements are largely placed with independent fostering agencies (IFAs) that have an agreement with Southend Borough Council and provide local placements. Southend will usually only place with independent providers deemed 'good' or 'outstanding' by OFSTED.

The foster carer recruitment strategy, aimed at attracting local families to become foster carers, is increasing the number of available in-house placements.

## **Carer Households**

The Fostering Service currently has 113 approved carer households across all the categories. Whilst several new Foster Carers have been approved, others have resigned or retired over the past year, however we continue to successfully recruit locally. The recruitment campaign is in place to recruit additional carers to reflect the needs of Southend's looked after population. Foster Carers need to reflect the ethnic and religious backgrounds of the children looked after by Southend Borough Council. We are particularly seeking carers from black and minority ethnicities, carers who can offer a home to large sibling groups, carers for children with a disability and carers willing to take adolescents. Fostering Allowances are set in detail in the Fostering Allowances booklet and policy. These figures are reviewed annually.

The Southend Fostering Team continues to carry out foster care and Family and Friends assessments and to assess and formally support and supervise all Connected Person's placements.

## **Procedures for the Recruitment, Approval, Training, Support and Review of Foster Carers**

Southend Fostering Service has undertaken to ensure that its practices comply with the National Minimum Standards (2011). Furthermore the policies in relation to the recruitment,

assessment, approval, training, management, support and supervision of foster carers reflect the expectations set out in the preceding Code of Practice.

Southend Fostering Service undertakes all its work within the principle, set out in the 1989 Children Act, that the welfare of children is paramount. This principle is applied to the agency's decision making, planning and daily work.

All social work tasks, including the assessment, support and supervision of foster carers, are carried out by qualified and experienced social workers.

All enquiries to the agency by people expressing an interest in becoming a foster carer are responded to promptly. We aim to have formally acknowledged the enquiry within two working days by sending an acknowledgement letter and information leaflets. This will be further supported by a phone call and a home visit within 7 working days of their confirmation that they wish to proceed.

Applicants are then invited to attend the Skills to Foster course. These are run at least every 3 months. Subject to satisfactory safeguard checks and the agreement of the Team Manager, applicants are also invited to make a formal application and are immediately allocated for assessment.

The target date for presentation to the Fostering Panel is within 6 months from the date of the initial enquiry. Applicants are invited to read the assessment report and to attend the Fostering Panel considering their application. The Fostering Panel's recommendations are then considered by the Director of Children's Services who is the decision maker. Each foster carer is allocated a named supervising social worker, who visits them on a regular basis. The agency also provides a 24 hour on call system through their Out of Hours service, staffed by specialist, experienced foster carers. Foster carers are offered respite as required by the Care Plan and Placement Agreement for each child.

## **Foster Carer Allowances**

Fostering Allowances are set in detail in the Fostering Allowances booklet and policy. These figures are reviewed annually.

## **Ongoing Learning and Development**

A rolling programme of training is provided for foster carers, including courses on:

- Fostering Challenge

- Apprentiships
- Valuing Diversity
- Managing difficult behaviour
- De-escalation
- The effects of separation and loss
- First aid
- Substance misuse
- Life story work
- Court work
- Theraplay
- Child Protection
- Health of Looked after Children
- Fostering changes

Southend Fostering Service has full membership of CoramBAAF and Fostering Network and all carers have membership to Fostering Network (funded by the Fostering Service) where they can gain additional support and advice.

### **Fostering Panel**

- The Fostering Panel is independently chaired.
- The Panel is compliant with the Fostering Regulations 2011 (updated 2013).
- The Panel meets on a monthly basis
- The Panel considers recommendations for the approval of foster carers and matches between foster carers and specific children where a long term placement is planned. It also oversees Household Reviews and the de-registration of foster carers and helps with quality assurance.

### **Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning**

The Fostering Service keeps statistical records and undertakes analysis in order to inform judgement on the quality of the services offered and to provide information on which to strategically plan future placement requirements.

The Borough has a Commissioning Strategy, drafted in line with Department of Health guidance on 'Planning & Providing Good Quality Placement for Children in Care'. Information is kept and monitored on:

- The number of referrals of children/young people by age, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender and disability,
- The number of enquiries to approval, number of carers by age, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender and disability
- The number of Annual Foster Home Reviews conducted to timescale
- Disruption rates

There is a clear audit programme for all foster care files.

## Private Fostering

The Fostering Service is responsible for:

- Information on Private Fostering within the local community together with the Local Safeguarding Board.
  - The completion of a Private Fostering Assessment to ensure that the placement can meet the child's needs.
- The maintenance of a register of people privately fostering and children placed with them
- The monitoring of standards within private foster homes.
- Awareness raising within the local community

## Complaints

Complaints leaflets are provided to foster carers. Complaints leaflets are provided to children and young people by their own social worker and the fostering service provides further copies when requested or when circumstances indicate that this is relevant. Adults and children are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the service with their social worker and/or the team manager.

### **Making a Complaint**

Southend Borough Council, Department for People has a Complaints Manager. Complaints, or indeed general comments or compliments, about the service can be lodged. Any complaint will be acknowledged and the Complaints Manager will organise an investigation of the complaint according to the three stages of complaints (Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3).

The Complaints Manager can be contacted at  
 Department for People  
 Civic Centre  
 Victoria Avenue  
 Southend-on-Sea  
 Essex SS2 6ER

Telephone 01702 215085 or by email [childrenscomplaints@southend.gov.uk](mailto:childrenscomplaints@southend.gov.uk)

Comments and Complaints can also be made to Ofsted:

OFSTED  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
03001231231

Maggie Atkinson Children's Commissioner for England  0800 528 071 Advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
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### Additional Copies

Copies of this Statement are routinely given to people using the services provided by Southend Fostering Services.

A Children's Guide to our services is also available.

For a copy of this document in any other format/language, or to order more copies, please contact:

Southend Fostering Service  
Civic Offices  
Victoria Road  
Southend on Sea  
Essex SS2 6ER  
Tel No: 01702 212180

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# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

## Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) to Cabinet

on  
9<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Report prepared by: Gillian Shine, Senior Procurement  
Advisor and Mark Atkins, Lead Procurement Advisor

Agenda  
Item No.

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### Passenger Transport – Policy Changes

People Scrutiny Committee and Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillors: Councillor Salter, Councillor Moring and Councillor Courtenay  
A Part 1 Public Agenda item

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#### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- (i) articulate to members the proposed changes to policies which were recommended as part of the transport review
- (ii) update members on the feedback received from users and stakeholders as part of the consultation in regards the recommended policy changes for passenger transport provision regards eligibility
- (iii) seek approval to proceed with implementing the revised policies for the following areas:
  - Home to School for Pre and Post-16 Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
  - Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Centres and Activities
  - Looked After Children
  - Dial-a-Ride
- (iv) endorse the timescales to implement the proposed policies as outlined in 3.3.1 below.

1.2 It should be noted that the recommendations in this report consider feedback captured as part of the consultation process which started on 14 July 2017 and ended on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

1.3 This was referred back to Cabinet by the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 for further consideration.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that the following proposed policies are now adopted as per the approach identified in 3.1:

- a) Home to School Transport for Pre and Post-16 Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018) as follows:
  - The Special Educational Needs Travel Assistance Policy (see Appendix A) to be implemented as set out in 3.1.2 a) and 3.1.2 b) below. The provision of 'travel assistance' is to be focussed on the promotion of independence and personalisation. As pupils adopt more independent alternative modes of transport then routes will be optimised.
- b) Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Centres and Activities (effective from 1st April 2018) as follows:
  - The Adult Social Care travel assistance policy (see Appendix B) to be implemented as proposed in 3.1.2 c) below. the focus on maximising independence will mean that travel assistance will only be provided by the Council once all alternative transport options have been considered.
  - Where transport is provided by the Council, the contribution from the user is increased to the new charge of £4 per day for a return trip and £5 per day where multiple trips are applicable.
- c) Looked After Children (effective from 1st April 2018) as follows:
  - The looked after children and young people travel assistance policy (see Appendix C) to be implemented as proposed in 3.1.2 d) below.
- d) Dial-a-Ride (effective from 1st April 2018) as follows:
  - The Dial-a-Ride policy (see Appendix D) to be implemented as proposed in 3.1.2 e) below.

## **3. Background**

### **3.1 Policy Review**

3.1.1 The initial stage of the transport review found that a number of policy areas required further investigation:

- The lack of an overall strategy for the provision of passenger transport
- A lack of policies and guidance setting out eligibility criteria and processes for assessing need for and obtaining assistance with transport

- The provision of assistance with transport in excess of the Council's statutory minimum duty
- A lack of understanding of the actual and potential markets for a Dial-a-Ride service.

3.1.2 The second phase produced a series of proposed changes to policy:

**a) *Home to School Transport for Pre-16 Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)***

Currently, the majority of SEND pupils who are eligible for travel assistance are transported by SBC on in-house or contracted transport services, with a small number travelling independently following travel training. A mileage cost is available for parents who wish to transport their own child if this is considered appropriate.

*Recommended new approach from the transport review:*

- Individual assessments around the provision of 'travel assistance' are considered alongside the promotion of independence and personalisation.
- There will be a rationalisation of transport routes as pupils adopt more independent alternative modes of transport.
- Independent travel training will be the first response to a request for travel assistance. Following training:
  - Those deemed capable of independent travel will be provided with a cash amount to purchase a subsidised public transport pass.
  - Those deemed unsuitable or those who do not become independent travellers at the end of the training process, will be offered a travel support allowance –to enable them to make their own travel arrangements.
- Those for whom a travel support allowance is not appropriate will be offered a place on shared transport services provided by the Council.
- A travel support allowance is always offered as a first response to those travelling out of borough (as distances involved result in expensive transport provision).

**b) *Home to School Transport for Post-16 Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)***

The current approach is to provide a space on an existing statutory transport service or provide dedicated services beyond the statutory minimum. All services are free of charge to the user.

*Recommended new approach from the transport review:*

- Independent travel training will be the first response to a request for travel assistance (same as the approach for pre-16 students above).

- Charges to be imposed for Post-16 SEND to bring it into line with mainstream Post-16 charging arrangements. Students from eligible low income households will not be required to pay.
- Post-16 pupils will be able to purchase a subsidised public transport pass.

Dedicated transport services will only be provided, subject to a charge (which is equivalent to current cost of an annual bus pass), once other travel assistance options have been considered.

**c) *Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Centres and Activities***

The Council does not have a transport policy for Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending day care services. Service users are charged £2 per day for transport to access day services (Viking and Project 49); this is a flat fare regardless of the number of trips required to be made to attend activities during the course of the day. The £2 fare has been in place for approximately 4 years. In addition, certain service users who live in residential care homes are being transported on Council funded vehicles to day care services, rather than being transported by the care home.

The policy needs to consider what action the Council would take if someone refused to pay the transport charge. Options could be:

- Withdraw day care – we would need to be clear about the reasons for attending day care and what effect withdrawal would have
- Owing to individual financial circumstances, it could be agreed to waive the charge
- If there is no valid reason why the charge should not be paid, then further action would need to be considered.

*Recommended new approach from the transport review:*

- Implement a new policy which formalises current practice and details SBC's expectations of service users (e.g. around the use of Motability cars, etc.).
- That the daily charge for transport should be increased to £4 per day for simple return trips to £5 per day for multi-journeys. Although this would not recover the full cost of providing the transport, it would reflect a more realistic balance, which would still remain considerably cheaper for the client than securing transport in the private market. The charge will be reviewed on an annual basis.

84 clients who attend Project 49 are charged for transport to attend the centre. Increasing the day rate to between £3-£5 per day for these 84 clients would increase annual income by between £11,600 and £34,800.

There may be additional clients attending Project 49 who are not transported to Project 49 by the Council, but they attend other day care and adult education services which are not included in the numbers of paying clients, as charges are only imposed for journeys to those who are transported to and from Project 49 and does not include the additional trips provided during the day.

The potential increase in income assumes that there would be no reduction in client numbers as external market transport costs would still be much higher.

**d) *Looked After Children***

Currently, the requirement for transport is treated more as an after-thought to the provision of care services, which artificially inflates the transport element of the process of arranging care. SBC has no policy for Children's Social Care, meaning that elements such as passenger assistant requirements are not formalised.

*Recommended new approach from the transport review:*

- Devise a new policy which would clarify issues such as notice periods for transport bookings, expectations of carers and parents, passenger assistant standards, venues for contact visits, etc.
- The process of arranging transport, particularly contact transport, should be co-ordinated by the transport function alongside the contact co-ordinator at the contact centre (Allan Cole), with transport availability being clarified and secured with transport colleagues early in the process of arranging care.

**e) *Dial-a-Ride***

The Council does not have a formal policy for the provision of Dial-a-Ride, although there are guidelines outlining how the service operates. The Dial-a-Ride service provides transport to essential facilities and services for Southend residents who are unable to use conventional public transport services. The service currently operates using three accessible minibuses which are owned by the Council but due for replacement. The Dial-a-Ride drivers are Council employees. The service operates on a on-demand basis, Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 16:30. Members call the Council's transport team to book a trip and there are no limits on the number of trips that a member is able to make during the course of any given week. All destinations must be within the Southend Borough Council boundary although trips to hospital appointments are not permissible. An annual membership fee of £12 per member is charged and payments per trip are based on return mileage, which is recorded in mileage bands.

The current cost of the service, including three paid drivers, is in excess of £110,000 per year. The scheme currently has 61 members (two-thirds of whom make trips on a regular basis), resulting in a subsidy per member of approximately £1,800 per year. Dial-a-Ride is not a

statutory service and other local authorities, for example Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire County Councils, reviewed and decided to withdraw the provision. In the absence of a local community transport operator in the Borough, the Council is keen to retain the service, but should consider ways of reducing the cost of providing it.

*Recommended new approach from the transport review:*

Implement a policy which

- reduces the hours of operation from 09:00 to 16:30 to 10:00 to 14:30 to minimise the cost of operation
- introduces scheduled, bookable trips to popular destinations such as local supermarkets and central Southend
- removes trips to day care facilities which are provided by Adult Social Care for eligible residents
- reduces the number of trips any one member is able to make, to enable more people to access the service

### **3.2 Details of the consultation analysis on the proposed policies**

3.2.1 Further to 1.2 above, the Council started a consultation process on 14 July 2017 with service users and stakeholders around the proposed changes to the following policies (as set out in 3.1.2):

- a) *Home to School for Pre and Post-16 Students (SEND)*
- b) *Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Centres and Activities*
- c) *Looked After Children*
- d) *Dial-a-Ride*

3.2.2 The consultation for the above policies ended on 10 October 2017 and complied with the best practice guidance from the Department for Education.

3.2.3 The results of the consultation are as follows:

#### **a) *Home to School Transport for Students (SEND) Pre and Post-16***

A total of 153 responses were received with 95% of these returns being from parents/carers, and they related to children and young people from the following age groups:

- Post-16 years of age (20%)
- 11-16 years of age (39%)
- 5-10 years of age (38%)
- Under 5 years of age (3%)

*Details of consultation responses:*

Recommendations for Change	Feedback
Satisfaction with current service offering	97% of the respondents were happy with the current provision
Offer Independent Travel Training (ITT) for older children to make the school journey as a way of promoting independence and life skills	52% agreed that this would promote independent life skills
Offer a Travel Support Allowance if ITT not appropriate	44% agreed that parents are often able to make the best travel arrangements to suit their situation
Charges for Post-16 (not applicable for low-income households)	33% agreed overall (42% agreed when clause added regarding low-income households)

**b) Adults with Learning Difficulties and Older Adults attending Day Care Centres and Other Activities**

A total of 62 responses were received with a majority of responses from users or representation of users attending activities at Project 49.

