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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 5th October, 2021

Time: 6.30 pm

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Contact: S. Tautz (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

Email: committeesection@southend.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

3 Questions from Members of the Public

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 September 2021 (Pages 1 - 4)

**** **ITEMS CALLED IN/REFERRED DIRECT BY CABINET - 14 SEPTEMBER 2021**

None

**** **ITEMS CALLED-IN FROM THE FORWARD PLAN**

None

**** **ITEMS FOR PRE-CABINET SCRUTINY**

None

**** **OTHER SCRUTINY MATTERS**

5 Independent SEND Peer Review

To receive an update on the progress of the commissioning of an independent peer review of SEND provision.

6 Children's Services Improvement Board (Pages 5 - 30)

Report of Executive Director (Children and Public Health) attached.

7 Joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2021/22 (Pages 31 - 38)

Report of Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) attached.

TO: The Chair & Members of the People Scrutiny Committee:

Councillor L Salter (Chair), Councillor H Boyd (Vice-Chair)
Councillors B Beggs, M Berry, J Courtenay, T Cowdrey, A Dear, K Evans,
D Garne, B Hooper, J Lamb, A Line, K Mitchell, I Shead, M Stafford, A Thompson

Co-opted members

Church of England Diocese

Fr Jonathan Collis (Voting on Education matters only)

Roman Catholic Diocese

VACANT (Voting on Education matters only)

Parent Governors

(i) VACANT (Voting on Education matters only)

(ii) VACANT (Voting on Education matters only)

Southend Association of Voluntary Services

K Jackson (Non-Voting)

Healthwatch Southend

O Richards (Non-Voting)

Southend Carers Forum

T Watts (Non-Voting)

Observers

Southend Youth Council

Public Document Pack

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

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Present: Councillor L Salter (Chair)
Councillors H Boyd (Vice-Chair), B Beggs, J Courtenay, T Cowdrey,
M Dent*, K Evans, N Folkard*, D Garne, B Hooper, J Lamb, A Line, I Shead,
M Stafford, A Thompson

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: Councillors L Burton, P Collins, A Jones and C Nevin (Cabinet Members),
S Baker, A Barnes, T Forster, M Marks, B Martin, S Newman,
K Ramkhelawon, S Tautz and J Williams
O Richards (Healthwatch Southend), T Watts (Southend Carers Forum) (Co-
Opted Members), M Faulkner-Hatt, O Slaughter (Southend Youth Council)
(Observers)

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 7.35 pm

257 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Berry (no substitute), Councillor A Dear (Substitute: Councillor N Folkard) and Councillor K Mitchell (Substitute: Councillor M Dent).

258 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

- (a) Councillors L Burton, P Collins, A Jones, and C Nevin, (Cabinet Members) - Interest in the called-in items; Attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19 July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (b) Councillors L Burton, P Collins, A Jones and C Nevin (Cabinet Members) - Interest in the referred item; Attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19 July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (c) Councillor L Salter - Minute 261 (Southend 2050: Annual Review and Refresh of Outcomes and Roadmap Milestones), Minute 262 (Annual Public Health Report 2020/21) and Minute 263 (Corporate Risk Register) - Husband is a consultant surgeon at Southend Hospital; Daughter is a consultant at Basildon Hospital; Son-in-law is a general practitioner in the Borough - Non-pecuniary interests.
- (d) Councillor T Cowdrey - Minute 259 (Questions from Members of the Public) Mentioned in the question to be presented at the meeting in the capacity of a former member of the Advisory Board of Healthwatch Southend - Non-pecuniary interest.
- (e) Councillor N Folkard - Minute 261 (Southend 2050: Annual Review and Refresh of Outcomes and Roadmap Milestones), Minute 262 (Annual Public Health Report 2020/21) and Minute 263 (Corporate Risk Register) - Ambassador for Fund Raising

Team at Southend University Hospital; Daughter is Head of Nursing for Paediatrics across Mid and South Essex Hospitals - Non-pecuniary interests.

- (f) Councillor C Nevin - Minute 261 (Southend 2050: Annual Review and Refresh of Outcomes and Roadmap Milestones) and Minute 262 (Annual Public Health Report 2020/21) - Family members employed by Mid and South-Essex (MSE) NHS Foundation Trust; Previous association with MSE hospitals; Employed at external NHS Trust - Non-pecuniary interests.
- (g) Councillor C Nevin - Minute 263 (Corporate Risk Register) - Former employee at care homes within the Borough - Non-pecuniary interest.

259 Questions from Members of the Public

The Committee noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration to a question presented by Mr M Ali.

260 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 July 2021

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 July 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

261 Southend 2050: Annual Review and Refresh of the Outcomes & Roadmap Milestones

The Committee considered Minute 216 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 July 2021, which had been referred directly to each of the three Scrutiny Committees and called-in, together with a report of the Chief Executive presenting the annual review and refresh of Southend 2050 that set out how the Council would use the evolved Southend 2050 outcomes to drive recovery.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of the Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the refresh of the Southend 2050 outcomes and high-level roadmap milestones, be endorsed.

2. That further developed work on the review and refresh of the Southend 2050 outcomes and associated roadmap milestones be presented to Cabinet in September, including the associated outcome success measures.

3. That the planned engagement over the summer and additional Special Cabinet meeting on 7th September 2021, following the Scrutiny Committees, be noted.

4. That it be noted that the Southend 2050 roadmap milestones will form part of future reports that update on Southend’s recovery journey in order for responsive developments.

5. That it be noted that the performance and measures of success and progress to achieve 2050 will continue to be reported through the Outcome Success Measures Report, reported twice a year to Cabinet.”

Note: This is an Executive Function, save that approval of the final decision is a Council Function

Cabinet Member: Councillor I Gilbert

262 Annual Public Health Report

The Committee considered Minute 217 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 July 2021, which had been called-in to the People Scrutiny Committee, together with a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) presenting the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for 2020.

At the request of councillors, the Director of Public Health undertook to circulate the Council's Vaccination Hesitancy Plan for the national vaccination programme arising from the COVID-19 pandemic to all members of the Committee.

Resolved:

That the following decision of the Cabinet be noted:

"That the 2020 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health, including the highlighted actions, be approved."

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Councillor C Nevin

263 Corporate Risk Register

The Committee considered Minute 223 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 July 2021, which had been called-in to each of the three Scrutiny Committees, together with a report of the Chief Executive presenting the updated Corporate Risk Register summary.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration undertook to provide a written response to questions raised by members of the Committee, with regard to the current numbers of Council and agency staff employed in both care home settings and for the delivery of domiciliary home care across the Borough.

Resolved:

That the following decision of the Cabinet be noted:

"That the updated Corporate Risk Register summary and the position at June 2021, outlined in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved."

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Councillor P Collins

264 Independent SEND Peer Review

The Committee received an update on the progress of the commissioning of an independent peer review of SEND provision, as agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 27 July 2021.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

265 Joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2021/22

The Committee received an update on the progress that had been made in respect of the joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project for 2021/22, on the theme of 'Enabling Councillors to be Effective'.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function

Chair: _____

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

6

Report of Executive Director (Children and Public Health)

to

People Scrutiny

on

5th October 2021

Report prepared by: Michael Marks, Executive Director
Children & Public Health

Update on Children's Services Improvement Programme from the Children's Services Improvement Board

People Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Councillor Laurie Burton
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

To update the People Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Children's Services Improvement Board.

To agree the frequency of updates to the People Scrutiny Committee from the Children's Services Improvement Board.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The People Scrutiny Committee is asked to: -

- Note the background and current work programme of the Children's Services Improvement Board captured in Appendix One and summarised in section 3 of the report.
- Agree to receiving further updates on the work of the Children's Services Improvement Board every 6 months.

3. Background

3.1 The Children's Services Improvement Board is in place to provide strategic challenge and oversight to enable the service to improve following 2 consecutive Ofsted judgements of Requires Improvement in July 2016 and 2019.

