

MINUTES of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER – CHILDREN’S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING** held on 6 July 2021.

PRESENT

Cabinet Member - Councillor J Patten

Also in attendance – R George, G Hickton and N Gourlay

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor A Dale

04/21 **MINUTES** **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Education held on 8 June 2021.

05/21 **CHILDRENS SERVICES PERORMANCE & REVENUE OUTTURN 2020-21** The Cabinet Member was provided with an update of the Council Plan performance position and the revenue outturn position of the Children’s Services & Safeguarding and Education Portfolios (formerly Young People) portfolio for 2020/21

The report presented both financial and Council Plan performance data. The performance summary set out progress on the Council Plan deliverables and measures led by the Children’s Services & Safeguarding and Education portfolios. The remainder of the report gave a summary and detail on the revenue outturn position for the portfolios

As an overview, the report showed that progress was "good" for the majority of the Council Plan deliverables led by the portfolios, however the deliverables "Review care and support offer" and "Schools which were ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’" had been flagged as "requiring review". After the use of additional Covid-19 funding and the release of £0.204m of reserves which had no further commitments against them, the outturn position for 2020-21 was an overspend of £3.388m. It was calculated that £1.215m of savings had been achieved by the year end. This compares to target savings of £3.179m and the value of savings initiatives, which had been identified for implementation in the current year, of £2.350m.

Key variances included Placements for Children in Care/Unable to remain at home (overspend £7.875m); Children’s Safeguarding services (underspend £0.014m); Early Help and Preventative services (underspend £2.336m); Home to School Transport (overspend £1.707m); Education Support services (underspend £0.655m); Pensions payable to former teachers and other staff (overspend £0.321m); and Unallocated budget (underspend £3.189m). These figures include all additional costs incurred due to Covid-19 and the funding provided to cover those costs. Identified Covid-19 costs and their funding sources were detailed in the report.

Budget reduction targets totalling £2.350m were allocated for the year. Further reductions allocated in prior years, totalling £0.829m, had not been achieved and were brought forward to 2020-21. This resulted in the total reduction targets to be achieved at the start of the year of £3.179m. The value of the savings initiatives which have been identified for implementation in the current year is £2.350m.

Growth items and one off funding in the 2020-21 budget included Social Worker recruitment (£1.300m ongoing, £1.300m one-off); Placement demand Pressures (£11.000m ongoing); Home to School Transport SEN (£1.000 ongoing; £0.971m one-off); SEND assessment and planning (£0.600m ongoing); Increase in Special Guardianship placements (£0.336m ongoing); Foster Carers (£0.100m ongoing); Care Leavers (£0.498m one-off); Child Protection (£0.500m ongoing); Children in Care Legal Proceedings (£1.100m one-off); Support to Achieving Great Futures (£0.108m one-off); Preventative Support to Families (£1.000m one-off); Elective Home Education (£0.207m one-off); Service Transformation (£0.438m one-off); and Quality Assurance SEND & Fostering (£0.214m one-off).

Details of the earmarked reserves totalling £6.912m and the debt position were also reported.

In terms of performance, details were given in the report on Council Plan deliverables and Key Measures in terms of a focus on prevention and early intervention and High Performing Council Services, with specific reference being made to the fact that 90% of Childrens Homes were now rated as good or outstanding and the continued drive to making improvements in the delivery of children's social care.

Members present made a number of comments and asked questions which were duly noted or answered by officers.

RESOLVED to note the report.