*Details of consultation responses:*

Recommendations for Change	Feedback
Satisfaction with current service offering	97% of the respondents were happy with the current provision
Travel assistance will not be provided if an individual has access to other means of travel, even if they choose not to use them	31% agreed
Those living in residential care homes will not receive assistance from the Council with travel to social care activities as this should be provided by the residential care home	37% agreed. There was some feedback that related to fears of isolation for those in care homes
Increase charges for providing travel assistance to adult social care activities to cover more of the cost of providing it	39% agreed that charges should be increased. There were some concerns that some users may be affected by the introduction of Personal Independent Payments (PIPs) as this is lower than the previous Disability Living Allowance (DLA) meaning they may struggle with the affordability of increased transport costs
Proposal to increase daily charge from £2 to £4 per day (£5 per day for those making multiple trips during the day)	63% considered it unfair to have differential charging rates

**c) Looked After Children**

A total of 26 responses were received from the following:

- 84% foster carers
- 8% transport operators
- 4% social workers
- 4% other

*Details of consultation responses:*

Recommendations for Change	Feedback
Foster carers will be expected to take the child in their care to school, leisure activities and contact visits wherever possible	71% agreed that transport should only be provided by SBC after all other options have been considered and discounted
If a carer transports the child in their care to school and contact visits, the Council will reimburse the full cost (based upon the mileage)	86% agreed that SBC should reimburse the travel costs (based upon the mileage)
The Council encourages contact visits at a foster carer's home, especially for babies and younger children, in order to reduce their need to travel	Some responses expressed concerns about having parents in foster carers' homes
Children from same schools can be transported to contact visits in the same vehicle	95% agreed, with the agreement of the parents
The need for a passenger assistant for a looked after child or young person will be decided by the Council and include a full risk assessment	86% agreed

**d) Dial-a-Ride**

A total of 62 responses were received from the following groups:

- Current DaR members (56%)
- Representatives of destinations or organisations accessed by current DaR members (24%);
- Those who are eligible for this transport provision but are currently not a DaR member (17%)
- Other (3%)

*Details of consultation responses:*



Recommendations for Change	Feedback
Retain a DaR service for Southend	98% agreed
Make DaR more cost effective	100% agreed that Council is right to look at ways of providing DaR in a more cost effective way which lets more people use the service
Introduce scheduled bookable trips, reduce the number of trips per member per week	65% agreed that proposed changes should make the service more accessible to those wishing to use it
Reduced hours and days of operation	60% agreed that the new hours of operation will allow more members to get to the essential services and facilities they need

### **3.3 Revisions as a result of the Consultation Exercise:**

#### **a) Home to School Transport for Students (SEND) Pre and Post-16**

Subject to agreement to the recommendations in 2.1 above, the Council would develop communication materials for Independent Travel Training and Travel Support Allowance which provides parents / carers with sufficient information to make informed decisions about the best travel option for their child and the family.

#### **b) Adults with Learning Difficulties and Older Adults attending Day Care Centres and Other Activities**

There is a need to ensure fairness in charging for these services and it is no longer sustainable to continue at the current contribution from users and it should be noted that the increased charge is still lower than those imposed by other local authorities. It should also be noted that the increased charge is only a contribution and does not cover the full costs to provide the transport.

To ensure residents do not feel isolated in residential care homes – there is a need to look at how activities can be incorporated for these residents. When considering the operating model for the future provision of this transport, the Council will review whether it can provide transport for care homes in a more cost effective way.

#### **c) Looked After Children**

Contact visits being hosted in a foster carers home would be assessed on a case by case basis so that the concerns that were expressed can be addressed.

**d) Dial-a-Ride**

It is recommend that the revised policy is adopted and implemented. Although, if this provision of transport is transferred to an external provider then the Council could review this again to see if a more cost effective model could extend the hours of operation. The Council will also explore what transport services the voluntary and third sector have in place that could support this requirement.

**3.4 Timescales for Implementation**

3.4.1 Below is the recommended timescale to implement the revised policies:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Policy</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018	Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Care
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018	Dial-a-Ride
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018	Looked after Children
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2018	Home to School for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

**4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 The reasons for the above recommendations are as follows:

- a) Home to School (SEND) transport – this recommendation is to approve some changes to the current policy to enable consistency and fairness in decisions regarding eligibility. The proposed changes to current provision offer different types of travel assistance aimed at encouraging independence and well-being, whilst treating each student on an individual basis.

Numerous local authorities, e.g. Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC and Trafford MBC are adopting the above approach.

Most local authorities are currently considering the provision of Post-16 transport, including SEND. Most are stopping short of withdrawing SEND provision or charging full cost recovery but levelling the playing field in terms of charging, e.g. In April 2014, Herefordshire County Council withdrew the provision of free Post-16 SEND transport.

- b) Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Centres and Activities – this recommendation is for approval to have an established policy

that demonstrates how the Council will support individuals by providing travel assistance to access social care activities in a consistent and equitable way.

Other local authorities have increased their charges considerably over recent years. Nottinghamshire County Council for example, increased its £7 per day charge to £8 per day in 2016/17.

All individuals needs will be assessed on a case by case basis utilising the 'reasonable test' attached to the policy.

- c) Looked After Children – this recommendation is for approval to have an established policy to enable fairness in decisions about eligibility. This policy sets out the Council’s approach to providing travel assistance for children and young people in foster care and residential care. It covers travel between home, school, leisure and contact visits.

Other local authorities have begun to recognise the pressing need to adopt a transport policy for Children’s Social Care as this area of care provision comes under increasing financial pressure. *The Independent Advisors* advised Leicestershire County Council to adopt such a policy in work recently undertaken for them.

- d) Dial-a-Ride – this recommendation is for approval to have an established policy to enable fairness. The Council’s proposal is for a Dial-a-Ride policy to revise and formalise established practice. It should be noted that while other local authorities have decided to stopping running their Dial-a-Ride service, Southend has decided that it will continue to offer this service, although it needs to be operated in a more fair and consistent way. The cost of providing the Dial-a-Ride service throughout the day, every weekday, is no longer sustainable. The number of people who use the service is extremely low, which means the cost to the Council is very high (more than £25 per person per trip).

## 5. Corporate Implications

### 5.1 Contribution to the Council’s Vision and Corporate Priorities

This project will contribute towards the following Council Priorities:

<b>Safe</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look after and safeguard our children and vulnerable adults.</li> </ul>
<b>Clean</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the use of green technology and initiatives to benefit the local economy and environment.</li> <li>• Encourage and enforce high standards of environmental stewardship.</li> </ul>

<b>Healthy</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the life chances of our residents, especially our vulnerable children and adults, by working to reduce inequalities and social deprivation across our communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Prosperous</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the town is 'open for businesses' and that new, developing and existing enterprise is nurtured and supported.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with and listen to our communities and partners to achieve better outcomes for all.</li> <li>• Enable communities to be self-sufficient and foster pride in the town.</li> <li>• Promote and lead an entrepreneurial, creative and innovative approach to the development of our town.</li> </ul>

**5.2 Financial Implications**

- 5.2.1 The expectation is that financial efficiencies will be delivered through the adoption and application of the proposed new and revised policies and thus there will be a contribution to the Council’s savings targets in future years.
- 5.2.1 The level of potential savings that could be achieved through the implementation and adoption of suggested policies will be determined on the decision whether or not to adopt the proposed changes as recommended in section 2.

**5.3 Legal Implications**

- 5.3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport; other elements of adults and children social care also fall under this duty. The proposed policies are not recommending to remove this duty but is recommending policies that assess eligibility around fairness as well as the maximising of independence.

**5.4 People Implications**

- 5.4.1 A full consultation was undertaken as per 1.2 with all stakeholders and users.
- 5.4.2 If the application of the revised/new policies leads to a reduced need for the in house transport provision, this could lead to a redundancy situation. In this instance a full consultation with the affected staff and the trade unions will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation.

**5.5 Property Implications**

- 5.5.1 There are no property implications.

## **5.6 Consultation**

- 5.6.1 Consultation on the proposed policies started on 14 July 2017. The consultation period ended on 15 September 2017, except the home to school (SEND) consultation which concluded on 10 October 2017. A copy of the full consultation report can be made available on request.

## **5.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 5.7.1 Equality Analyses have been initiated on the basis of the proposed policies and these will need to be finalised.

## **5.8 Risk Assessment**

- 5.8.1 As the choice of alternative options to conventional minibus transport for the school journey is voluntary, there is a risk that parents will not opt to change their travel arrangements. It will be important to promote the benefits of independent travel training via targeted publicity materials, to ensure that parents have the required information to enable them to make properly informed choices.

## **5.9 Value for Money**

- 5.9.1 The SEND travel proposals aim to enhance value for money through reducing the number of current external contracts and in-house services. They also aim to deliver value for money in the longer-term as SEND pupils who learn independent travel skills retain and develop those skills in the future, thus reducing the requirement for transport services to be provided by Adult Social Care. In addition, renumerating parents for making their own travel arrangements should also deliver value for money, particularly for those currently travelling on higher cost transport.
- 5.9.2 The Dial-a-Ride proposals aim to deliver value for money by offering a service to meet the travel needs of a greater number of people who are unable to use conventional public transport, rather than providing unlimited travel to a small number of current members.
- 5.9.3 The proposals to increase the charge for Adult Social Care transport will ensure that the transport provided covers a greater proportion of its costs than has been the case over recent years.

## **5.10 Community Safety Implications**

- 5.10.1 Community safety implications will be addressed.

## **5.11 Environmental Impact**

- 5.11.1 Independent travel training will reduce the need for pupils to be transported to school and enable them to walk, cycle or use public transport, thus reducing the impact on the environment in the short and longer term.

- 5.11.2 Improved route planning and the requirement to transport fewer children in minibuses would lower the environmental impacts generated by the current arrangements, although the provision of a travel support allowance (which would increase personalisation and choice) could serve to increase the number of cars used to transport children to school and have a negative environmental impact.
- 5.11.3 The inclusion of scheduled Dial-a-Ride services to popular destinations should help to reduce the number of trips made by the minibuses, thus having a positive environmental impact.

## **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 None.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix A – Special Educational Needs Travel Assistance Policy
- 7.2 Appendix B – Adult Social Care Travel Assistance Policy
- 7.3 Appendix C –Travel Assistance Policy for Looked After Children and Young People
- 7.4 Appendix D - Southend on Sea Borough Council Dial-a-Ride Policy

**Special Educational Needs Travel Assistance Policy  
July 2017**

#### **4.1 Introduction and Aims**

This section of the policy sets out the Council's approach to the provision of funded home to school travel assistance for children of statutory school age and Post-16 students, who attend a local authority maintained school or academy and who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

This policy aims to promote freedom and choice by

- encouraging independence and life skills development wherever possible, by providing independent travel training for children as appropriate
- enabling families to receive reimbursements for making travel arrangements for their own child as appropriate
- making the provision of transport a last resort for those that cannot access any other form of travel assistance safely and once other travel assistance options have been discounted

#### **4.2 Eligibility**

Children do not automatically qualify for travel assistance because they have an EHCP, although it is recognised that the child may face additional challenges in making the school journey.

To be eligible for travel assistance, the child must:

- live in the Borough of Southend-on-Sea
- be of statutory school age
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- be registered at a school named in the EHCP which is the nearest suitable school to the child's home address
- be unable to reasonably walk to school, even when accompanied by an adult, because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs and/or their disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010

Unless there are specific circumstances as dealt with in other sections of this policy, the distance criteria for pupils with an EHCP are the same as for all other pupils. It will apply to the nearest appropriate mainstream school, learning resource base or special school as determined by the Council.

When parents request a placement for their child in a school of their choice which is not the nearest appropriate school, the Council is not responsible for the provision of travel assistance or the cost of that provision, as laid out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The provision of travel assistance for the school journey should not be regarded as a permanent entitlement. Travel assistance will be reassessed as part of a child's review of their EHCP at transition points between Key Stages or at any point in between at the Council's discretion.

Children with special educational needs but without an EHCP are considered within the general home to school travel assistance policy.

### **4.3 Types of Travel Assistance**

In determining the type of travel assistance to be offered, the Council will adopt a stepwise approach. The type of travel assistance to be offered to a child will be considered in the following order:

#### *4.3.1 Public Transport Season Ticket*

This is a ticket for use on public transport and is the most common form of travel assistance provided. Where it is possible for a child to travel on public transport accompanied by a responsible adult (if necessary) then a season ticket will also be provided for the responsible adult to facilitate this. Rail season tickets may be provided where appropriate.

#### *4.3.2 Independent Travel Training*

Children from Year 9 upwards whose application for travel assistance is successful will be considered for independent travel training to enable them to use public transport for the journey between home and school in the future. The process of determining suitability will be undertaken in consultation with the child's school. In arriving at a decision, the Council will consider the home to school journey to be made on public transport, as well as the informed view of the child's school regarding the child's suitability for training.

The child will be provided with travel assistance until the travel training process has been completed. Once travel training has been successfully completed, this may take the form of a season pass for the child, or other assistance as appropriate.

#### *4.3.3 Travel Support Allowance (TSA)*

Children who are deemed to be unsuitable for Independent Travel Training will be entitled to request a Travel Support Allowance (TSA). A TSA is a payment to help parents to get a child to school. Payments will be issued on a staged basis across the school year. In arriving at the TSA amount, the Council will take into consideration the cost of transporting the child using its own in-house vehicles or external contracted vehicles, as well as the child's age, their timetable, and the distance from home to school. A parent may spend the TSA in any way they choose, as long as it ensures that the child attends school, e.g. arrange for a friend or relative to travel with the child; car share with other parents; arrange school transport for a sibling to enable the parent to transport the child with an EHCP to school; use a Motability car to transport the child, etc. The Council may review the payment of the TSA if concerns are raised about the child's level of school attendance.

A TSA is optional for the parent and in making a request parents should consider whether it is appropriate for their circumstances. However, in instances where a



child is to attend a school which is outside of Southend Borough, a TSA will be the first means of assistance offered.

#### *4.3.4 Transport Vehicles*

The provision of a vehicle (usually a shared minibus) to transport a child or young person to and from school is made in **exceptional circumstances only** where it is assessed that no other form of travel assistance is suitable. Vehicle pick-up and drop-off times are arranged so that journey times are minimised and cannot be varied to suit the parent. When accepting an offer of supported transport, parents are agreeing to a kerbside or bus stop arrangement. A door-to-door service is not provided, but the kerbside or bus stop pick-up and drop-off points will be close to the child's home.

The provision of supported transport may cease to be necessary as a child grows older and as they become more independent.

#### **4.4 Parental Responsibilities**

If supported transport has been granted to a child, it remains the parent's responsibility to:

- a. ensure that the child is ready for collection at the appointed time and at the arranged pick up point. Failure to comply will result in the parent being responsible for getting their child to school. Contractors will not be expected to vary contract times and the Council will not meet any additional costs incurred for pupils being late
- b. take their child from their home to the vehicle and to collect the child from the vehicle
- c. allow the Council to use any specialist seating which the child requires
- d. sign off the risk assessment in relation to complex/medical needs and/or passenger assistant provision, where applicable

In addition, parents are responsible:

- a. if the child needs to return home during a school day due to illness
- b. if the child needs to return home to attend any health appointments during a school day
- c. if transport is required outside of the normal school hours to facilitate attendance on a school trip
- d. for providing their own travel arrangements should the school decide to exclude the child
- e. if family circumstances dictate that the child needs to travel earlier or later than provided for within the contracted transport

#### **4.5 Passenger Assistants**

Passenger assistants are normally provided on vehicles which convey more than five children. In other cases, passenger assistants will only be provided for children with the most complex needs or where a child's behaviour raises questions of health and safety. The child's school will be asked to carry out a risk assessment in order to

justify the need for a passenger assistant for an individual pupil, should the need for one be indicated in the 'Request for Travel Assistance' form. The risk assessment will be considered by the Council. In instances where a child requires solo transport with a passenger assistant, the parent will be expected to act as the passenger assistant.