3.2 The Improvement Board was established in 2016 to support the improvement of the Service to good or better. It scrutinises the progress of the service against a set of priorities and milestones captured in the Improvement Plan (appendix 1).

3.3 The Improvement Board has been strengthened in the last 12 – 18 months. For example, the structure and content of the Improvement Plan was revised in

2020 to make it sharper and more focused with 6 key priorities (para 3.7). The 6 priorities are informed by the annual self-assessment that the service undertakes and feedback from the most recent Ofsted inspection report in 2019. In addition, 2 frontline practitioners from Children's Services have been added to the Improvement Board to ensure that as part of the oversight and strategic scrutiny of the improvement programme, there is a practitioner perspective fed into the Board and back to the Senior leadership management team within Children's Services.

3.4 The Improvement Board meets bimonthly, and the membership is as follows:

- Leader of the Council (Chair),
- Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning
- Opposition Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning
- Chief Executive of the Council
- Independent Safeguarding Adviser to the Southend Strategic Safeguarding Partnership
- Independent
- Two front line practitioners from Children's Services
- Executive Director, Children and Public Health
- Director of Children's Services (Chair of Children's services management team)
- Director of Education and Early Years

3.5 The Children's Services management team attend the Improvement Board.

3.6 The Children's Service's Improvement Plan (Appendix 1) sets out the 6 priorities and the actions and outcomes under those priorities to improve the service and in turn provide good or better outcomes for the children and young people it works with.

3.7 The 6 priorities are: -

1. That leadership will drive our ambition and purpose throughout organisation
2. To improve the quality of practice so it is consistently better
3. To improve the outcomes for Looked After Children
4. To deliver the right service at the right time
5. To impose financial effectiveness and sustainability within children's services
6. To work with children, young people and families to shape services

3.8 Some achievements and progress against the 6 priorities in the first 6 months of this financial year include:

Leadership

- A 'Vision for Children's Services' has been developed by staff with input from the Children in Care Council and Southend Youth Council and was launched in September 2021.
- The Corporate Parenting Strategy has been reviewed and revised and was signed off by the Corporate Parenting Group in September 2021. It

includes priorities and outcomes that have been informed by engagement with looked after children and care leavers.

- Increased focus on strategic leadership to improve management oversight and grip with the introduction of a Performance and Finance Board chaired by the Executive Director Children and Public Health.
- All Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) managers have been offered the opportunity to join the BALI (Black and Asian Leadership Initiative) programme with the Virtual College.

Quality of Practice

- The development offer for social workers has been aligned to the National Assessment and Accreditation Scheme (NAAS) and was launched in September 2021. It was co-designed with the staff rep group.
- A new approach to case auditing was launched in July 2021. The new approach will mean there will be more rigour and consistency to auditing in Children's Services. All auditors have been trained in the 'Beyond Auditing' approach prior to the July 2021 launch, with all Advanced Practitioners, Team Managers, Independent Reviewing Officers and Service Managers now expected to complete audits.
- Positive feedback from the Department for Education's (DfE's) National Care Leaver Adviser on the Children's Service's offer to Southend's care leavers, following a visit by the National Care Leaver Adviser's to view the work of the service and meetings with Southend Care Leavers.

Improve outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC)

- Recruited 8 more Foster Carers.
- Increased management capacity in the Fostering Service, including a new marketing officer to further improve the number of in-house foster carers.
- A Children's Commissioner post has been established to help Children's Services commission good quality placements at the most cost-effective price.
- We have exceeded the target for recruitment of in-house foster carers. 8 carers have been recruited against a target of 6. The target increases to 8 in September
- Following a review of service delivery, a dedicated team for LAC has been created to improve the experience of children and young people with the aim of reducing the number of changes in social worker and increasing their access to life story work. Feedback from the independent advocacy service is that young people feel the change has been positive.

Delivering the right service at the right time

- A focus on early help, supported by agreement to an Early Help Partnership Strategy which was signed off by Southend Strategic Safeguarding Partnership for Children earlier this year, is a key strand of the improvement programme. The impact of the new strategy is not due to be reported on until December 2021.

Financial effectiveness

- A financial recovery plan for Children's Services has been developed and is in place and sits alongside the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

- A reduction in the number of LAC from circa 330 at the end of 2019 to 285 as of September 2021 has contributed to a reduction in the overall overspend of Children's Services. It should be noted that the number of LAC is never static and safeguarding needs are always the priority, but nevertheless this reduction of LAC has helped to reduce the service overspend.
- As of September 2021, there has been a reduction in expenditure on Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) placements with a reduction of the equivalent of 3 PVI residential placements against the baseline in September 2020.

Shaping Services

- Children and young people involved in shaping the Vision for the Service along with feedback from the Hear Our Voice report in Autumn 2020.
- Established Staff Forum to increase the involvement of staff in shaping the service and its improvement
- Added 2 practitioners to the Improvement Board to ensure that there is a practitioner and frontline perspective on the wider improvement programme and the work of the improvement board.
- The staff rep group, Principal Social Worker Forum and design workshops have contributed to; the social worker development offer, Building Strong Practice programme, the development of the Service Vision, and the pilot Beyond Auditing programme.

3.9 Despite the progress outlined in paragraph 3.8 further work is needed to move the service from Requires Improvement to Good or better and more importantly provide systemic and consistent good or better practice and outcomes for children and young people. Therefore, the focus for the next 6 months and beyond will include: -

- Improve the recruitment and retention of social workers and reduce the number of agency staff.
- Improve Placement stability for children and young people.
- Implement the revised Fostering Improvement Plan to improve the in-house fostering offer.
- Review the pilot new approach to case file auditing and embed and sustain an effective case file audit system and wider quality assurance work to provide better strategic management oversight and grip.
- Improving the engagement and participation of a range of children, young people, and their families.

3.10 Improving the practice and delivering against the focus areas identified in paragraph 3.8 will also improve the financial performance of the service. Improvement to the in-house fostering service should lead to reduce reliance on external residential placements and Independent Fostering placements, although we will always need some, to meet particular needs of children and young people, and lead to greater placement stability. As of period 4 financial monitoring for the current financial year, the projected overspend for the service is £2.453m (excluding the £2.5M one off Children Social Care Reserve funding); this overspend is a positive reduction of (£0.3M) from the ongoing spend pressure of 2020/21 rolling into 2021/22. There is therefore a positive trajectory

of currently forecast reduced overspend spend which is driven by the current reduction in LAC numbers. It should be noted that the service is still waiting to see if there will be any increase in referrals and in turn LAC numbers because of the pandemic.

- 3.11 A Financial Recovery Plan, which sits alongside the Children's Services Improvement Plan is in place to capture where investment has been made to support the improvement programme, to not only improve the service and outcomes for children and young people, but as part of an invest to save approach to reduce reliance on external placements unless a case needs specialist support that cannot be provided by the in-house offer.

4. Other Options

There are none related to this report.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

To update members of the People Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Improvement Board and the wider improvement programme for Children's Services and to clarify the updating arrangements with People Scrutiny.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map.

The Council is a Corporate Parent for all children and young people who are under the care of the Local Authority. In addition to LAC, Children's Services works with some of the most vulnerable children and young people and their families. Supporting children to good or better outcomes means that this work contributes to all 5 of the 2050 outcomes.

- 6.2 Financial Implications

See paras 3.10 and 3.11 in this report.

- 6.3 Legal Implications

The Council holds a number of statutory duties for children and young people including those that are LAC, care leavers and those deemed to be Children In Need (CiN) under current legislation including the Children Act.

- 6.4 People Implications

There are none related to this report.

- 6.5 Property Implications

There are none related to this report.

- 6.6 Consultation

N/A

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

There are none related to this report.

6.8 Risk Assessment

N/A

6.9 Value for Money

N/A

6.10 Community Safety Implications

N/A

6.11 Environmental Impact

N/A

7. Background Papers

Ofsted inspection of Services for Children in Need of help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers report July 2016 [Southend on Sea draft report \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](#) Please note the link says draft but this is the version of the 2016 report on the Ofsted website.

Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Care Services report July 2019 [50103322 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](#)

8. Appendices

Children's Service's Improvement Plan v1.1 August to December 2021



Improvement Plan

2021-2023

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE, EARLY HELP AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Version 1.1 - Aug-Dec '21

Introduction

This Improvement Plan outlines our roadmap for improving the lived experiences of children, young people and families over the next three years. Whilst ambitious, we are confident in achieving these outcomes if we retain a strong improvement focus.

As we achieve key milestones, this plan will evolve. We will use this plan to help us to drive improvements for children at pace. It is through dialogue with our children, young people and families and staff that we can ensure the outcomes we work towards remain relevant.

Michael Marks, Executive Director (Children & Public Health)

Purpose of this Plan

This plan provides a high-level overview of how our service is delivering against key outcomes. This plan is based on our Self-Evaluation of June 2020 and OFSTED recommendations from our most recent inspection in July 2019. Delivering against these priorities will lead to an improved service and improved outcomes for children, young people and families.

The overall lead for the plan is the Director of Children's Services. Governance for this plan rests with the Children's Services Improvement Board. Progress is reported and scrutiny offered at the Children's Services Performance Board, Cabinet and Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP).

How our plans fit together



People at the Heart

At the heart of all our plans and effort is the Children, Young People and Families who use our services. We do this through aligning our plans, keeping these people at the heart of what we do



Transforming Together

Driving positive change throughout our Borough, Children's Services is a key part of our wider 2050 ambitions. Children's Services is committed to creating a Southend-on-Sea we can call our Pride and Joy.



Continual Improvement

We are committed to continually improving our approach through working closely with children, young people, families and professionals. Together we can co-design a strategy which supports our wider ambition.

Voice of Professionals
Listening to the voice of our staff is critical if our plans are to succeed. Working together is what will achieve our ambitions for Children's Services

Co-Production
Connecting with children, young people and families across the Borough to ensure they are at the centre of our plans for improvement

Looking Outside
With a close eye on Local and National Data, we will take inspiration from other Local Authorities and Organisations and strive for better

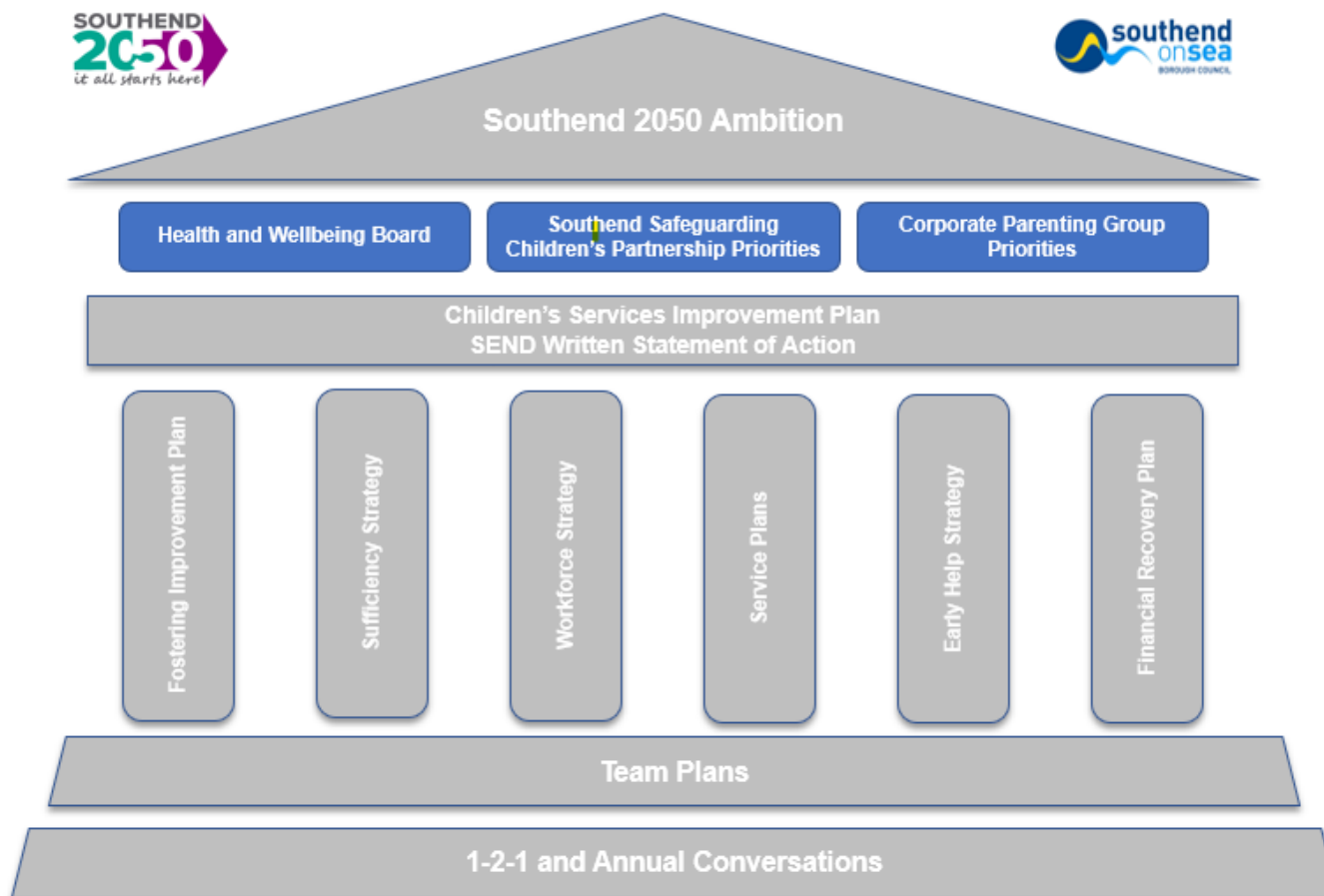
Highest Standards
We will use our quality assurance processes and inspection findings to insist on the highest standards are delivered throughout our service

Shared Ambition

The success of this plan rests on connecting the work of all our staff to our strategic plans and Southend 2050 ambition. The schematic below visualises how strong 1-2-1s, Annual conversations and team plans underpin this plan and our Southend 2050 ambition.

We will connect staff to our wider ambitions through:

- Listening to the voice of our professionals, with regular two-way communication through all levels of our service
- Utilising co-production principles, using the knowledge, skills and experience of our staff to shape our plans
- Clearly communicating our progress against milestones, and
- Embracing innovation and encouraging staff to promote ideas and new ways to achieving our outcomes



Our Six Priorities below have been identified as our main areas of focus required to delivering these outcomes:

Our Priorities

1 Leadership will drive our ambition and purpose throughout the organisation

2 Improve the quality of practice so it is consistently good or better

3 Improve the outcomes for looked after children



4 Deliver the right service at the right time

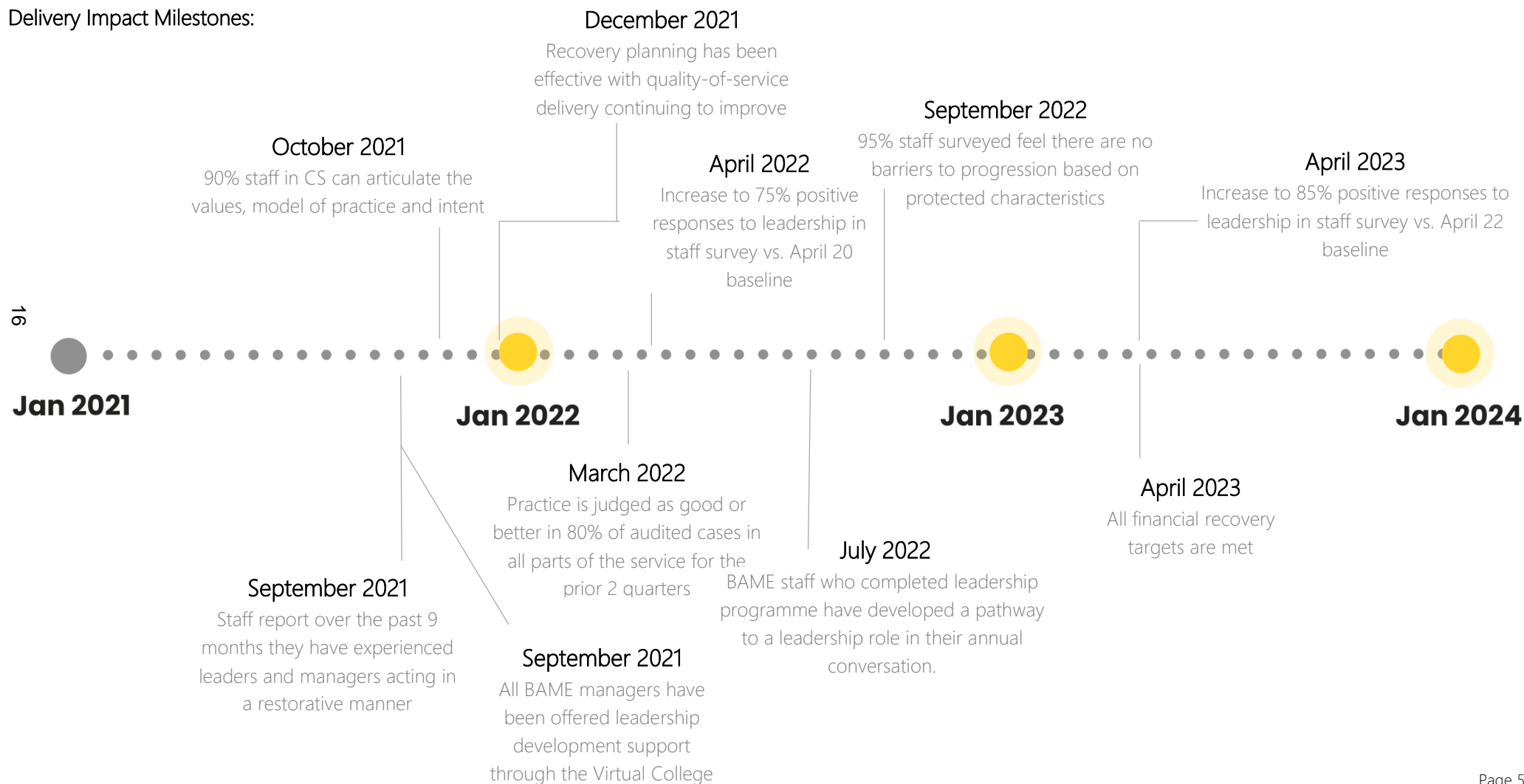
5 Improve financial effectiveness and sustainability within Children's Services

6 Work with children, young people and families to shape services

Priority One: Leadership will drive our ambition and purpose throughout the organisation

Expected outcome once delivered: *Our ambition and purpose is understood and supported throughout all areas of the organisation. Staff feel part of our plans and feel they can actively contribute*

Delivery Impact Milestones:

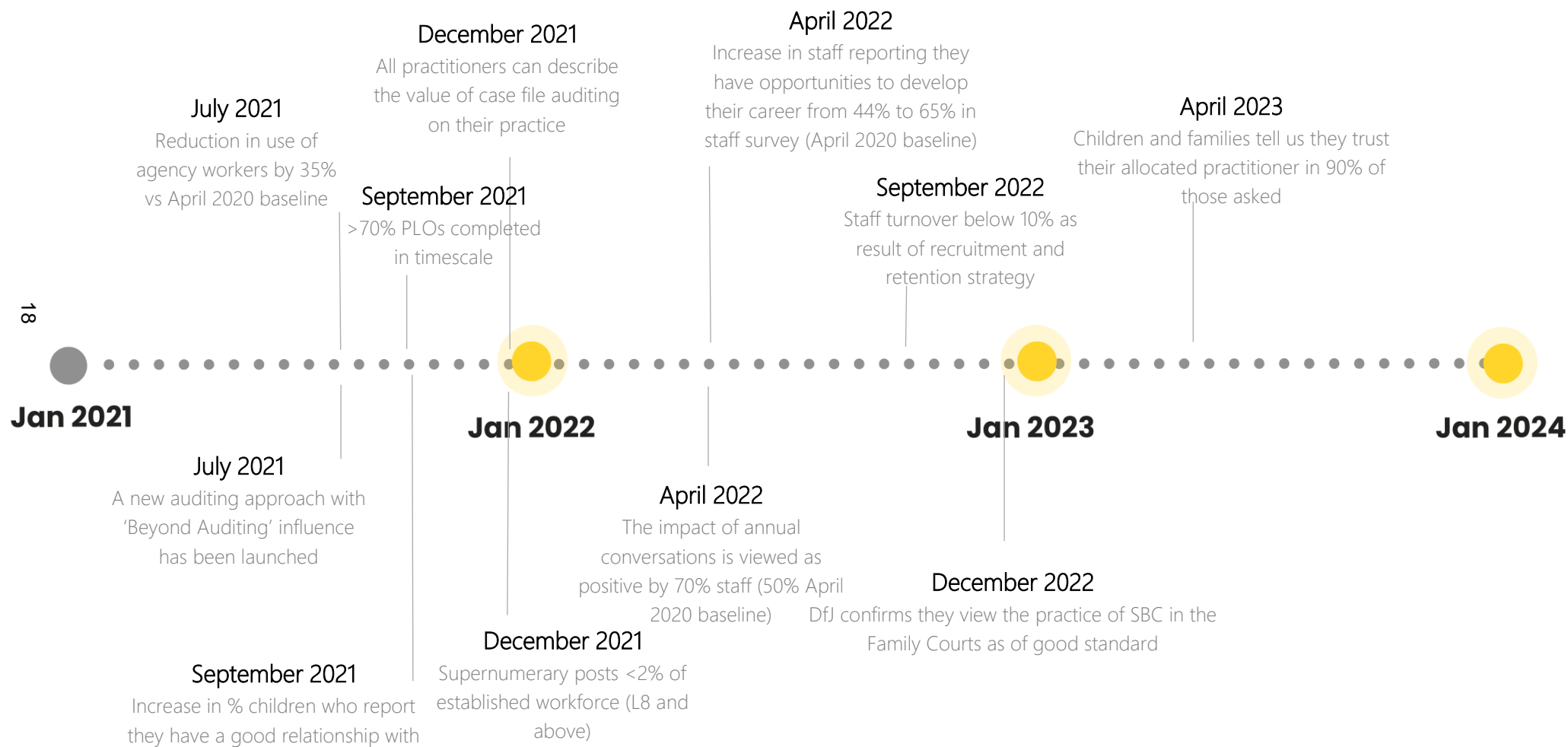


Ref	Action	Start Date	Outcome	Due Date	Lead
1.1	Embed our new strategic intent which aligns to 2050, covid-19 recovery, financial recovery & service plans	June 2020	At least 90% of CS Staff can articulate the strategic intent, values and model of practice, indicating an embedded strategic intent (measured through staff survey)	Oct 2021	DCS
1.4	Review the revised corporate parenting group priorities and practice to ensure that it continues to be focussed on outcomes for children and informed by children and young people.	July 2021	Corporate Parenting Group works with partners and the wider council to improve the outcomes for looked after children.	Oct 2021	Chair of CPG
			Corporate Parenting Group has clear priorities to deliver good outcomes for children		
1.5	Implement a coherent senior management structure, streamlining accountability for functions and performance and puts the needs of children at the centre of its design.	July 2021	Services are aligned under Heads of Service to supports improved performance and outcomes with specific service plans.	Dec 2021	Exec Director and DCS
			Stronger professional relationships and increased collaboration have resulted from the streamlining of service areas.		
1.6	Relaunch our restorative model of practice, supporting its use via learning & development initiatives	Jan 2021	The restorative model is consistently evidenced through our forms, processes and interactions with children and young people	Oct 2021	DCS
			Our workforce at all stages of their employment with SBC receive the support they require to practice in a restorative manner		
1.7	Enhance our leadership capability through actively contributing to 2050 outcomes, TT programme and development opportunities with the Virtual College.	Jan 2021	Children's Services leaders actively shapes and supports the delivery of our 2050 and Transforming Together outcomes.	Sept 2021	Exec Director
			BAME managers have the opportunity for leadership development support through the Virtual College		

Priority Two: Improve quality assurance so that quality of practice is consistently good or better across all services

Expected outcome once delivered: *Children and families receive high quality services without delay which improve their lives.*

Delivery Impact Milestones:



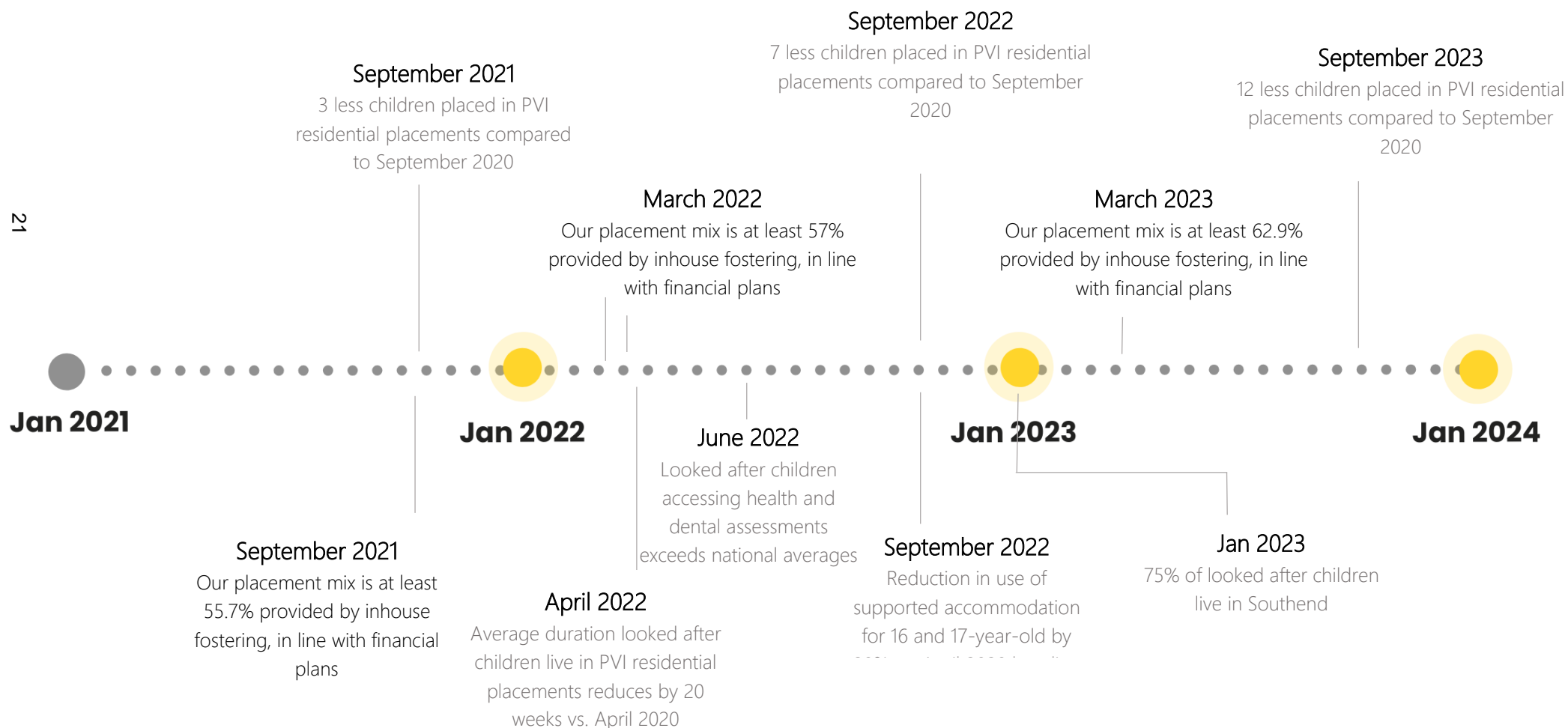
Ref	Action	Start Date	Outcome	Date Due	Lead
2.1	Deliver the Recruitment and Retention strategy to support a permanent and stable workforce	Jan 2021	Reduction in use of agency workers by 35% vs September 2020 baseline (13) <i>c162</i>	Dec 2021	HoS (RB)
			Recruitment targets for Apprentices, NQSW and PE educators are achieved in line with R&R strategy.		
			90% NQSW successfully complete the ASYE within 13 months (excluding LTS and Maternity)		
			Supernumerary posts <2% of established workforce (<i>L8 and above</i>) <i>FY 20/21 - 181.8 FTE L8 and above</i>		
2.2	Develop and deliver a workforce strategy (including a comprehensive CPD offer and succession planning) which supports a knowledgeable and skilled workforce at all levels	Dec 2020	84% staff feel they are well supported by their managers <i>(74% baseline April '19 Employee Engagement Survey)</i>	April 2022	HoS (RB)
			90% of managers can articulate their role in providing challenge and support as referenced in the workforce strategy		
			Managers have the knowledge, skills and capabilities to support the delivery of good and outstanding services		
2.4	Provide clear guidance, expectations and offer of support for CPD, annual conversations and group supervision	Jan 2021	All service areas receive a consistent level of professional support which positively influences their development	Sep 2021	HoS (RB)
			85% of practitioners can show how CPD supervision and annual conversations supports the quality of their practice with children and families		
			>85% of case supervision is judged as good or better in file audit for 4 consecutive months <i>c155</i>		
2.5	Provide training and support for auditors, including team managers and IRO, which reinforces our expectations of quality and quantity of quality assurance activity.	Jan 2021	Auditor ratings achieve >90% agreement with moderator judgements	Dec 2021	HoS (RB)
			All team and service managers meet expectations of audit set in the Audit Guidance		
			85% of audited cases to be judged as good or outstanding		
			CPD Offer evidences strong links to the findings of quality assurance activity		

2.6	Equip and Empower our workforce in using a broad range of quality assurance activity to shape practice, including the 'Beyond Auditing' approach	Jul 2021	Service Managers evidence how quality assurance and learning information has been used to improve outcomes for children in their service area (November)	Dec 2021	HoS (RB)
			OPIT produce a QA dashboard that includes elements such as children's voice, information from the IROs on quality of practice and complaints in addition to findings from the Beyond Auditing approach (November)		
			An additional outcome should be that the workforce are able to demonstrate how they use the QA dashboards to make changes to their practice (December)		
2.8	Ensure that current involvement with children and families is informed by history and leads to improved outcomes for children	Jan 2021	All children have an up-to-date chronology which is comprehensive and supports the quality of intervention (<i>Evidenced in Audit</i>)	Sep 2021	HoS (LD) HoS (RB)
			Percentage of children who start to have a Child Protection Plan from 1st April, where it is their second or subsequent CPP within 2 years of previous CPP ending is less than 11%		
			75% of audited plans are robust, effective and outcome focussed and therefore judged as good or above.		