The Council only accepts passenger assistants who hold an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

#### **4.6 Southend Special Schools and Learning Resource Bases**

The provision of travel assistance to attend the special schools and learning resource bases is not an automatic entitlement. It is recognised, however, that when a child attends a special school or a learning resource base attached to a mainstream school, this may not be local to their home. For this reason, when required because of distance (see Section 4.2), vulnerability, behaviour or physical disability, the Council may provide travel assistance and this will be identified in the child's EHCP.

If places are not available at the nearest appropriate school, the Council will provide travel assistance to the next nearest school if it meets the distance criteria.

#### **4.7 Residential Placements**

A child placed in a residential school will be provided with travel assistance. In the first instance, this will be in the form of a TSA to enable the parent to make their own arrangements for getting the child to and from school. In cases where a TSA is not appropriate, the Council will provide supported transport.

A child in termly boarding establishments will be entitled to travel assistance at the beginning and end of each term and for half term breaks. Weekly boarders will be entitled to travel assistance to the school on Monday morning and from the school on Friday afternoon.

The Council will not provide travel assistance:

- where the residential school requires a child to go home for a period which would not form part of the above arrangement (e.g. if a pupil is not included on a school trip, the school is responsible for the travel assistance)
- for pupils attending health provision (e.g. speech therapy, occupational therapy, mental health)
- for hospital appointments or dental treatment
- should the residential school decide to exclude the child
- if family circumstances dictate that the child needs to travel earlier or later than provided for within the contracted transport

#### **4.8 Out-of-School Activities**

The Council will not provide transport either at evenings or weekends for out of school activities in any school.

#### **4.9 Reintegration / Integration and Alternative Educational Packages**

Any travel costs associated with reintegration, integration and alternative educational packages, including work experience, will not be met by the Council and are the responsibility of the school, college or parent.

#### **4.10 Exclusion from School**

The Council will not reimburse any additional travel costs incurred as a result of a decision taken by a school to exclude a pupil.

#### **4.11 Post-16 Students who have an EHCP**

This section of the policy relates to:

***a. 16-19 year old students attending educational settings***

If the Council has supported the application, this is viewed as attending the nearest appropriate educational setting and the Council will provide subsidised travel assistance providing the eligibility criteria are met. If the Council has not approved the educational setting as the nearest appropriate setting, it will not provide travel assistance.

***b. Students aged 19 – 25***

If the Council has supported the application, subsidised travel assistance may be provided. Applications are dealt with by Adult and Community Services Department.

In common with the assistance available to statutory school age children, Post-16 students will be considered for Independent Travel Training as a first response to a request for travel assistance (see Section 4.3.2). Travel assistance will be provided whilst the student undertakes the training. Upon completion of the training course, should a student be considered unable to travel independently for the school journey, alternative forms of travel assistance will be offered, as detailed in Section 4.3 above.

If the student is deemed unsuitable for Independent Travel Training they will be allocated a space on a dedicated vehicle for Post-16 students.

In line with mainstream charges for eligible students, a charge will be levied for travel assistance provided by the Council to eligible Post-16 students. The charge will be reviewed on an annual basis. Those who are from a low income family may be entitled to free travel assistance. Proof of low income must be provided at the time of application. Please see the Council's Low Income Criteria for Education Transport, available at

[http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/file/4758/low\\_income\\_criteria\\_for\\_education\\_transport\\_2017-18](http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/file/4758/low_income_criteria_for_education_transport_2017-18)



#### **4.12 Applying for Travel Assistance**

In all cases where travel assistance is required, a 'Request for Travel Assistance Form' must be completed and returned to the Council's Transport Entitlement Officer.

#### **4.13 Appeals**

Those not eligible to receive travel assistance or those disputing the travel assistance offered may submit an appeal against the decision in writing within 4 weeks from the date of the refusal letter. Requests for appeal will not be accepted outside the 4 week period. The appeal should include a detailed explanation as to why the child should receive travel assistance, or a different type of travel assistance to that already offered, including supporting evidence of any exceptional circumstances. This information will be submitted to an appeal panel for consideration. There is no provision for the appellant to appear in person. The decision of the panel will be communicated to the parent/carer in writing. Further correspondence will not alter the decision.

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**Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**  
**Adult Social Care Travel Assistance Policy**  
**July 2017**

**1. Introduction**

ASC provides travel assistance for adults with learning disabilities, mental health issues, physical disabilities and older people within the Borough of Southend-on-Sea. This travel assistance policy demonstrates how the Council will support individuals by providing travel assistance to access social care activities in a consistent and equitable way.

Over recent years, the introduction of new national legislation has resulted in significant changes to the way in which social care opportunities are provided. Today, individuals have greater choice in deciding the format, location and timing of their social care activities. This increased freedom has implications for travel and this policy aims to outline how travel demand might best be met - whether through independent travel arrangements, self-funded travel or via Council-funded and arranged travel solutions.

It is assumed and expected that people who can travel to an eligible social care activity, either independently or with assistance from family, friends or care givers will do so.

Funded travel will only be provided if, in the opinion of the assessor, there is no alternative and appropriate travel option available and it is the only reasonable means of ensuring that the individual can safely access an eligible activity.

Adult Social Care will work closely with the Children and Young People's Service to ensure that the travel needs of children and young people are assessed whilst at school, so that opportunities to undertake travel training in order to complete specific journeys on mainstream transport have already been explored and, where appropriate, implemented. This will assist in overcoming any expectations from families that Adult Social Care will provide travel assistance to individuals in all circumstances. All young people requiring adult social care will require an assessment of their travel needs.

**2. Links to National and Local Priorities and Plans**

The Care Act 2014 has replaced various pieces of legislation and policies. The changes introduced in the Care Act are designed to put individuals in control of their lives.

The Care Act states that local authorities must have regard to promoting wellbeing which means considering any care and support needs in the context of the person's skills, ambitions and priorities. The Act requires local authorities to consider an individual's ability to get around in the community safely and consider their ability to use facilities such as public transport, shops or recreational facilities when

considering the impact on their wellbeing. This includes consideration of the role a person's family or friends can play in helping the person to meet their goals.

The Care Act promotes an approach of preventing, reducing and delaying needs for care and support and refers to the consideration of a person's strengths, their informal support networks any other support that might be available in the community to meet their goals. This approach recognises the value in the resources of voluntary and community groups and the other resources of the local area.

This travel assistance policy addresses 2 of the Council's 5 Aims and 4 of its 15 Corporate Priorities as follows:

**Aim :** Healthy

**Priority:** To actively promote healthy and active lifestyles for all

**Priority:** To improve the life chances of our residents, especially our vulnerable children and adults, by working to reduce inequalities and social deprivation across our communities

**Aim:** Excellent

**Priority:** To work with and listen to our communities and partners to achieve better outcomes for all

**Priority:** To enable communities to be self-sufficient and foster pride in the town

### **3. Policy Aims and Principles**

This policy aims to:

- Promote independence
- Maximise choice and control
- Support a healthy lifestyle
- Improve quality of life
- Maintain dignity
- Provide access to local services

The key principle is that those who can travel to a community activity, whether independently or with the assistance of family, friends or care givers, will do so. Adult Social Care will provide a signposting service to ensure that individuals have access to tailored travel information to enable them to plan their journeys.

The use of commonly available transport options will be encouraged, such as public transport, walking or mobilising with the use of aids either independently or with support, people using their own car or Motability vehicle, utilising transport assistance costs and concessionary travel.

Travel assistance will be provided to the nearest available resource / community activity. Should an individual wish to access an activity which is further afield when there is a comparable activity which is closer to home, the individual will be required to finance any additional travel assistance costs.



Following an assessment of need, Council-funded transport will only be provided to meet an eligible assessed need. The transport provided will be appropriate to meet the need, provide value for money and be cost-effective.

#### **4. Guidance for determining eligibility for travel assistance**

The Council will adopt the decision making process outlined in Annex 1 in determining the individual's eligibility for travel assistance.

Council-funded travel assistance will not normally be provided to individuals if they:

- a. live in a residential care home
- b. attend a social care facility which has its own transport
- c. have their own Motability vehicle which they drive themselves
- d. have a Motability vehicle for which they are not usually the driver
- e. have family, friends or care givers who are able to transport them
- f. have a bus pass which they are able to use to attend the community activity

If the person has access to any of the travel arrangements listed in a. to f. above and chooses not to use them, the expectation is that they will fund their own travel.

In determining an individual's suitability for travel assistance, the Council will adopt the principle of reasonableness, e.g. is it reasonable to expect the individual to make their own travel arrangements; travel a certain distance, rely on a carer to drive the Motability car; etc.

##### **4.1 Assessment of ability to travel independently**

Where it has been determined that there is no existing transport provision available, or its use may introduce unreasonable levels of risk to an individual when travelling independently, an assessment will be undertaken.

The Children and Young Peoples Service actively promotes independence in the provision of travel assistance and assesses children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for suitability to undergo Independent Travel Training (ITT). Adult Social Care will ascertain whether an individual has previously completed an ITT course and whether they were subsequently able to travel independently for their school or college journey.

Those individuals who were previously deemed to be capable of independent travel will undergo refresher training for the purposes of making journeys independently to and from community activities. The principle of reasonableness will be applied to ensure that the proposed journey is achievable via the intended mode(s) of travel.

Those individuals who have not previously undertaken a course of ITT will be assessed for their suitability to do so. The assessment will include consideration of the individual's:

- Mental capacity
- Communication difficulties
- Psychological factors e.g. mental health, dementia, agoraphobia
- Vulnerability
- Consideration of degenerative conditions
- Any other factors that may affect personal safety

As well as issues regarding mobility, such as

- Ability to walk outside
- Requirement for a wheelchair or other walking aid
- Ability to enter and leave a property
- Ability to get on and off a vehicle
- History of falls
- Ability to use stairs

The assessor will use the information gathered to determine whether the individual:

- a. Is capable of travelling independently using the proposed travel mode without an unreasonable level of risk
- b. Requires travel training to enable them to be capable of independent travel in the near future
- c. Is not capable of travelling independently via the proposed mode of travel and will require Council-funded transport that meets their assessed needs

#### **4.2 Identification of Appropriate Transport**

Once eligibility has been confirmed, it is the duty of Adult Social Care to facilitate appropriate travel arrangements. Travel which is arranged or provided by the Council will only be provided once other alternatives have been considered and discounted. The range of travel assistance may include:

- Assistance with using public transport e.g. travel buddies
- Shared travel in Council-funded minibuses
- Shared travel in taxis
- Solo travel in taxis

ASC resources are unlikely to be allocated specifically to meet transport related needs where an individual:

- is in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, unless there are factors limiting their ability to fully utilise the benefits of the allowance, e.g. geographical location, the nature of the disability or carer support requirements
- lives in a residential care home, as these are subject to the terms and conditions of the contract between the Council and the care home

#### **5. Charging**

A charge is imposed for all travel which is arranged or provided by the Council as a contribution toward the cost of providing the transport. Differential charges will be applied for individuals who:

- make one return journey per day to a local activity (£4)
- make a return journey to a main day centre plus additional journeys to access activities at other locations during the course of a day (£5)

Alternatively, individuals can take funding for travel in the form of a direct payment. In such cases, the charge for transport is a daily charge, regardless of the distance travelled.

Charges are reviewed on an annual basis.

## **6. Implementation**

This policy will be applied from 1 April 2018 to any new applicants for adult social care travel assistance.

The travel needs of individuals already in receipt of travel assistance will be assessed, with regard to the new policy, at their annual review.

## **7. Monitoring, Review and Reassessment**

In all cases, the travel arrangements organised on behalf of an individual will be temporary and subject to review within a period of weeks of commencement. This will ensure that the arrangement is the most suitable for the individual and is value for money and cost-effective for the Council.

Travel arrangements and any impacts this policy has had on the ability of vulnerable people to access appropriate services to meet their eligible social care needs, will be considered by assessing officers at a review or reassessment of the individual's needs.

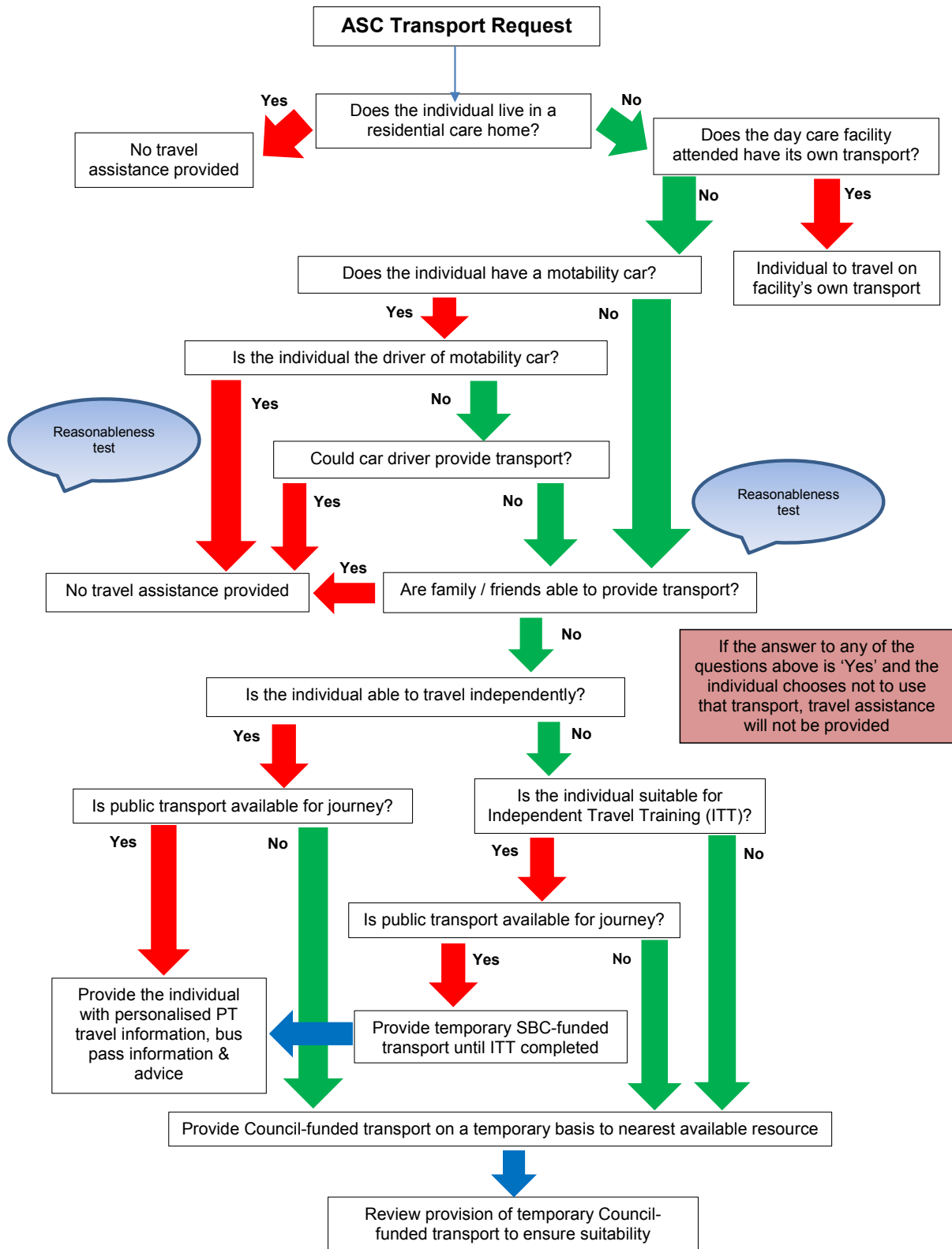
An individual or their authorised representative may request a review of their social care assessment if at any time they consider their needs have substantially changed.

At any time in this process the individual or their representative may make a complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

## **8. Appeals**

There may be instances where some applications are declined and the individual or their carer may not agree with the Council's decision. In these cases, the Council offers an Appeals Process. The number to call to appeal a decision is 01702 215008, option 6.

Annex 1 Decision Process in Determining ASC Travel Assistance



**Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**

**Travel Assistance Policy for Looked After Children and Young People**

**July 2017**

**Overview**

- Looked after children and young people will, as far as possible, share the normal expectations and day to day experiences of all children
- Wherever possible children and young people who live close to their school should travel in the same way as their peers by:
  - Being walked to school by their carer; or
  - Walking alone if they are of an appropriate age and can do so safely; or
  - Being driven by their carer and dropped off
- Children and young people who live further away from their school but live in the Borough should also travel in the same way as their peers where possible by:
  - Being driven there by their carer and dropped off; or
  - Reaching school by public transport if they are of an appropriate age and can do so safely
- Where possible the disruption of schooling due to changes in care placements, should be avoided. Where necessary, this should be timed to take place when less disruptive to schooling
- The onus will be on foster carers to provide transport wherever possible
- Independent travel will be promoted and encouraged as soon as practicable for the individual
- Use of taxis will only be approved in exceptional circumstances and where it is deemed necessary to keep children and young people safe

**1 Introduction**

1.1 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (SBC) has a duty to provide travel assistance to meet the needs of all Children and Young People under its care.

1.2 This policy details the travel assistance procedures for Looked After Children and Young People including those under foster care and residential care.

1.3 This policy has been developed to ensure the safe and efficient provision of transport for Looked After Children and Young People between home, school, leisure and contact.

**2 Transport Policy Principles**

2.1 As a Corporate Parent, SBC has a responsibility to meet the care and development needs of its children. As with other children, Looked After Children and Young People can require travel assistance for a wide variety of reasons.

2.2 It is important that in meeting these needs, Looked After Children and Young People are (as much as possible) provided for in the same way as other children and that different levels of self-reliance and independence are recognised, encouraged and catered for.

2.3 SBC should ensure that the stability and continuity of care and education, is promoted, in the interests of maximising life chances.

2.4 Where possible the disruption of schooling due to changes in care placements, should be avoided. Where necessary, this should be timed to take place when less disruptive to schooling (unless an emergency placement is required, for example, if there are Child Protection concerns or the breakdown of a placement).

2.5 Travel assistance may be provided to facilitate continuity of schooling from a new care placement until an appropriate school transfer point is reached. Education stability is crucial and therefore the child should (where possible) continue their education in their current school.

2.6 In the same way, it is essential that Looked After Children and Young People should be provided with travel assistance to enable them to have contact with their birth families or significant others, at a frequency usually set by the court and detailed in their care plan.

### **3 Home to School Travel Assistance**

3.1 Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 – children should stay at the setting that they were at prior to becoming looked after (unless in exceptional circumstances). The child should go to the school that is local, as far as possible, to their placement unless the placement is short term or until a permanency plan is implemented. As a matter of principle, the Council would expect carers to make their own arrangements to get the child to school with the Council paying the return mileage for the journey. Young looked after children should not be transported in taxis on a daily basis.

3.2 Key Stage 2 – the presumption is that children stay at the setting that they were at prior to becoming looked after (unless in exceptional circumstances). The Council would expect carers to make their own arrangements to get the child to school and the Council will pay the return mileage for the journey, or accompany them to use public transport as appropriate. Changes to a school place will only be considered in the child's best interests at the point at which the permanency plan is due to be implemented or where the distance travelled is excessive.

3.3 Key Stage 3 – The first presumption would be that children and young people will walk or use public transport with a Council-funded travel pass. The second presumption would be for the carer to ensure they get to school with the Council paying the return mileage for the journey. If that is not viable, or if the placement is short term (until a permanency plan is implemented), then using a taxi may be justified, or, if the child/young person needs transport to be provided for their attendance. This decision will be reviewed on a termly basis and consideration given before the summer term to whether a change of school be made for the following year.

3.4 Key Stage 4 – The first presumption should be that the young person takes themselves to school by public transport with a Council-funded travel pass. Any change of school should be minimised during Key Stage 4 and therefore there is a

stronger presumption against any change of school. The child's educational placement must be reviewed during the summer term of Year 9 and this review must include a review of arrangements of getting to school. If that is not viable, or if the placement is short term (until a permanency plan is implemented), then using a taxi may be justified, or, if the child/young person needs transport to be provided for their attendance. This decision will be reviewed on a termly basis and consideration given before the summer term to whether a change of school be made for the following year.

3.5 Home to school travel assistance for Looked After Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is covered by the Council's Special Educational Needs Travel Assistance Policy

#### **4 Transport Expectations of Foster Carers**

4.1 Foster Carers will be expected to undertake 'normal' parental duties, which will include taking a child to school, access to leisure activities and contact.

4.2 There may be practical reasons why it is not possible for the foster carer to provide transport for the child, for example, the foster carer does not drive or does not have access to a car, or they may have foster children from different families. Other exceptional circumstances would include cases where a significant safeguarding risk can be evidenced e.g. transporting a looked after child with challenging behaviour. Every effort should be made, however, to ensure that carers do provide the transport so that foster children do not feel different, for example, by arriving at school in a taxi.

4.3 Foster carers are able to claim all mileage incurred as a direct result of their fostering responsibilities, for example, school transport, transport to & from contact, etc.

#### **5 Travel Assistance for Contact Visits**

5.1 Arrangements for contact are facilitated by the Contact Coordinator.

5.2 Contact at a foster carer's home, particularly for babies and younger children, will be encouraged by the Council, where it is safe enough to do so. This will mean less reliance on travel arrangements and children being transported around.

5.3 If it is agreed that contact should take place at a venue other than the foster carer's home, the foster carer should be the first choice for transporting the child to and from the contact venue.

5.4 If the foster carer is unable to transport a child to and from the contact venue, the provision of transport will be a last resort once all other possibilities have been explored.

5.5 Contact travel arrangements are made by the Transport and Contracts Team. For transport to be approved for contact purposes, all of the following criteria must be met:

The Contact Coordinator confirms that:

- the foster carer cannot transport the child to the contact venue **and** cannot act as a passenger assistant; **and**

The Contact Coordinator confirms with the child's social worker that:

- There is no safe and trusted family member to offer transport; **and**
- There is no other staff member able to provide transport (e.g. a social services assistant).

5.6 Requests for transport for contact purposes should incorporate a minimum of three working days' notice, to enable the Council to arrange the most cost effective provision and avoid expensive short-notice arrangements.

5.7 Older children and young people may choose to transport themselves to contact if able and appropriate to do so. For those children and young people who would like to make the journey themselves but might require assistance to do so, further support may be provided via the Council's Independent Travel Training service. Details of how to obtain a bus pass for independent travel can be obtained via the Council.

5.8 Parents will be asked to give written permission for their child/ren to share transport with other looked after children to attend contact as appropriate.

## **6 Procedure for Arranging Transport for Looked After Children and Young People**

6.1 Requests for home to school travel assistance must be fully completed by the child's social worker and be agreed by the Council. Travel arrangements for contact will be requested by the Contact Coordinator. Under no circumstances must a member of children's social care staff other than the Contact Coordinator enter into arranging transport directly with a taxi or transport company, unless the transport is required for out of hours emergency purposes (see Section 7).

6.2 There is no legal duty on the Council to provide passenger assistants for those to whom it provides transport in connection with education or social care services. However, the Council has a duty of care to all those for whom it provides such transport and fulfilling that duty may involve the provision of a passenger assistant. Requests for a passenger assistant must be fully justified by the child's social worker and subject to a risk assessment. The Contact Coordinator will ultimately determine whether a Passenger Assistant is required.

## **7 Emergency and Out of Hours Transport**

7.1 Following agreement by the Council emergency transport can be provided.

7.2 Where transport is required out of hours with little or no notice, then this will be sourced by the Council. This transport must be sourced from the Council's approved transport provider list.



## **8 Accessing Social Care, including Respite / Short Breaks for Disabled Children**

8.1 Certain children with disabilities may have been assessed as having a social care need. This need can include attendance at respite / short breaks provision.

8.2 Travel assistance to social care or similar provision will be provided where it is deemed necessary to meet the child's needs. Where, as a result of an assessment, it is deemed necessary for transport to meet the needs of the child, which will be considered on an individual basis, this will either be organised by the respite provider or the Council. This will be provided free of charge.

8.3 Requests for transport for respite purposes must, wherever possible, incorporate a minimum of three working days' notice, to enable the Council to arrange the most cost effective provision and avoid expensive short-notice arrangements.

## **9. Resolving Disputes**

Where there is an issue regarding responsibility for transporting a looked after child to and from school, contact and social activities, this should be dealt with locally. If however the matter is irresolvable at this level, this should be escalated to the senior manager responsible for the fostering budget.

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## Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Dial-a-Ride Policy July 2017

### Introduction

Southend-on-Sea Dial a Ride is an on demand, fully accessible transport service to enable people with mobility difficulties who are unable to use conventional public transport to access *essential* facilities and services.

### Types of Trip

There are two types of Dial a Ride service:

1. a scheduled 'shopper' service – taking clients into central Southend or to a local supermarket and returning them home
2. an on demand service – a bookable service taking clients from home to any destination within the Borough of Southend (excluding day centres and hospital appointments) and returning them home

### Operating Schedule

The scheduled shopper service operates on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Members from each named area will be able to book trips into central Southend or to the local supermarket for their area on the nominated day. For the 'central Southend' trips, members will be dropped off at the designated points in the town at 11:00 and collected at 13:30 for the return journey. For the 'Supermarket' trips, members will be dropped off at the supermarket at 11:00 and collected at 13:30 for the return journey.

The fully on demand service operates on Mondays and Wednesdays. The first pick up time is 10:15 and the last drop off time at home is 14:30.

The table below shows the operating schedules for both services.

Day	Shopper service		Fully on demand (10:15 – 14:30)	
	Area 1 Eastwood / Leigh	Area 2 Shoebury / Southend	Area 1 Eastwood / Leigh	Area 2 Shoebury / Southend
Monday	Central Southend		Bookable	Bookable
Tuesday		Central Southend		
Wednesday			Bookable	Bookable
Thursday	Supermarket			

Friday		Supermarket		
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## Membership

Dial a Ride operates as a membership scheme. To be eligible for membership, applicants must:

- Live within Southend Borough
- Have difficulty using public transport because of disability or qualify under one of the following criteria:
  - Be in receipt of Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance
  - Be registered blind
  - Be in receipt of Higher Rate Attendance Allowance (for women aged over 60 and men aged over 65)
  - Be in receipt of Mobility Supplement of War Pension.

Membership costs £12 per year and must be renewed each January. Applicants may be asked to undergo a mobility assessment to establish their level of disability and provide proof of any allowance / benefit being claimed.

Applicants can apply for membership online or download a form to be completed and returned to the Council. The Council reserves the right to refuse membership for any reason.

## Booking a Trip

All trips must be booked individually, at least two working days in advance. Bookings will be taken by phone between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00, Monday to Thursday. Bookings will be taken on a first come, first served basis. A maximum of one shopper trip and one fully on-demand trip will be bookable per member per week.

## Fares

Individual fares will be charged based on the mileage per return trip, plus a booking fee of £1.50. Guide dogs are welcome and travel free of charge. Members are required to inform the booking staff when making a booking if they intend to bring a guide dog.

## Passenger Assistants

Drivers will assist members to board and alight from the vehicles but will not be required to enter the member's home or accompany them as they shop.

Members aged under 16 must be accompanied by an adult during travel.

If a member requires a passenger assistant during travel or at the trip destination, they must provide their own, who will accompany them on the outward and return journey. Members must notify the booking office when they book if they will be accompanied on the trip. There is a flat fare of £6 for a return journey for a

passenger assistant. Passenger assistants for registered visually impaired members will travel free of charge.

### **Cancellations**

If members need to cancel a booking they should call the booking line as soon as possible between the hours of 9:30 – 15:30 Monday to Friday. Cancellation fees will not be charged, but frequent short notice cancellations (without an adequate reason) may result in termination of membership.

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**Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**  
**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)**  
**to**  
**Cabinet**  
**on**  
**9<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
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Report prepared by: Gillian Shine, Senior Procurement  
Advisor and Mark Atkins, Lead Procurement Advisor

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**Passenger Transport - Operating Model and Procurement Process**  
**Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**  
**Executive Councillor: Councillor Moring**  
**A Part 1 Public Agenda item**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to progress the passenger transport review to procurement stage to identify a preferred partner through a competitive dialogue process.
- 1.2 The report details a series of processes that need to be undertaken in order to meet the proposed procurement timetable. To enable a number of approvals delegated authority is required and the report seeks Members' agreement to this.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the following key elements are agreed for inclusion in the procurement documentation to set out the Council's ambitions, parameters and expectations for its Passenger Transport Service and to enable the procurement process (refer to Appendices A and C).
- 2.2 That Competitive Dialogue is agreed as the procurement approach to securing a preferred partner.
- 2.3 That commencement of the competitive dialogue process, based on the timetable set out in 4.4 is approved.
- 2.4 That the term "Partnership Approach" via a Corporate Structure be used in defining the approach to be developed by tenderers in response to the Council's objectives and that this be used throughout the procurement documentation.
- 2.5 That the proposed Passenger Transport objectives/requirements are agreed as an appropriate and comprehensive set of underpinning statements to be included in procurement documentation and to form the basis for evaluation questions.

2.6 That the Director of Strategy Commissioning and Procurement (in consultation with the Directors of Transformation, Learning, Adults Services, Finance and Resources) shall be authorised, to take decisions during the procurement process to ensure agile and timely decision making keeping the procurement to timetable and protecting the Council's position.

### 3. Background

3.1 The Council currently provides transport to adults and children across various service areas. The cost for this provision is estimated to be circa £2.1m per annum which is split between nine external contractors and the services/resources provided in-house. Contracts across the service areas will now expire in July 2019. New procurement arrangements are therefore required in the near future to continue the provision of passenger transport.

3.2 In November 2017, a report on Passenger Transport – 'Operating Model and Procurement Process' was presented to Cabinet which had outlined the various options that were explored as part of the Transport Review and that the Joint Venture approach was identified as the recommended operating model for the provision of passenger transport (see Appendix B).

### 4. Procurement

4.1 Cabinet agreed *that further work be undertaken on the Joint Venture operation as well as identifying the procurement route for the preferred partner*. Extensive work has been undertaken by the Council and its transport advisors to fully scope the necessary information to pursue competitive dialogue as the procurement route.

4.2 Competitive dialogue seeks to drive innovation from the market through an iterative process. It will put the provision of Passenger Transport to the market for response which, through dialogue, should result in significant added value while addressing the Council's requirements and objectives.

4.3 Below is an indicative timescale to undertake the procurement and implement the services:

Date	Activity
9 January 2018	Cabinet approval to proceed with the procurement
22 February 2018	Full Council
March 2018	Publication of Procurement
March – May 2018	Selection Stage
May-October 2018	Dialogue, Detailed Solution and Final Tender stages
November 2018	Award Contract
November 2018 - July 2019	1) Set up JV 2) Contract mobilisation for JV partner
July - August 2019	Implementation period for home to school transport
1 August 2019	All passenger transport services go live



4.4 Procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements for the **Selection Stage** (formerly known as Pre-Qualification Stage), which will assess applicants' past experience of delivering similar services and their capacity/capability to deliver a fully integrated passenger transport service.

4.5 It should be noted that the procurement route will be seeking a preferred partner to provide a transport solution with its main purpose to deliver a passenger transport service. However, by procuring a transport solution means the JV model could consider additional services as listed under section 6 of Appendix A (if a commercial partner could provide this).