Priority Three: Improve outcomes for looked after children

Expected outcome once delivered: *Looked after children are supported in ways which offer them the best possible outcomes.*

Delivery Impact Milestones:



Ref	Action	Start Date	Outcome	Date Due	Lead
3.1	Develop a trauma informed fostering service which meets the complex needs of children in care and keeps children closer to home	Jan 2021	95% of annual household reviews occur within timescales	Sept 2021	HoS (JH)
			Family relationships are strengthened through the right support being provided to children with complex needs		
			Our placement mix is at least 55.7% provided by inhouse fostering, in line with financial plans		
3.2	Implement all parts of the sufficiency strategy, reporting quarterly progress to CSDMT and CPG	Jan 2021	We have recruited 10 new foster carers, half of our 21/22 target	Sept 2021	HoS (CS)
			4 young people placed in new residential unit in Southend		
3.3	Continue to provide challenge and support to partners the delivery of timely health assessments and dental checks	July 2020	100% new entrants of care are formally submitted for health assessments	Dec 2021	DCS
			Children receiving an IHA in line with statistical neighbours <i>c036, c042</i>		
			Looked after Children with a dentist recorded on LCS is 100%		
			Children receiving dental checks in line with statistical neighbours <i>(c043)</i>		
3.8	Ensure all permanency decisions are in the best interests of the child are made in a timely manner	Jan 2021	Children and young people have timely permanent arrangements leading to positive outcomes <i>(Evidenced through Audit)</i>	Oct 2021	HoS (LD)
			Placement order to Match is below National Average of 170 days <i>(Adoption Scorecard 16-19, A2)</i>	April 2022	HoS (JH)
			Time from care to placed with adoptive family is below National Average of 363 days <i>(Adoption Scorecard 16-19, A10)</i>		
3.9	Prepare and Launch a New Southend Offer, which strengthens placement stability and improves the offer for Foster Parents,	July 2021	Governance is in place which will support timely and effective responses to fostering recruitment challenges*remove	Dec 2021	HoS (JH)
			Service Level Agreements are in place which require providers to attend Placement Support Meetings in order for notice to be accepted.		
			Our New Southend Offer has been launched at the Fostering Conference (September)		
3.10	Improve placement stability for children in care embedding an agile response to handling need as it emerges	July 2020	Placement stability has increased, with 87% of children having less than 3 placements since April 2020 <i>c056</i>	Dec 2021	HoS (JH)
			Support plans are introduced where appropriate, which pre-empt need and reduce the likelihood of placement breakdown		
			We can evidence how strategies are impacting outcomes for our young people, through the introducing of a new reporting system		

Priority Four: Deliver the Right Service at the Right Time

Expected outcome once delivered: *Demand on services is well understood, enabling us to provide children, young people and families with the right service at the right time.*

Delivery Impact Milestones:

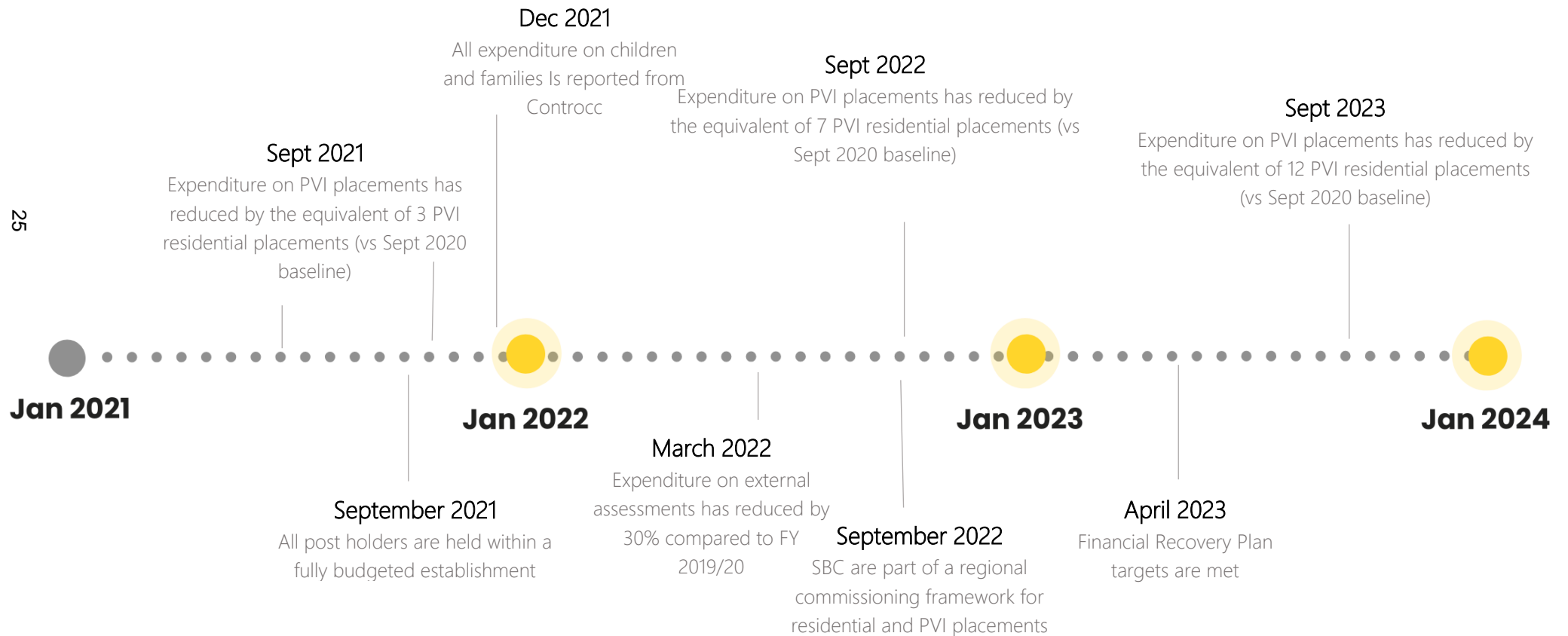


Ref	Action	Start Date	Outcome	Milestone Due	Lead
4.3	Improve our understanding of whether our rate of Looked After Children is at the correct level to meet need in Southend.	Jan 2021	Our LAC rate / numbers remain below our 95% upper confidence interval of forecast numbers <i>c002</i>	April 2022	DCS
4.4	Identify the key causes of neglect in our communities, using an accurate and reliable evidence base.	Nov 2020	We have established an accurate & reliable evidence base of the causes of neglect and its prevalence in our communities Our understanding of the causes of neglect is influenced and shaped through the voice of our community Community groups shape our response to the causes of neglect, playing an active role in the Thriving Communities programme and its revised programme of work	April 2022	HoS (MB)
24 4.5	Fully embed a strengths-based approach within the Thriving Communities programme, using early intervention to prevent cases escalating to the point they require specialist intervention.	April 2021	A core leadership community group is established and is driving forwards a strategic vision The voice of the community is influencing and shaping our approach to preventing neglect Children experiencing neglect are supported without needing a referral to CSC or EH Children at risk of neglect are supported at the earliest possible time through a system-wide, strengths-based approach.	April 2022	HoS (MB)
4.6	Introduce an Early Help Partnership delivery plan which is evidence led and shaped by communities and partner organisations	Aug 2021	We have an evidence-based understanding of Early Help provision across Southend-on-Sea We understand what data is collected by communities and partnership organisations, and can identify gaps The impact of existing Early Help provision is fully understood	Dec 2021	HoS (CC)
4.7	Continue to deliver the Early Help Partnership Strategy, with a focus on reshaping provision based on what works	Jan 2022	Children, young people and families receive the total support needed that improves their resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Children, young people and families have access to co-ordinated Early Help in accordance with need as soon as difficulties are identified.	Dec 2023	HoS (CC)

Priority Five: Improve financial effectiveness and sustainability within Children's Services

Expected outcome once delivered: *Strong financial controls are an enabler and practiced throughout our service.*

Delivery Impact Milestones:



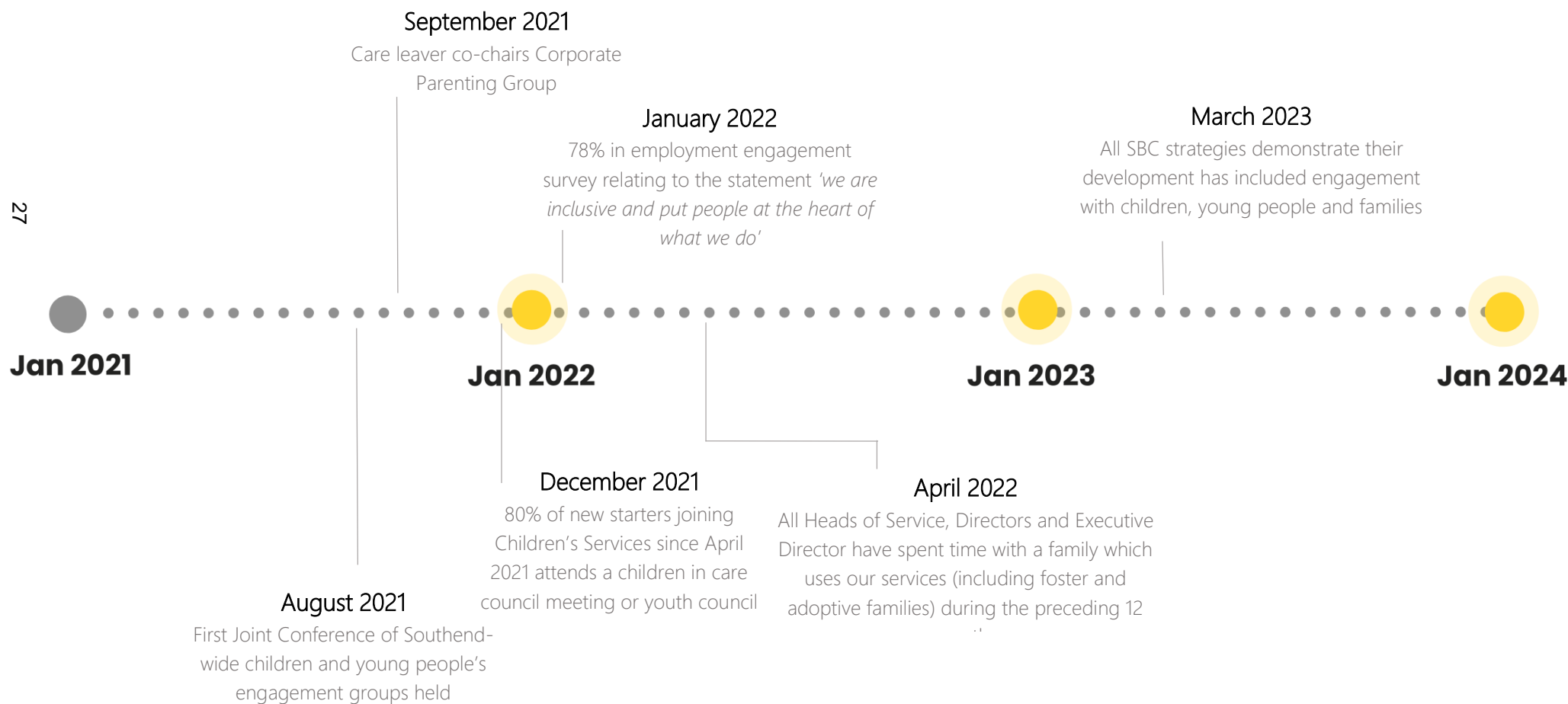
Ref	Action	Start Date	Outcome	Date Due	Lead
5.1	Introduce and embed robust financial control mechanisms throughout CS, including sharing clear practice expectations for all levels of expenditure	Jan 2021	100% s17 and s23 costs are paid through Controcc Fostering payments are consistently applied and based on a child's needs Leadership feel financial systems and processes are supporting their oversight	Dec 2021	DCS
5.2	Reduce the number of PVI residential and foster placements as a proportion of all placements	Nov 2020	Reduction of 3 PVI residential placements set against increase in in-house fostering placements 3% increase in use of in-house foster and kinship carers as a proportion of all foster carers	Sept 2021	HOS (CS)
5.3	Develop a commissioning and contracting function which has sufficient seniority and capacity to deliver service transformation and efficiencies.	July 2020	There is a strong commissioning plan in place which is beginning to realise efficiencies in the commissioning of services. The plan is aligned to our improvement plan, and includes service redesign, market testing and challenge to in-house providers.	Jan 2022	Director Integrated Comm.
5.4	Increase the effectiveness of control methods for high cost care packages, so that funding decisions take place at the most appropriate level.	Jan 2021	The funding and exit panel regularly review individual cases of an appropriate complexity and/or cost, with decisions informed by those involved in the care and support journey High-cost care placements are quality assured so they achieve value for money and offer appropriate care for the assessed needs of children	Oct 2021	HoS (CS)

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Priority Six: Work with children, young people and families to shape services

Expected outcome once delivered: Children, young people and families are an active part of how we shape services, helping co-design and co-produce where possible.

Delivery Impact Milestones:



Ref	Action	Start Date	Outcome	Date Due	Lead
62	Deliver 3 co-designed and co-produced projects with young people, based on areas they feel need change. <i>(Informed through Summer 2020 engagement with LAC, CiN and children subject to CP plans)</i>	Jan 2021	Children in care have as few barriers to connecting with us virtually as possible <i>(Achieved through CICC Connected and Smart project)</i>	Sept 2021	HoS (RB)
			CYP can access their savings without delay when leaving care <i>(Achieved through CICC Savings project)</i>		
			8 young people are accredited as peer mentors for looked after children		
			Young people have reviewed the peer mentoring and care pack projects, and confirm they are meeting their needs.		
63	Expand the representation of children's voices through the Children in Care Council, Southend Youth Council and other channels.	Dec 2020	All secondary schools are represented and active in decision making at Southend Youth Council	Dec 2021	HoS (RB)
			Children in Care Council is representative of the LAC population as a whole		
			Children and young people who are not part of the CiCC or SYC are familiar with multiple ways in which they can influence and shape services		
28 64	Improve the quality and frequency of contact between Senior Leaders and children and families who use our services.	Jan 2021	The transformation of Children's Services is shaped through regular dialogue between Senior Leaderships (Executive, Director, Heads of Service) and children, young people and families.	Sept 2021	Executive Director and DCS
			65		
			We understand our workforce's perception of coproduction methods, and its ability to shape services based on the views of children and young people <i>(Baseline established through staff survey)</i>		

Governance

This Improvement Plan will evolve as outcomes for children, young people and families are achieved. It is through dialogue with our staff, children, young people and families we serve that we can ensure our actions deliver the outcomes we have planned.

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Children's Services Improvement Plan

- **Sign off:** Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB)
- **Scrutiny:** CSIB
- **Report to:** Safeguarding Partnership

Fostering Improvement Plan

- **Sign off:** Performance Board (PB)

Sufficiency Strategy

- **Sign off:** Cabinet
- **Scrutiny:** Corporate Parenting Group (CPG)

Early Help Strategy

- **Sign off:** Safeguarding Partnership
- **Scrutiny:** Safeguarding Partnership

Workforce Strategy

- **Sign off:** CSDMT
- **Scrutiny:** CSDMT

Service Plans

- **Sign off:** CSDMT
- **Scrutiny:** CSDMT

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Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

7

Report of Executive Director
(Legal and Democratic Services)

To

Place Scrutiny Committee, People Scrutiny Committee,
Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

On

4, 5 and 7 October 2021

Report prepared by: S. Tautz (Principal Democratic Services
Officer)

Joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2021/22

Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the progress of the joint in-depth scrutiny project for 2021/22.

2. Recommendations

That the project plan and work programme for the joint in-depth scrutiny project for 2021/22, be noted.

3. Joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2021/22

3.1 At the cycle of meetings in July 2021, it was agreed by each scrutiny committee that a single joint in-depth scrutiny project be undertaken on behalf of the three committees during the 2021/22 municipal year, on the theme of 'Enabling Councillors to be Effective.'