## **5. Governance and Shareholding Structure of JVC**

5.1 The potential governance and shareholding structure of the JVC is detailed in Appendix C.

## **6. Other Considerations**

6.1 Should the requirements, and processes outlined in this report not be approved this could further delay work that needs to be undertaken in order to be proceed with the recommended procurement approach. This would also impact on the procurement timescale and progress on shaping a robust tender specification as well as ensuring the implementation of the home to school service being ready for the start of the school summer holiday period and going live for the start of the academic school year in 2019.

## **7. Reasons for Recommendation**

7.1 It is critical that the Council has an agreed, robust and transparent position on each of the matters presented in this report in order to shape the procurement documents and to ensure that the Council's ambitions for its Passenger Transport Service is delivered through the partnership.

7.2 On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017, Cabinet endorsed the recommendation that a JV approach is the best delivery model to achieve sustainable transport provision for the Council. This model offers transparency of costs, visibility of profits and the ability for the Council to have some control in the delivery of the service. This approach, assuming a partner with appropriate experience, existing infrastructure and resources can be found, reduces risk to the Council.

7.3 This report is now asking for approval to commence the competitive dialogue process and agree the indicative timetable.

## **8. Corporate Implications**

8.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

This project will contribute towards the following Council Priorities:

<b>Safe</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look after and safeguard our children and vulnerable adults.</li> </ul>
<b>Clean</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the use of green technology and initiatives to benefit the local economy and environment.</li> <li>• Encourage and enforce high standards of environmental stewardship.</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the life chances of our residents, especially our vulnerable children and adults, by working to reduce inequalities and social deprivation across our communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Prosperous</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the town is ‘open for businesses’ and that new, developing and existing enterprise is nurtured and supported.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with and listen to our communities and partners to achieve better outcomes for all.</li> <li>• Enable communities to be self-sufficient and foster pride in the town.</li> <li>• Promote and lead an entrepreneurial, creative and innovative approach to the development of our town.</li> </ul>

8.2 Financial Implications

8.2.1 The expectation is that efficiencies will be delivered through the proposed new operating model and thus there will be a contribution to the Council’s savings targets in future years. It is anticipated that the integration of services will demonstrate savings across the duration of the contract and business growth will in turn demonstrate some income generation opportunities.

8.2.2 Further savings could be achieved through the implementation and adoption of the revised/new travel assistance policies which will need to be enforced prior to the implementation of the JVC so the Council benefits in advance and these savings are then not shared with the JVC. The Council will also need to ensure that there is a mechanism in place whereby the Council policies shape the service being delivered by the JVC.

8.3 Legal Implications

8.3.1 Any new operator will need to supervise and monitor drivers in connection with DVSA and DVLA licensing and permit requirements and holding of insurance.

## 8.4 People Implications

- 8.4.1 A full consultation will be required with staff that will be transferred to the JV partnership as well as those where TUPE applies to the external contracts. This consultation will need to include Trade Unions in keeping with prevailing Council policy.
- 8.4.2 The Council's prescribed TUPE process and timescale for TUPE transfer will then also need to be followed.
- 8.4.3 The JV partner would be expected to provide their own expertise on TUPE to actively support the Council's HR Team with all aspects of TUPE.
- 8.4.4 The Council needs to consider the contract management arrangements with the JV partner. This would form part of the dialogue process.
- 8.4.5 Policies would need to be developed to confirm the duties of a Company Director for the JVC. The primary obligation and legal duty of care of directors of the JVC constituted as the JVC is to itself and not to the person of whom they are representative or by whom they are nominated. They have an obligation to exercise independent judgement and act in good faith as to promote the success of the JVC.
- 8.4.6 Further to 8.4.5, it should be noted that the nominated Directors will need to receive the appropriate training before they agree to sign acceptance of their directorship.

## 8.5 Property Implications

- 8.5.1 Whilst some space in the Tickfield yard could be released, the JV will still need to source premises to store the fleet and sites presented by the Council's asset team may need to be explored as part of the implementation.

## 8.6 Consultation

- 8.6.1 Consultation will need to be held with staff that are currently involved in the in-house services and there will be a need to consult with operators delivering the external contracts. Further consultation with service users as and when necessary.

## 8.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.7.1 As the JV proposals involve a re-modelling of service delivery there will be a requirement for the procurement and service area leads to conduct an Equality Analysis.
- 8.7.2 Equality analyses have been initiated on the basis of the proposed policies.

## **8.8 Risk Assessment**

8.8.1 Inevitably there will be a degree of risk in setting up a Joint Venture partnership with a third party. However, given the nature of the proposed JV this risk is not considered high. It is unlikely that the creation of the JV would cause any financial risk to the authority other than the loss of one-off set up costs should the company fail at an early stage.

8.8.2 There is the potential for risk to reputation through negative media campaigns and dissent from incumbent suppliers or users, e.g. parents who prefer to retain existing transport arrangements.

8.8.3 A Risk Register will be established by the new Board of Directors and all risks will be actively reviewed on a regular basis. Mitigation strategies will be agreed with the Council.

## **8.9 Value for Money**

8.9.1 This proposal aims to enhance value for money through streamlining service delivery and reducing the number of current external contracts and in-house services.

8.9.2 The JV model also offers an improvement in quality and ultimately the potential for income generation and profits to be split between shareholders.

## **8.10 Community Safety Implications**

8.10.1 The proposed JV partnership will aim to provide a more comprehensive service that ensures access to suitable transport as required by clients.

## **8.11 Environmental Impact**

8.11.1 Improved route planning and the reduction in need for transport across the borough would lead to a reduction in traffic and travel which will lower the environmental impacts generated by the current arrangements.

## **9. Background Papers**

9.1 None

## **10. Appendices**

10.1 Appendix A - Service Requirements

10.2 Appendix B – November 2017 Cabinet Report

10.3 Appendix C – The Joint Venture Partnership

## Service Requirements

Below is an outline of the minimum requirements:

<b>Service Requirements</b>	
The Council is seeking a partner to form a Joint Venture Company (JVC) to deliver a compliant fully integrated passenger transport service.	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Home to School Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Looked After Children</b>
1.1	The service is required to provide appropriate transportation for the safe conveyance of service users with special educational needs and disabilities (where applicable), to their respective educational establishment.
1.2	The Council requires service users (currently 386) to be transported into and out of specific establishments, the majority of which are within the borough of Southend on Sea
1.3	As well as transporting service users with special educational needs and disabilities, this transport provision also includes home to school transport for children's social care (looked after children). The requirement of this transport can vary i.e. two weeks to allow the child to settle in with a new foster carer, or in some cases could run for the whole of the academic year
1.4	This service includes the requirement of wheelchair accessible mini-buses that will operate with pick-ups and drop-offs either at bus stops or a door to door service
1.5	The service will be required to provide one Passenger Assistant (PA) per vehicle and it is also expected that the PA will need to be epileptic and diabetic trained. There will also be occasions when an additional PA is required as a one-to-one requirement and in this instance; there will be two PAs on the vehicle. (Please note: for eight seater mini-buses one PA is the standard requirement and for 16 seater mini-buses or larger vehicles two PAs is the standard requirement).
1.6	The service must ensure the maximum "on the vehicle" time for a service user, does not exceed 1 hour for children under the age of 11 and 1 hour and 15 minutes for children over the age of 11 years.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults Passenger Transport</b>
2.1	The service is required to provide appropriate transportation for the safe conveyance of service users with learning disabilities to their respective establishment.
2.2	The Council currently requires adults (currently 123) to be transported across various Passenger Transport routes to and from the Council's own adult social care day centres – 'Project 49' and 'Viking'.
2.3	A maximum of 14 users are being transported per mini-bus on the inbound (morning) and outbound (afternoon) trips for Project 49 which are wheelchair accessible and currently three wheelchairs are being transported per minibus on the round trips for Viking.
2.4	In addition to the morning and afternoon trips to and from Project 49 and Viking, trips are provided during the course of the day to various destinations in the

	borough. Transport to these destinations is provided by six in-house 16-seater mini-buses, along with an extra two eight-seater vehicles (non-wheelchair accessible) and one mini-bus (for three wheelchair users).
2.5	This service also includes passenger transport to adult education sites – SEEVIC, Westcliff Centre, South Essex College, Southend Adult Community College – which is provided by a range of external contractors. Certain people are provided with transport to adult education sites on a ‘fully funded’ basis, others are required to make a contribution to the Council for their transport.
2.6	The service must ensure the maximum “on the vehicle” time for a service user, does not exceed 1 hour and should aim for normal operation of the service within a window of 45 minutes where travelling is within the borough of Southend.
2.7	The service will be required to provide one Passenger Assistant (PA) per vehicle where applicable. It is also expected that the PA will need to be epileptic and diabetic trained. There will also be occasions when an additional PA is required as a one-to-one requirement and in this instance; there will be two PAs on the vehicle. (Please note: for eight seater mini-buses one PA is the standard requirement and for 16 seater or larger mini-buses two PAs is the standard requirement).
<b>3.</b>	<b>Children’s Social Care Passenger Transport</b>
3.1	The service is required to provide appropriate transportation for the safe conveyance of service users to their respective destination.
3.2	There are currently 65-85 children being transported across this service area which is divided into ‘Respite Care’ for Disabled Children and ‘Supervised Contact’.
3.3	It should be noted that the number of children being transported changes on a frequent basis. Transport to respite care can occur on a regular or ad hoc basis. The Council’s policy specifies a minimum notice period of three working days for transport provision wherever possible, however there may be occasions where the notice for booking this service is less than the three working days.
3.4	The majority of transport to respite is provided by taxis, unless the person requires a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
3.5	The service must ensure the maximum “on the vehicle” time for a service user, does not exceed 1 hour and should aim for normal operation of the service within a window of 45 minutes where travelling is within the borough of Southend on Sea.
3.6	The service will be required to provide respite care passenger transport with pick-ups either after school or during school holidays and this service can vary from a return to the child’s home or one-way trip. These return trips could also be spread over a weekend or a couple of days.
3.7	The service for supervised contact visits may be booked at short notice, but the Council’s policy states that a minimum of three working days’ notice should be provided wherever possible. The majority of contact visits take place at the Allan Cole Centre in Shoeburyness.
3.8	The Service will be required to provide passenger transport for supervised contact with pick-up either after school or from the foster care home visits and sometimes on weekends. This service is to be provided by taxis, unless a wheelchair accessible vehicle is required. Trips may also be a return or one way trip. It should be noted that whilst this service is usually provided by a taxi, there may be occasions where this involves a number of siblings and the requirement of multiple car seats, so a minibus may be used on these occasions and these must be provided as part of the service.

3.9	The service may on occasions also need to provide a passenger assistant where this is requested by the Council. For respite care and supervised contact visits, the policy states that the Council will determine whether or not a passenger assistant is required on a case by case basis, following a risk assessment.																		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Dial a Ride Passenger Transport</b>																		
4.1	The dial-a-ride service provides transport to essential facilities and services for Southend on Sea residents who are unable to access conventional public transport services.																		
4.2	All destinations are within the borough of Southend on Sea. Trips to hospital appointments are not permissible on the service. The hours of operation will reduce to 10:00 until 14:30 Monday to Friday from 1st April 2018, providing two types of service as follows: i) a scheduled 'shopper' service – taking clients into central Southend or to a local supermarket and returning users home ii) an on demand service – a bookable service taking clients from home to any destination within the Borough of Southend On Sea (excluding day centres and hospital appointments) and returning them home																		
4.3	This service currently has 61 members, two-thirds of whom travel on a regular basis. Users pay an annual membership fee of £12.50 which is reviewed annually and users currently call the Council to book a trip. Each user pays a mileage based fare for each trip, with mileage organised into fare bands and are charged a £2.50 booking fee for each booking made. It should be noted that the number of service users and routes stated were current at the time of publication and are subject to change.																		
4.4	It is expected that the operator will consider ways in which to promote this service to make it more accessible for new members to join. Where possible the operator may also consider extending the hours of operation if it is feasible, does not affect other transport services operated for the Council and does not have a cost implication.																		
4.5	This service includes the requirement of wheelchair accessible mini-buses that operate with pick-ups and drop-offs via a door-to-door service.																		
4.6	The service must ensure the maximum "on the vehicle" time for a Service User for the on-demand service only, does not exceed the necessary time taken for the journey and should aim for normal operation of the service within a window of 30 minutes where travelling is within the borough of Southend on Sea. However, this time can be extended to 45 minutes to account for the loading and unloading of wheelchairs/mobility scooters.																		
4.7	Service users pay an annual membership fee of £12.50 which is reviewed annually. The operator will be responsible for all bookings for this service. The booking facility must allow service users to make a booking by telephone call however other methods could be considered if appropriate for the user.																		
4.8	Each user pays a mileage based fare for each trip, with mileage organised into fare bands and are charged a £2.50 booking fee for each booking made. Fares are currently based on the charging structure below (It should be noted that the structure below will have a 2% increase applied on an annual basis): <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Miles</th> <th>Single Journey</th> <th>Return Journey</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-1 miles</td> <td>£3.35</td> <td>£6.70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1-4 miles</td> <td>£3.90</td> <td>£7.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4-6 miles</td> <td>£4.95</td> <td>£9.90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6+ miles</td> <td>£6.00</td> <td>£11.95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Additional escort to travel</td> <td>£2.75</td> <td>£5.45</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Miles	Single Journey	Return Journey	0-1 miles	£3.35	£6.70	1-4 miles	£3.90	£7.75	4-6 miles	£4.95	£9.90	6+ miles	£6.00	£11.95	Additional escort to travel	£2.75	£5.45
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Additional escort to travel	£2.75	£5.45																	

4.9	The service must ensure that the fare charging structure does not exceed the current fare structure although an annual 2% uplift on the above is permissible. The service user is also able to travel with their care dogs which travel free of charge.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Income Generation</b>
5.1	The JVC will provide the opportunity for additional income generation via the ability to bid for contracts via the JVC to delivering passenger transport services for academies, schools, other local authorities and local businesses for example. This mechanism will also allow the potential for profits to be shared between both parties.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Optional</b>
6.1	<p>Whilst the service will be to provide passenger transport services, the new model will be a transport solution which could also include but would not be limited to the following aspects once a JV is set up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fleet including Electric Vehicles, Mowers and other Grounds Maintenance vehicles</li> <li>▪ Courier/Library Services</li> <li>▪ Bus Passes</li> <li>▪ Other transport provisions as required across the Council</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>



**Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**  
**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)**  
**to**  
**Cabinet**  
**on**  
**7<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

Report prepared by: Gillian Shine, Senior Procurement  
Advisor and Mark Atkins, Lead Procurement Advisor

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**Passenger Transport - Operating Model and Procurement Process**  
**Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee**  
**Executive Councillor: Councillor Moring**

**A Part 1 Public Agenda item**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to progress this review to procurement stage to identify a preferred partner
- 1.2 In order to commence procurement it is critical that the Council has an agreed position on the type of operating model it wants passenger transport to operate under in the future. The report sets out the options that were considered and seeks Members' agreement to the preferred operating model
- 1.3 The report also details an indicative procurement timescale associated with procuring a partner for the preferred operating model and implementation date of the new service. To achieve these dates a number of approvals are sought, specifically around the extension of existing contracts and the report seeks Members' agreement to these
- 1.4 As part of this review, a consultation on the recommended policy changes was also undertaken with stakeholders, parents/carers and service users which will be presented for approval in a separate Cabinet report. In regards the transport operating model there will be two parts:
- a) Part 1 – The purpose of this report is:
    - (i) to update members on the transport review and seek members' approval on the preferred operating model.
  - b) Part 2 – Subject to approval with the recommendations above, a further report is to be presented to Cabinet in January 2018 that will provide details of:
    - (i) how the agreed Joint Venture (JV) will operate on a day to day basis
    - (ii) confirmed procurement procedure to procure the JV partnership – competitive dialogue or open procedure

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the following key elements are agreed to enable procurement activities to commence around this passenger transport review, in parallel with completing the policy consultation with users. Approval is requested for the Council to:

2.1.1 Procure a partner to develop a 'For Profit' JV partnership as the recommended operating model for providing all its passenger transport services

2.1.2 Use a full procurement procedure (either competitive dialogue or open procedure) to procure a partner to develop a 'For Profit' JV partnership as opposed to contracting directly with a local authority owned company under Regulation 12 (the old teckal arrangements)

2.1.3 Implement the new service from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019 based on the time table set out in 6.2 below

2.1.4 Grant a tender exemption to extend existing contracts, based on the understanding that market conditions and potential legislative changes have hindered the Council's ability to procure a partner to develop other types of JV partnership

### Next Steps

2.1.5 Subject to approval with the recommendations above, a further report to be presented to Cabinet in January 2018 that will provide details of the confirmed procurement procedure to procure a partner to develop the JV partnership

## 3. Background

3.1 The Council currently provides transport to adults and childrens across various service areas. The cost for this provision is estimated to be circa £2.1m per annum which is split between nine external contractors and the services provided in-house (this cost also includes the internal transport team). Contracts across the service areas are close to their expiry dates, having been extended as far as possible to enable the transport review to be undertaken. New procurement arrangements are therefore required in the near future to replace the existing contracts.