3.2 The project is being led by a project team to which appointments were made by the Council its meeting on 15 July 2021. The membership of the Project Team is Councillors B Beggs, K Buck, T Cowdrey, K Evans, A Line, J Moyies, D Nelson, I Shead and A Thompson. The Project Team is supported by S Meah-Sims (Head of Corporate Strategy), S Tautz (Principal Democratic Services Officer) and T Row (Principal Democratic Services Officer). Other officer support will be identified and called upon as appropriate or required for elements of the project.

3.3 Two meetings of the Project Team have so far been held to identify the scope of the scrutiny project and to develop a project plan and an achievable work programme. At its initial meeting, Councillor J Moyies was appointed as Chair of the Project Team.

3.4 The project plan and work programme for the in-depth scrutiny project as agreed by the Project Team, are attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

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**JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY PROJECT 2021/22**

TOPIC: 'ENABLING COUNCILLORS TO BE EFFECTIVE'

FRAMEWORK FOR SCRUTINY/SCOPE OF PROJECT:

- (1) To identify and review current arrangements for the provision of support that councillors need to carry out their elected role, focusing on the "Councillor role" rather than the specific requirements of members of the Cabinet, the Shadow Cabinet or the chairs of committees.
- (2) To identify any 'quick wins' in terms of aspects of the main areas of focus of the project and to understand other ongoing activity that relates to the aims of the project to ensure joined-up arrangements.
- (3) Where relevant, to feed into the separate review to be undertaken of the Council's Constitution by the General Purposes Committee, to which all members of the Council will have a separate opportunity to contribute.
- (4) To complement the work of the design group currently looking at councillor development as part of the leadership programme.

METHOD: Through Project Team meetings, witness sessions and/or workshops.

TARGET DATE: April 2022

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillors: B Beggs, K Buck, T Cowdrey, K Evans, A Line, J Moyies (Chair), D Nelson, I Shead and A Thompson.

OFFICER/PARTNER SUPPORT

S Meah-Sims (Head of Corporate Strategy), S Tautz (Principal Democratic Services Officer), T Row (Principal Democratic Services Officer). Other officer support to be identified as appropriate or required for elements of the project.

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

The evidence base will be:

- (a) Councillor 'case studies', experiences and feedback.
- (b) Specific examples of issues within the scope of the project where things have not gone well.
- (c) Relevant data, profiles, trends, and patterns, where such information is held by the Council or can be obtained from published sources or benchmarking arrangements.
- (d) Performance information on key issues (e.g., response times, call handling etc.).
- (e) Customer feedback (e.g., contact with the Council, contact with councillors, use of the website etc.).
- (f) Information/feedback from relevant officer teams (e.g., 'Councillor Queries')
- (g) Benchmarking information (e.g., around member support services and the use of casework systems at other local authorities) through the Scrutiny Network or other benchmarking arrangements.

- (h) Presentation/demonstration of relevant systems and processes to support councillors.
- (i) Review of recommendations arising from the In-Depth Scrutiny Project for 2020/21.

POTENTIAL WITNESSES:

- (a) All members of the Council, including non-aligned councillors.
- (b) Relevant service managers and officer teams.
- (c) Representatives of other local authorities.
- (d) Members of the public.
- (e) Representatives of external organisations/agencies and service providers.

The scrutiny process is structured to add value and is supportive of the challenges already set to be delivered, but has limited resources, which need to be focused on providing front-line services and the priority outcomes for the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To make appropriate recommendations to the Cabinet.

All recommendations to be costed where necessary in order to be fed into the annual budget-setting process.

Enabling Councillors to be Effective Joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2021/22

Proposed Work Programme September 2021

Overview:

At the July 2021 cycle of meetings, the three Scrutiny Committees agreed that a joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project be undertaken for 2021/22, around the theme of 'Enabling Councillors to be Effective.'

At the meeting of the Council on 15 July 2021, a Project Team of 9 members was agreed to undertake the project. The Project Team was tasked with reviewing relevant issues and to report back to the Cabinet with appropriate findings and recommendations.

The Project Team elected Councillor J Moyies as Chair at its initial meeting on 19 August 2021.

The scope of the review is:

- (a) To identify and review current arrangements for the provision of support that councillors need to carry out their elected role, focusing on the "Councillor role" rather than the specific requirements of members of the Cabinet, the Shadow Cabinet or the chairs of committees.
- (b) To identify any 'quick wins' in terms of aspects of the main areas of focus of the project and to understand other ongoing activity that relates to the aims of the project to ensure joined-up arrangements.
- (c) Where relevant, to feed into the separate review to be undertaken of the Council's Constitution by the General Purposes Committee, to which all members of the Council will have a separate opportunity to contribute.
- (d) To complement the work of the design group currently looking at councillor development as part of the leadership programme.

Members of the Project Team:

Councillors: B Beggs, K Buck, T Cowdrey, K Evans, A Line, J Moyies (Chair), D Nelson, I Shead and A Thompson.

Timescale:

Preparation of full report and recommendations by the end of the municipal year (April 2022).

Work Programme:

(1) September 2021

- (a) Agree project framework/scope and draft work programme.

(2) October 2021 – First Contact

- (a) Investigate perceived increase in the number of resident queries being dealt with by councillors.
- (b) Understand the experience of residents when contacting the Council.
- (c) Review progress against relevant recommendations arising from the associated In-Depth Scrutiny project for 2020/21, including:
 - The development of a new engagement portal.
 - ‘My Southend’ and the ‘progress of cases’ element.
 - Call handling efficiency.
 - The customer experience email/phone/website/letter.
 - Data sharing between departments
 - The current website experience
- (d) Witness Session/Workshop:
 - Presentation by relevant officers, including current plans for ‘My Southend’ and the Council’s website.
 - Visit/listen to the call centre/mystery call the whole process through various means.
 - Identify areas of concern/requiring improvement.

(3) November 2021 – Councillor Queries

- (a) Review of the service post recent improvements:
 - Urgent matters.
 - Day-to-day issues.
 - Requests for information.
 - Policy support.
 - Emergency contact number/people.
 - Preparation for meetings
- (b) Witness Session/Workshop:
 - Project Team to brainstorm all situations.
 - Feedback from the ‘Councillor Queries’ officer team on their view on possible improvements.
 - Opportunity for all councillors to present their issues and suggestions.
 - Councillors to offer specific examples of issues where things had not gone well.

(4) December 2021 - Officer/Councillor Engagement

- (a) Arranging meetings.
- (b) Direct approaches to officers
- (c) Initial/ongoing training/information for councillors
- (d) Joint knowledge and understanding.
- (e) Witness Session/Workshop:
 - Review the recent Councillor/Officer protocol and how it is working/identify areas of improvement.

- Receive overview of current councillor development activity as part of the leadership programme to complement the scrutiny project.

(5) January 2022 – Councillor Casework

- (a) Consider the benefits of a casework system to improve the management of resident issues.
- (b) Find out what other Councils use.
- (c) Find out what is available.
- (d) Does the LGA have an opinion?
- (e) Witness Session/Workshop:
 - Presentation on an appropriate system from another local authority or site visit to a relevant local authority.

(6) February 2022 - Cross Service, External Partners and Outsourced Services

- (a) Consider current arrangements for ensuring that queries concerning services provided by external organisations/agencies are passed on seamlessly rather than bouncing a query back as “not our problem.”
- (b) Witness Session/Workshop:
 - External organisations/agencies and service providers.

(7) Ongoing Work Programme Activity

Enabling Non-Aligned Councillors

To be achieved through individual aspects of the Work Programme on an ongoing basis, complemented by the review to be undertaken of the Constitution.

- (a) Ensure that non-aligned councillors have the ability to be effective.
- (b) Examine barriers to knowledge and influence and identify anything that restricts the ability to represent residents effectively.
- (f) Witness Session/Workshop:
 - Discussion with non-aligned councillors.

(8) April 2022

- (a) Agree final report and recommendations to be made to the Cabinet.

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