	Provision		Contract end date	Comments
1.	<b>Home to School Transport</b>	One School One Operator Contractor (SEN)	July 2019	There is an option in the contract to extend the existing contract to July 2019
		Individual and New Routes (SEN) Framework of 9 suppliers	July 2018	There are no options in the existing contract to extend beyond July 2018

	Provision	Contract end date	Comments
2.	<b>Adults and Children's Social Care</b>	Children's Respite care	July 2018 There are no options in the existing contract to extend beyond July 2018
		Supervised Contact	July 2018 There are no options in the existing contract to extend beyond July 2018– any extension should be done as part of the Home to School (individual and new routes framework)
		Adults with Learning Disabilities (External)	July 2018 There are no options in the existing contract to extend beyond July 2018. Awarded as part of the Home to School individual and new routes framework (Currently extended to end March 2018)
		Adults with Learning Disabilities (Internal – Project 49)	No Contract (in-house) Current vehicle leases will need to be extended until July 2019.
3.	<b>Community Services</b>	Dial-a-Ride	No Contract (in-house) Current vehicle leases will need to be extended until July 2019.

3.2 The initial review of the existing passenger transport service was undertaken to identify any areas of service improvement or efficiency that needed addressing prior to considering a recommended procurement route. The issues identified were:

- a) key components of the service such as planning, scheduling, eligibility criteria using inconsistent existing policies meant the transport services were not being utilised effectively or to full capacity
- b) whether a more effective service can be achieved through better route optimisation, service integration and streamlined contract management
- c) the annual costs of running the transport service are perceived as high in comparison to other local authorities where similar services are being provided.

3.3 Following the initial passenger transport review, the Council procured independent transport advice to assist with undertaking an in-depth analysis of the initial transport review which included reviewing the services, existing policies and identifying potential cost and efficiency savings.

3.4 The in-depth analysis of the transport review as highlighted in 3.3 above made the following recommendations:

*(i) Policies*

That a consultation is undertaken with service users and stakeholders regarding the following draft policies:

- Home to School for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) pre and post-16 students
- Adults with Learning Disabilities and Older Adults attending Day Centres and Activities
- Supervised Contact for children and families
- Dial-a-Ride

*(ii) Procurement route and operating model*

That the use of a JV partnership is the most sustainable and best value option for the Council.

*(iii) Timescales*

That the Council ensures that the transfer of all home to school transport to the new operating model is during the school summer holiday to ensure readiness for the start of the academic school year.

*(iv) Leased Vehicles*

That the Council procures new leases in order to be able to continue to provide the in-house adults with learning disabilities service until these services are transferred to the new operating model.

## **4. Operating Model**

4.1 Initial investigation by the Passenger Transport Review showed that there were five potential operating models for delivering passenger transport services (see Appendix A).

4.2 As detailed below further analysis eliminated a number of options considered in Appendix A, leaving use of a JV as the most sustainable and viable option.

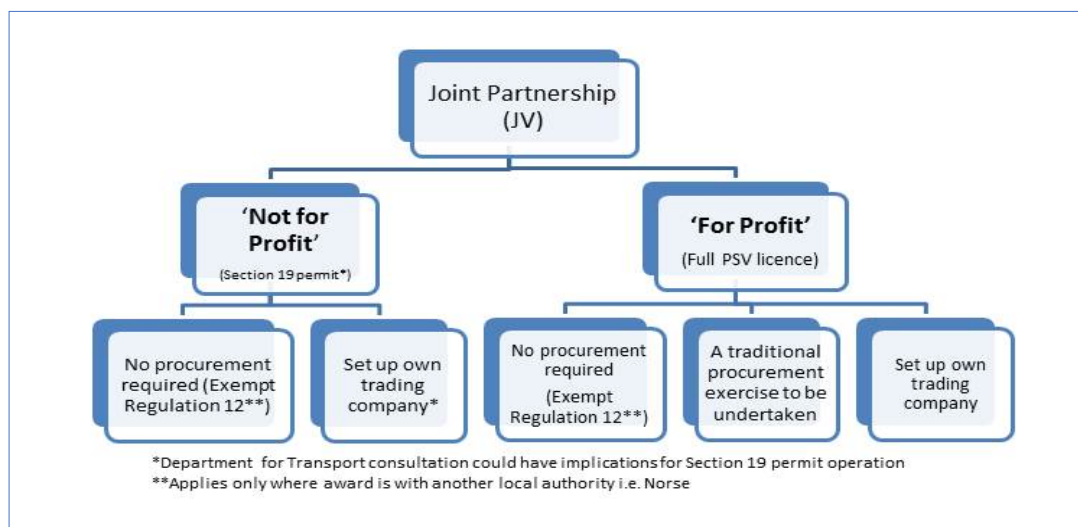
### **4.2 Use of a traditional 3rd Party supplier/outsourcing provider**

4.2.1 The nature of the 3rd-party market, including traditional private sector transport/outsourcing companies has been shown not to offer the Council the benefits it requires. In particular, the drive to provide benefits and savings directly to the Council is absent. There is no transparency of actual operating costs or visibility of profits unless contract clauses are provided for and which are difficult to enforce. The Council does not have the ability to have an ongoing say or influence on the method of service delivery under this type of model. It has also been found that this market's experience of delivering the types of transport required is limited. Our experience of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party outsourcing model is that the provider makes efficiencies within the service which are difficult to contract manage with a resultant loss of quality in the service or excess profits to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party supplier.

### **4.3 Use of a Joint Venture (JV)**

- 4.3.1 A JV approach has been identified as being the best delivery model to achieve sustainable transport provision for the Council. This model offers transparency of costs, visibility of profits and the ability for the Council to have some control in the delivery of the service. It also offers the opportunity for income generation via ability to enter into contracts with academies, schools, other local authorities and local businesses for example. This approach, assuming that a partner with appropriate experience, existing infrastructure and resources can be found, takes risk away from the Council.
- 4.3.2 A JV partnership is usually governed by a Board comprising of Directors from each party in a shareholding structure. A shareholding structure determines the profit share that is to be distributed between both partners. This structure allows the Council to have far greater control of the way the services are being delivered. Alongside this a JV offers flexibility that is not available in rigid contracts, which often end up costing more and where contract variations are required.
- 4.3.3 A JV partnership also offers the Council the ability to draw upon the partner's expertise and experience in running a passenger transport service. This model also has the ability to integrate the transport services to maximise the efficient use of its fleet, drivers and staff so that the transport service is used to its fullest capacity and can potentially provide for future pressures or increased demand thus providing a financial safeguard. It is also anticipated that the JV would be able to open up the opportunity for the creation of new jobs for Southend residents (subject to TUPE from existing contracts and inhouse staff), the opportunity to create numerous apprenticeships (drivers, Passenger Assistants and Administration) and make improvements to the local environment/air quality through route optimisation.
- 4.3.4 The majority of the current transport services will be delivered via the JV through mainly a mini-bus transport service with some taxi provision. It is therefore anticipated that the JV partner will provide the bulk of the service via mini bus provision, this will be supplemented with taxi provision, which will be sub-contracted via an approved contractor framework (this could include a stipulation to use local businesses).
- 4.3.5 There are two types of JV partnerships that could be established as follows:
- (i) A partnership with a company that is wholly owned by a local authority which is exempt of the regulation 12 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and offers a relatively straightforward and quick set up process or a Joint Venture. This option could be either a 'not for profit' or a 'for profit' partnership depending on the permit or licence this partnership would operate under.
  - (ii) A partnership with a privately owned company via a JV partnership would require a traditional procurement to be undertaken and would widen the competition in the market and does not exclude local authority owned companies or incumbent suppliers and other local business to put in a bid. However, this option requires a traditional procurement exercise to be undertaken and is a lengthy process due to the contract mobilisation required following contract award. This option could only operate on a 'for profit' partnership that would need to operate under a full PSV operating licence.

4.3.6 The diagram below confirms the structure for a procurement process for either a 'not for profit' and a 'for profit' JV partnership model:



### **'Not for Profit' JV**

4.3.7 Organisations that provide transport on a 'not-for-profit' basis can apply for permits under Section 19 or Section 22 of the Transport Act 1985. This means a 'not for profit' JV partnership could operate under a Section 19 permit required for the mini-bus provision of passenger transport. To be eligible for a Section 19 permit the organisation has to meet criteria set by the Driving Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). This operating model is less costly in terms of DVSA licencing requirements (i.e. £9 per vehicle) and there is no requirement to have a qualified transport manager that attracts the higher cost of a licence for a full PSV operating licence (£4,000 required for first vehicle and £3,200 for each vehicle thereafter). As well as this money needs to be held in a bank account and evidence of this available to the traffic commissioner.

4.3.8 In order to meet the timescales to ensure the home to school transport would be implemented during the school holidays and be live at the start of the schools' academic year in September 2018, the Council decided to further explore the establishment of a JV partnership with a local authority owned company under a 'not for profit' model operating under Section 19 permits. However, the recent announcement from the Department for Transport (DfT) advised it will be undertaking a consultation on the use of Section 19 and 22 permits. In view of this, the local authority owned company that was approached alongside others, are now being extra cautious around delivering any new transport provisions under a Section 19 permit with the Council. They have since withdrawn their proposal to enter into a 'not for profit' partnership with Southend at this time, although they would be happy to consider a partnership under a 'for profit' model. The local authority owned company that we had approached is currently the only local authority owned company that would have been able at this time to offer a partnership under a 'not for profit' model.

### **'For Profit' JV**

- 4.3.9 As outlined above, a Section 19 permit is only applicable for transport services operated by 'not for profit' organisations. Therefore a 'for profit' model would have to operate under a full PSV operating licence. As outlined in 4.3.7 above, the licencing requirements around this operation attracts higher costs to operating under a Section 19 permit and requires money to be held in a bank account. The full PSV operating licence also requires a transport manager who is held accountable for transport operation. As per 4.3.8, the local authority owned company that had been identified confirmed that they cannot consider a 'not for profit' JV partnership at this time. They would be interested in a 'for profit' JV partnership that would operate under a full operating licence via the local authority's's trading arm.
- 4.3.10 It is still possible to enter into a partnership with the local authority owned company as it does not require a traditional procurement exercise which is a lengthy process. However, the reduced timescale now means that it would not be possible to have this partnership set up and implemented in time for the start of the schools' academic year in September 2018 and then the implementation would have to be delayed to September 2019. Bearing in mind that a partnership with another local authority owned company would be delayed to meet the start of the academic year in September 2019, a 'for profit' model should now be opened up via a competitive procurement exercise to widen the competition to ensure best value to the Council.
- 4.3.11 As outlined in 2.1.2 and 4.3.10 above, the proposal is to undertake an open procurement exercise that allows for local businesses and incumbent contractors to bid in the tendering exercise as the main JV partner or as a sub-contractor with the main JV partner. This procurement exercise widens the competition and other local authority owned companies can also bid with the aim of getting best value for the Council.
- 4.3.12 Market research with 13 potential JV partners has been undertaken. This list was initially shortlisted to seven; and then only two confirmed at this time that they were interested and able to put in the time to develop a proposal within the current timescale for the Council's transport review:
- (i) A company that is wholly owned by a local authority
  - (ii) A private owned company (being a national bus operating company).
- 4.3.13 The table below outlines the benefits and issues regarding a 'Not for profit' and a 'For profit' arrangement:

<b>Issues</b>	<b>'Not for Profit' JV</b>	<b>'For Profit' JV</b>
Procurement Path	No procurement requirement – relatively quick process to set up. However, as there was only one local authority owned company identified as a potential partner who have since withdrawn their interest in this model.	A traditional procurement is required – a lengthy process which requires at least a nine month mobilisation period (fleet acquisition, TUPE etc) following contract award

<b>Issues</b>	<b>'Not for Profit' JV</b>	<b>'For Profit' JV</b>
Commercial Risk	JV Partner will assume the majority of the risks due to the Commercial investment and the Council risk is low as this only applies to the initial start up and set up costs.	JV Partner will assume the majority of the risks due to the Commercial investment and the Council risk is low as this only applies to the initial start up and set up costs.
Initial set up and investment	Shared - leverage partner structure and resources	Shared - leverage partner structure and resources
Variations to service	Flexible	Flexible
Financial Benefits through efficiencies	Shared with JV Partner	Shared with JV Partner
Potential for wider trading	No	Yes
Operational resilience	Takes advantage of partner resources	Takes advantage of partner resources
Experience	Experienced partners in market	Experienced partners in market
Service and eligibility efficiency	Yes	Yes
Flexibility across services	Yes through greater depth of resources	Yes through greater depth of resources
Council Management of Service	Direct as partner	Direct as partner
Permit or Operational Licencing	Section 19 permit or Full PSV Operating Licence	Full PSV Operating Licence
Licencing Costs	£9 per vehicle (valid for 5 years)	£4,000 required for first vehicle and £3,200 for each vehicle thereafter. (This money must remain in a bank account to prove to the traffic commissioner that the provider is able to replace vehicles when required)
Other licencing requirements		A qualified transport manager is required for the full operating licence
Challenges from incumbent providers	This model excludes incumbent providers from bidding to be the JV partner, but they could bid to act as a sub-contractor	This option allows incumbent providers to either bid as the main JV partner or a sub-contractor to the main JV partner
Potential JV Partners	There is only one JV partner under this option (local authority owned company)	The procurement exercise would generate interest from other parties including incumbent suppliers



#### **4.4 Recommended Approach:**

- 4.4.1 Further to 2.1.5, this report proposes to explore the procurement route of a partner to develop a JV partnership. The proposed JV partnership will be set up as a 'for profit' transport organisation under a full public service vehicle (PSV) licence. The use of a full PSV operating licence will ensure the Council is fully compliant in providing passenger transport and allows the JV partnership to operate under a 'for profit' model. The aim of the JV partnership will be to maximise quality, transparency, reduce costs where possible and achieve longer- term benefits (i.e. Income/Profit generation).
- 4.4.2 Therefore, it is recommended that a traditional procurement exercise is undertaken to seek a JV partner under a 'for profit' model operating under a full operating licence. This option would ensure the Council is fully compliant and not at risk of any implications arising from of the DfT consultation on Section 19 permits and would allow the Council to widen the competition for incumbent and local contractors to participate in the tender exercise as well as other local authority owned companies. It is anticipated during the course of the tender exercise, DfT's decision on Section 19 permits may be clearer and the risk on the local authority owned company's full operating licence should be clarified. However, by having to undertake a procurement exercise , it will only be possible to commence operation in September 2019. The lengthy procurement process is due to the requirement to incorporate a nine month mobilisation period following the award of the contract, to ensure competitive fairness where lead times are required for contractors to purchase vehicles.
- 4.4.3 This recommended approach also eliminates the risk of challenge from contractors who would have been excluded from being able to participate in a tender exercise due to their current licenced operation.
- 4.4.4 If the decision is taken to enter into a competitive tender process with a longer timeframe, it is highly likely that some of those companies already approached initially in the market research exercise would now enter into that procurement process. Due to the additional costs associated with the requirement of a full operating licence this option would widen the competition with the aim of achieving best value for the Council.

#### **5. Other Options**

- 5.1 Should the requirements, and processes outlined in this report not coalesce with Cabinet expectations this could further delay work that needs to be undertaken in order to be able to develop the recommended procurement approach. This would also impact on the procurement timescale and progress on shaping a robust tender specification.
- 5.2 Other procurement options have already been rejected as per 4.1 above.

#### **6. Timescales – full procurement process to procure a 'for profit' partner**

- 6.1 As outlined in 3.4(iii), the majority of transport provided is home to school transport – any changes to such services should be made during the summer for implementation in early September. Changes to the home to school transport services at schools have been made over the Christmas and Easter periods in the past, but the result has always been both a degree of chaos in the implementation and a greater negative

impact on service users and their families. The requirement to undertake a procurement exercise means that the home to school transport will not be able to go live until September 2019. The lengthy procurement process is due to the requirement to incorporate a nine month mobilisation period following the award of the contract, to ensure competitive fairness where lead times are required for contractors to purchase vehicles.

6.2 Below is an indicative timescale to undertake the procurement and implement the services:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
9 January 2018	Cabinet approval to proceed with the procurement
30 January 2018	People Scrutiny approval of Cabinet's decision
22 February 2018	Full Council's approval of Scrutiny's approval
March-April 2018	Invitation to Tender
April-May 2018	Tender Evaluation
June 2018	Cabinet approval of contract award
July 2018	People Scrutiny approval of Cabinet's approval of contract award
July 2018	Full Council approval of Scrutiny's approval of contract award
August 2018	Award Contract
September 2018-June 2019	1) Set up JV 2) Contract mobilisation for JV partner
July - August 2019	Implementation period for home to school transport
1 <sup>st</sup> August 2019	All passenger transport services go live

## **7. Tender exemption is granted to extend existing contracts**

7.1 As per 2.1.4 and 3.1 above, the following contracts will need to roll on until July 2019 via an extension to the existing contracts as the Council has a statutory duty to provide these services which will be out of contract if the Council does not extend:

- a) Home to School and Respite Care (Individual and new routes)
- b) Supervised Contact (via the Individual and new routes framework)
- c) Adults with Learning Disabilities (via the Individual and new routes framework)

### **7.2 Recommended Approach:**

7.2.1 Further to 2.1.4 in accordance with the Section 8.10 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, the Council is seeking Cabinet's approval for an exception to extend the existing following contracts for a period of 12 months via rolling on existing terms and conditions with the current contractors:

- a) Home to School and Respite Care (Individual and new routes)
- b) Supervised Contact (via the Individual and new routes framework)
- c) Adults with Learning Disabilities (via the Individual and new routes framework)

7.2.2 This exception request is due to the contracts expiring in July 2018 and the need to roll on existing contracts via an agreed contract extension and this is due to

regulatory forces that have hindered the timescales and have also created a risk to operating a transport service with compliant licencing. To mitigate this risk a procurement process will need to be undertaken which also allows competitive fairness. The Council has a statutory duty to provide the services in 7.1 and there is a need to have contractual arrangements in place. Therefore to confirm, the Council needs Cabinet’s approval to roll on existing contracts via an agreed extension while the procurement process can be progressed.

7.2.3 The extensions will be awarded via the existing individual and new routes framework to the same contractors on a goodwill basis under the existing terms and conditions. In the event a contractor does not want to continue their contract, the framework of nine contractors allows for a mini-competition to be undertaken and the contract to be awarded to another.

## 8. Reasons for Recommendation

8.1 It is critical that the Council has an agreed, robust and transparent position on each of the matters presented in this report in order to shape the procurement approach and to ensure that the Council’s ambitions for passenger transport are delivered through the partnership. Not reaching agreement on any of these matters risks delaying the procurement process.

## 9. Corporate Implications

### 9.1 Contribution to Council’s Vision & Corporate Priorities

This project will contribute towards the following Council Priorities:

<b>Safe</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look after and safeguard our children and vulnerable adults.</li> </ul>
<b>Clean</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the use of green technology and initiatives to benefit the local economy and environment.</li> <li>• Encourage and enforce high standards of environmental stewardship.</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the life chances of our residents, especially our vulnerable children and adults, by working to reduce inequalities and social deprivation across our communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Prosperous</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the town is ‘open for businesses’ and that new, developing and existing enterprise is nurtured and supported.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with and listen to our communities and partners to achieve better outcomes for all.</li> <li>• Enable communities to be self-sufficient and foster pride in the town.</li> <li>• Promote and lead an entrepreneurial, creative and innovative approach to the development of our town.</li> </ul>

## **9.2 Financial Implications**

- 9.2.1 The expectation is that financial efficiencies will be delivered through the proposed new operating model and thus there will be a contribution to the Council's savings targets in future years. The savings derived will be dependent upon the outcome of the Procurement process and the final agreed format of a 'for profit' joint venture (JV) model.
- 9.2.2 It is also expected that there will be initial start up and set up costs, which would need to be factored into the agreement of the 'for profit' joint venture (JV).

## **9.3 Legal Implications**

- 9.3.1 Any new operator will need to supervise and monitor drivers in connection with DVSA and DVLA licensing and permit requirements and holding of insurance.
- 9.3.2 Details of the arrangements between the two parties forming the JV will be documented within 'Articles of Association' that contain the purpose of the company as well as the duties and responsibilities of its members. Contractual obligations and responsibilities of each party will be formalised and documented within a 'Joint Venture Shareholders Agreement' including the right of either party to terminate.
- 9.3.3 As the proposal is to procure a JV under a full PSV operating licence any changes that follow the DfT consultation will not apply as the Council will be fully compliant and will not be affected by any changes. During the course of the procurement exercise it is anticipated that the implications of the DfT consultation should be clearer and thus ensure that if the local authority owned company that was identified became the preferred JV partner that all risks to their other operations would have been eliminated (i.e. this risk relates to the local authority's Section 19 permit operations which could also have an implications for their PSV operating licence).

## **9.4 People Implications**

- 9.4.1 A full consultation will be required with staff that will be transferred to the JV partnership as well as those where TUPE applies to the external contracts. This consultation will need to include Trade Unions in keeping with prevailing Council policy.
- 9.4.2 The Council's prescribed TUPE process and timescale for TUPE transfer will then also need to be followed.
- 9.4.3 The JV partner would be expected to provide their expertise on TUPE to actively support the Council's HR Team with all aspects of TUPE.

## **9.5 Property Implications**

- 9.5.1 Whilst some space in the Tickfield yard could be released, the JV will still need to source premises to store the fleet and sites presented by the Council's asset team will need to be explored as part of the implementation.

## **9.6 Consultation**

9.6.1 Consultations will need to be held with staff that are currently involved in the in-house services and there will be a need to consult with operators delivering the external contracts.

## **9.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications**

9.7.1 As the JV proposals involve a re-modelling of service delivery there will be a requirement for the procurement and service area leads to conduct an Equality Analysis.

9.7.2 Equality analyses have been initiated on the basis of the proposed policies.

## **9.8 Risk Assessment**

9.8.1 Inevitably there will be a small degree of risk in setting up a Joint Venture partnership with a third party. However, given the nature of the proposed JV this risk is not considered high. It is unlikely that the creation of the JV would cause any financial risk to the authority other than the loss of one-off set up costs should the company fail at an early stage.

9.8.2 There is the potential for risk to reputation through negative media campaigns and dissent from incumbent suppliers or users, e.g. parents who prefer to retain existing transport arrangements.

9.8.3 Further to 4.3.8, it is unknown yet what the implications of the Department for Transport consultation will be yet, although it is anticipated during the procurement process that any implications from the outcome of the DfT consultation will become clearer prior to any award to the preferred bidder.

9.8.4 A Risk Register will be established by the new Board of Directors and all risks will be actively reviewed on a regular basis. Mitigation strategies will be agreed with SBC.

## **9.9 Value for Money**

9.9.1 This proposal aims to enhance value for money through streamlining service delivery and reducing the number of current external contracts and in-house services.

9.9.2 The JV model also offers an improvement in quality and ultimately the potential for income generation and profits to be split between shareholders.

## **9.10 Community Safety Implications**

9.10.1 The proposed JV partnership will aim to provide a more comprehensive service that ensures access to suitable transport as required by clients.

## **9.11 Environmental Impact**

9.11.1 Improved route planning and the reduction in need for transport across the borough would lead to a reduction in traffic and travel which will lower the environmental impacts generated by the current arrangements.

**10. Background Papers**

10.1 None.

**11. Appendices**

11.1 Appendix A – Operating Model Options Explored.

## **The Joint Venture Partnership**

### ***Governance Structure and Initial Set up***

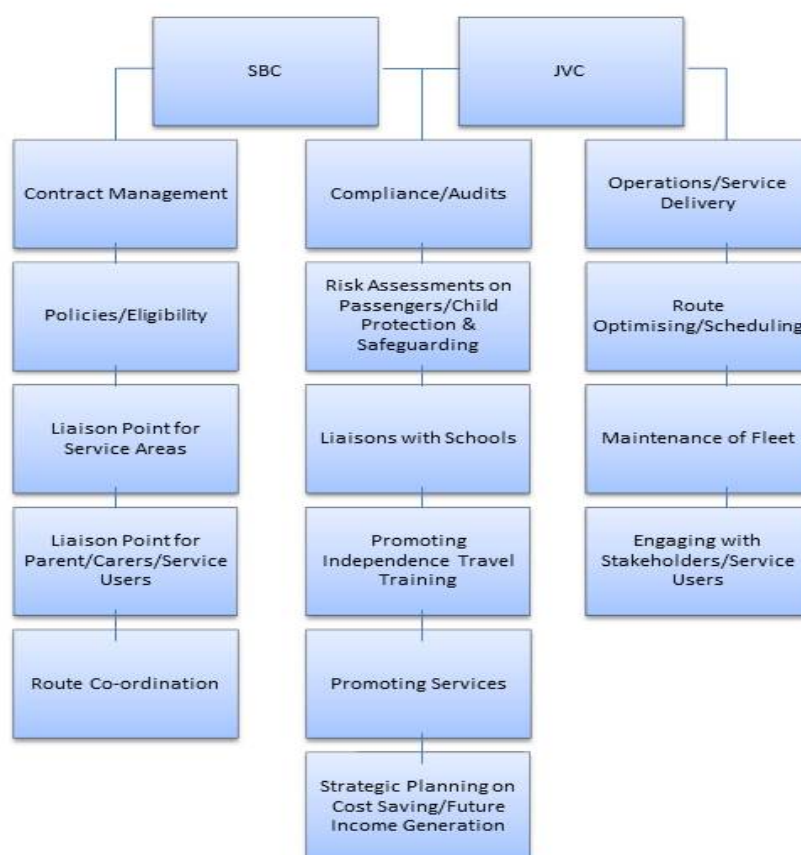
The procurement route will be selecting a preferred partner to form a Joint Venture under a Corporate Vehicle (JVC) with the Council, providing all of the Council's passenger transport services. This model allows the Council to access the skills and expertise of the market, whilst sharing the risk of delivery and any potential upside to the delivery of the service. The JVC is a well-recognised form of delivery vehicle and accepted by the private sector. Public sector controls can be maintained through reserved voting matters.

It should be noted that there will be initial start-up, set up and legal costs and for contract mobilisation to include staff recruitment, training, and management which will be established as part of the procurement process. In respect of the requirement for a full PSV operating licence, there will also be the need to hold £4,000 for first vehicle and £3,200 for each vehicle thereafter in a bank account so evidence of this available to the traffic commissioner. The number of vehicles that will require a PSV licence will be determined through the procurement exercise which is aiming to integrate the transport service so less vehicles will require a licence

The JVC will be governed by a Board comprising of Directors from each organisation in a shareholding structure. A shareholding structure determines the profit share that is to be distributed between both partners. This structure allows the Council to have far greater control of the way the services are being delivered. Therefore this model usually offers the flexibility that is not available in rigid contracts, which often end up costing more and where contract variations are required and it will be essential that this flexibility will be built into the JVC agreement. It should be noted that the nominated Directors will need to receive the appropriate training before they agree to sign acceptance of their directorship.

### ***Management and Service Structure***

The management structure of the JV would need to be determined as part of the procurement process and development of the JVC with a structure that best reflects the Council's objectives, whilst ensuring the JVC can act commercially. Whilst the procurement exercise will determine the development of the management structure it is anticipated that the roles and responsibilities are likely to be split between the Council and the JVC as per the example on page 2:



*Management and Service Structure*

### **Share Holding Structure**

The proposals from market engagement have indicated that the JVC partner would be the majority shareholder if the JVC partner was committing substantial investment as this places the JVC partner at a much higher commercial risk than the Council. During the procurement exercise the Council will make it clear that if the JVC Partner is the majority shareholder that a Council representative holds a corporate veto to ensure that the Council's policies and requirements are delivered.

It should be noted that whilst the proposed shareholding split demonstrates that the Council will be the minority shareholder for the reasons set out above the market engagement exercise has indicated that the profit from **additional** income generation could be split equally between the two JVC partners on a 50/50 basis which will need to be incorporated into the distribution policy and developed as part of the JVC agreement.

The indications from the market engagement have indicated that the JVC partner may be the majority shareholder as they will also assume the day to day management control of the



business. As part of the procurement process a JVC agreement will need to be drawn up which will set out the commitment of both partners.

Inevitably there will be a small degree of financial risk to the Council in setting up a JVC with a third party. However, given the nature of the proposed JVC this risk is not considered high. It is unlikely that the creation of the JVC would cause any financial risk to the authority other than the loss of one-off set up costs should the company fail and at an early stage. There will be no transfer or joint ownership of assets planned and costs for the service will be invoiced to the Council through the JVC whereby the JVC Partner will be leasing (or will own) the purchased vehicles including other overheads/supporting costs to deliver the passenger transport services.

The proposed 'For Profit' JV model will operate under a full PSV operating licence although its sub-contractors could operate under a Hackney Carriage Licence. The 'For Profit' model provides the Council with the opportunity for additional income generation via ability to enter into contracts with academies, schools, other local authorities and local businesses for example.

Details of the arrangements between the two parties forming the JVC will be documented within 'Articles of Association' and/or shareholders agreement that contain the purpose of the company as well as the duties and responsibilities of its members. Contractual obligations and responsibilities of each party will be formalised and documented within a 'Joint Venture Shareholders Agreement' including the right of either party to terminate

### ***Company Director Roles***

Policies would need to be developed to confirm the duties of a Company Director for the JVC. The primary obligation and legal duty of care of directors of the JVC constituted as the JVC is to itself and not to the person of whom they are representative or by whom they are nominated. They have an obligation to exercise independent judgement and act in good faith as to promote the success of the JVC.

It should be noted that the nominated Directors will need to receive the appropriate training before they agree to sign acceptance of their directorship

### ***Duration of the JVC***

The duration of the JVC will be determined through the procurement exercise, although it should be noted that indications from the market engagement exercise have suggested that a minimum 10 year JVC agreement with options to extend or a 15 year JVC agreement would be more attractive to the JVC partner which is due to their substantial investment in the vehicles. By having a 15 year term means the JVC partner can purchase new vehicles (assets) which could be utilised to their fullest operating capacity. This in turn should also attract a more competitive bid than a shorter period for the JVC.



# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda  
Item No.

Report of the Chief Executive  
To  
Cabinet  
on  
9th January 2018

Report prepared by: Bridgette Cowley  
Revenues Group Manager

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## Debt Management - Position to 30<sup>st</sup> November 2017

Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Councillor Moring

### *A Part 1 Public Agenda Item*

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#### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to apprise Cabinet of the following:

- The current position of outstanding debt to the Council, as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017;
- Debts that have been written off, or are recommended for write off, in the current financial year as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017;
- Obtain approval for the write off of irrecoverable debts that are over £25,000

#### 2. Recommendation

That Cabinet:-

- 2.1 **Notes the current outstanding debt position as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and the position of debts written off to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 as set out in Appendices A & B;**
- 2.2 **Notes that there are no write offs greater than £25,000, which requires Cabinet approval.**

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 It was agreed by Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013, following a report of debts over £25k to be written off, that the Director of Finance and Resources would submit a report on a regular basis to Cabinet on all aspects of the Council's outstanding debt, along with the required write off position. This is the second report for the financial year 2017/18.
- 3.2 Southend-on-Sea is made up of a number of service areas responsible for the collection and administration of outstanding debt. The main areas are Accounts Receivable and Revenues which are linked to the billing and collection of the

vast majority of debts that fall due to be paid to the Council for chargeable services, such as social care (see 4.5 ) and statutory levies such as Council tax and Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates).

However, there are other areas of debt that are included in this report, namely recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments, Parking and Enforcement penalties and library fines. In addition, there are also debts for the Housing Revenue Account for rent arrears and service charges.

3.3 The process and legislative framework for the collection and write off of debt were detailed in the revised Debt Collection and Recovery Policy that was approved at Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017. However, it is worth noting that the Council has a good success rate in collection of debt, and the collection targets are agreed annually as part of the Councils service planning process.

3.4 Debts are only considered for write off where all other courses of recovery available have been undertaken or explored and the debt is considered irrecoverable.

#### 4. Councils Debt Types

##### 4.1 Council Tax

£88.4m of Council Tax is due to be collected in 2017/18, with a collection target of 97.3%.

In 2016/17 97.5% of the outstanding Council Tax due was collected, and collection continues for the outstanding arrears for that year and for previous years. The chart below shows the actual in year collection rate over the past 4 years, and the collection rate of each year's charge to date, including debts that have been written off.

	Council Tax Performance	
	As at 31st March of relevant year	As at 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
1st April 2013 - 31st March 2014	97.1%	99.5%
1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015	96.8%	99.3%
1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016	97.2%	99.2%
1st April 2016 - 31st March 2017	97.5%	98.6%

##### 4.2 Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates)

£46.5m of Non Domestic rates is due to be collected in 2017/18, with a collection target of 97.9%.

The Council achieved an overall collection of 98.0% in 2016/17, which was 0.2% above target and collection is continuing for outstanding arrears for previous financial years.

The chart below shows the actual in year collection rate over the past 4 years, and the collection rate of each year's charge to date, including debts that have been already written off.

	<b>Non-Domestic Rates Performance</b>	
	<b>As at 31st March of relevant year</b>	<b>As at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017</b>
<b>1st April 2013 - 31st March 2014</b>	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>99.9%</b>
<b>1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015</b>	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>99.9%</b>
<b>1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016</b>	<b>97.8%</b>	<b>99.7%</b>
<b>1st April 2016 - 31st March 2017</b>	<b>98.0%</b>	<b>99.1%</b>

#### 4.3 Housing Benefit Overpayment

This is any entitlement to a rent allowance or rent rebate that a person has received but is not entitled to. Most commonly this accumulates when there is a change to a person's circumstance and they fail to notify us in good time. The overpayment will be invoiced unless they are in receipt of Housing Benefit in which case their benefit entitlement is reduced to enable recovery of the overpayment. The vast majority of Housing Benefit overpayment is due to claimant error.

#### 4.4 Libraries

Library debt is made up of overdue fines and replacing lost or non-returned books.

#### 4.5 Department for People - Adult Services (formerly Social care)

Adult Services make charges for the following services;

- Contributions to residential accommodation
- Charges for non-residential services i.e. Home Care, Community Support, Day Services and transport to services
- Charges to other local authorities
- Charges to National Health Service

Adult Social Care Debt as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 was £3,935,745 in comparison to £4,046,549 on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

It should be noted that of the total amount outstanding;

- £1,706,169 is debt secured against property
- £647,548 is being collected by Direct Debit
- £658,237 is under 30 days old

#### **4.6 Parking**

The recovery of unpaid Penalty Charge Notices is undertaken by semi-judicial process under the current Traffic Management Act 2004.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 a total of 27,499 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) have been issued identifying a projected income of £893,713. It should be noted that PCNs are issued at a higher rate and lower rate (£70.00 and £50.00 respectively) depending on the seriousness of the parking contravention. PCNs may be paid at a discounted rate of 50% of the charge if paid within 14 days of the date of issue.

This value is continuously being amended as payments are received and it should be recognised that payments made at the 50% discount amount will reduce the projected income level. Generally, 75% of paid PCN's are paid at the discounted payment.

The value of cancelled notices is £99,243 and cases written off where no keeper has been identified totals £133,952.

#### **4.7 Miscellaneous Income**

This will include a range of services that the Council will charge for including such areas as rental income on commercial properties, recharges to other bodies for services we have provided, and recovering overpaid salaries from staff that have left.

It is important to note that collection can vary month by month depending on the value of invoices raised as a reasonable period needs to be allowed for payment to be made.

#### **4.8 Housing**

Under the management of South Essex Homes there are the arrears of outstanding debt of Rent and Service Charges. The cost of any write-offs for this category of debt is specifically charged to the Housing Revenue Account and not to Council Tax Payers.

### **5. Write-Off Levels**

- 5.1 Write off approval levels currently in place are shown in the tables below, which are in accordance with the Financial Procedure rules set out in the Constitution and the revised debt collection and recovery policy.

**Debt Type: Council Tax/ Accounts Receivable/Social Care/ Housing and Council Tax Benefit**

Designation	Amount
Assistant Manager	under £5,000
Manager	Up to £10,000
Director of Service	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

**Debt Type: NNDR (Non Domestic Rates)**

Designation	Amount
Assistant Manager	under £5,000
Manager	Up to £10,000
Director of Service	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

**Debt Type: Parking**

Designation	Amount
Notice Processing Officer & Section Leader.	under £5,000
Section Leader	Between £5,000 and £10,000
Group Manager	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

**Debt Type: Housing Rents and Service Charges**

South Essex Homes, as managing agent, submit proposed write-offs to the Council, following which the following approval levels are exercised.

Designation	Amount
Director of Service	Under £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

**6. Council Debt Position (as at 30/11/17)**

Appendices A and B show the current debt position within each service area, and the amount that has been written off so far in the current year.

For Council tax and Non Domestic rates there is a net collectable debt at the beginning of the year. Although this can change depending on changes to liability or property being removed or introduced to the lists, it is fairly consistent.

However other service areas may see greater fluctuations as new debts are created during the financial year.

**7. Other Options**

This is a report notifying members of the current position of the Council's debt and related write offs, and therefore there are no other options.

## **8. Reasons for Recommendations**

All reasonable steps to recover the debt have been taken, and therefore where write off is recommended it is the only course of action available.

If the Council wishes to pursue debts for bankruptcy proceeding, it will follow the agreed and published recovery policy that covers this.

## **9. Corporate Implications**

### **9.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities**

Efficient write off of bad and irrecoverable debts, where appropriate, is good financial practice and reduces the bad debt provision and financial impact in the Authority's accounts.

### **9.2 Financial Implications**

Debts that are written off will have been provided for within the Councils bad debt provision and as such there should be no specific financial implications. However it is possible that unforeseen and unplanned additional write offs occur, which lead to the value of debts written off in any year exceeding the bad debt provision.

Where this is likely to happen, this report will act as an early warning system and will enable additional control measures to be agreed and taken to either bring the situation back under control, or to make appropriate adjustments to the bad debt provision.

Relevant service areas have to bear the cost of debts that are written off within their budget.

### **9.3 Legal Implications**

If there are debts to be written off that exceed the level at which officers have delegated powers to deal with the matter, authorisation is required from the Cabinet.

### **9.4 People Implications**

The people implications have been considered and there are none relevant to this report

### **9.5 Property Implications**

The property implications have been considered and there are none relevant to this report

### **9.6 Consultation**

Consultation is not required for write off of debt



## 9.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Each write-off is considered on an individual basis, there is no equalities and diversity implication to consider

## 9.8 Risk Assessment

There is a financial implication to the bad debt provision if write offs are not dealt with within the current financial year

## 9.9 Value for Money

It is a matter of good financial practice and good debt management to report value of debt and write off regularly.

## 9.10 Community Safety Implications

There are no Community Safety Implications

## 9.11 Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact

## 10. Background Papers

Full details of recovery action against each recommended write-off are held within the services computer systems.

## 11. Appendices

Appendix A Summary of outstanding debt

Appendix B Summary of Write offs

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**Summary of Outstanding Debt****Outstanding Debt pre 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 (arrears)**

<b>Debt pre 1/4/17</b>	<b>Council Tax (a)</b>	<b>Business Rates (a)</b>	<b>Housing Benefit Overpayments (b)</b>	<b>Social Care</b>	<b>Miscellaneous Income</b>	<b>HRA (Care Line/Service Charges)</b>	<b>Parking (c)</b>	<b>Libraries (d)</b>	<b>HRA Current Tenants (e)</b>	<b>HRA Former Tenants (e)</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Net Collectable Debt	5,879	1,746	6,334	4,094	5,272	311	11,321	n/a	-	337
Amount Paid @ 30.11.2017	1,748	487	2,392	1,970	4,199	250	9,721	439	-	127
Number of Accounts	12,584	246	1,820	891	732	152	n/a	n/a	-	243
<b>Total Outstanding</b>	<b>3,988</b>	<b>1,169</b>	<b>3,120</b>	<b>2,124</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>211</b>

**Current Year Debt (Debt raised in respect of 2017/18)**

<b>Debt post 1/4/17</b>	<b>Council Tax (a)</b>	<b>Business Rates (a)</b>	<b>Housing Benefit Overpayments (b)</b>	<b>Social Care</b>	<b>Miscellaneous Income</b>	<b>HRA (Care Line/Service Charges)</b>	<b>Parking (c)</b>	<b>Libraries (d)</b>	<b>HRA Current Tenants (e)</b>	<b>HRA Former Tenants (e)</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Net Collectable Debt at 30.11.2017	88,476	46,547	3,202	8,039	18,799	2,657	1,148	n/a	21,720	153
Amount Paid @30.11.2017	61,937	33,165	2,392	6,163	16,325	2,360	669	18	21,601	23
Number of Accounts	73,214	2,351	2,787	1,173	833	3,395	n/a	n/a	1,670	180
<b>Total Outstanding</b>	<b>26,539</b>	<b>13,382</b>	<b>2,601</b>	<b>1,876</b>	<b>2,474</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>130</b>

## **NOTES**

- (a) Council Tax and Business Rates includes adjustments for write offs, credits and outstanding court costs.
- (b) HB Overpayment is not attributable to a financial year in the same way that Council Tax or NDR are i.e. a yearly debit is not raised. It is also not feasible to state when a payment is made which age of debt it has been paid against. For these reasons the outstanding amounts in the report reflect the actual outstanding debt at the date requested, it does not reflect the outstanding debt against current year and previous year debts.
- (c) Parking total outstanding is net of PCNs cancelled and written off.
- (d) The figure of £439k relates to total payments received since January 2005 until 30/11/2017.
- (e) HRA tenancy debts (residential rent accounts) are rolling amounts, with no breaks in years or rollovers. Any cash received is applied to the oldest rent week outstanding. The figures shown are total arrears outstanding, and therefore include arrears still outstanding from prior years.

Summary of Write Off's

## Debts written off in 2017/18

April 2017 – 30 November 2017 relating to any year

Write Offs	Council Tax £	Business Rates £	Housing Benefit Overpayment £	Social Care £	Miscellaneous Income £	HRA (Care Line/Service Charges) £	Parking £	Libraries £	HRA Tenants £
Under £5k	166,795.42	44,863.91	238,530.44	28,553	19,849	3	133,952	11,266	94,305
£5k-£25k	0	54,469.91	91,986.03	5,674	0	0	0	0	5,875
Over £25k	0	0	29,325.52	0	65,494	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,795.42</b>	<b>99,333.82</b>	<b>359,841.99</b>	<b>34,227</b>	<b>85,343</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>133,952</b>	<b>11,266</b>	<b>100,180</b>

## Write off greater than £25,000 for Cabinet approval

Amount of Write off £	Reason for Write Off	Service Area
	None this period	

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## **CABINET**

Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018

### **COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 46**

The following action taken in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 46 is reported. In consultation with the appropriate Executive Councillor(s):-

#### **1. The Deputy Chief Executive (Place) authorised:**

- 1.1 Clean Bus Technology Grant Funding Application: Southend on Sea Borough Council, Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council, Colchester Borough Council, Rochester District Council, Arriva, First Group

The development of the above-mentioned partnership bid to work towards improving air quality in the towns and cities throughout Essex.

- 1.2 V2Street Bid Under the Innovate UK Vehicle to Grid (V2G) Call

The submission of the above bid under the LIFE Programme, prior to the deadline of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017, for £1.5m over 18 months. If successful the collaborative research and development project will enable the Council to develop its understanding of how electric vehicles will affect the local grid, to establish business models to use electric vehicles to save money and to justify investment in the charging infrastructure and to unlock the electric vehicle market for up to 40% of households who are currently locked out. The Council will receive £60k to fund the work which will be undertaken by the Energy & Sustainability, Smart City and Highways Teams working together on a 100% basis (no match funding required)

- 1.3 60 Minute Mentor South Essex Expansion

The expansion of the above-mentioned project by signing the grant agreement and the commencement of the recruitment process for a Assistant Mentoring Co-ordinator post, who will be responsible for delivering the additional activity, scheduled to begin in January 2018.

- 1.4 Museum Collection Development Policy

The approval of the above-mentioned policy and the reconfirmation of the Documentations Policy and Care and Conservations Policies with Arts Council England to support the museums registration process.

## **2. The Director of Finance and Resources authorised:**

### **2.1 Request for Landlord's Consent and Variation of Existing Lease to Enable Sale and Consumption of Alcohol and Amended Opening Hours – La Petite Petanque at Alexandra Bowling Green Café, SS1 2EY**

The grant of landlord's consent and variation to the existing lease to permit the conditional sale and consumption of alcohol at the premises during trading hours Mondays to Sundays and on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and Valentine's night until 10.30 p.m. with the following additional conditions:

- Service of alcohol shall be by waiter/waitress only and shall be limited to persons seated at a table taking a substantial meal;
- The premises shall be run solely as a restaurant and the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises shall be linked to the purchase of a substantial meal;
- There should be no access for patrons to the upper roof terrace.

### **2.2 Disposal of 7a Ceylon Road, Westcliff on Sea**

The disposal of 7A Ceylon Road as the property is not part of the normal housing stock and requires substantial improvement works.

### **2.3 Airport Business Park – Plot Disposal Terms**

The agreement of commercially confidential terms for the first plot sale (Freehold 6.8 Acres) with an option to acquire a further adjacent plot. Henry Boot Developments Ltd will simultaneously contract (subject to detailed planning) for the construction of buildings with the buyer.



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

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