

From: Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services  
Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director for Social Care, Health & Wellbeing

To: Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee  
22 April 2014

Subject: Post Improvement Member Involvement

Classification: Unrestricted

**Summary:**

This report describes the current governance arrangements for Specialist Children's Services, and provides a series of options for the future arrangements to assure Members are kept informed and assured of continued progress.

Members are asked to **consider** the possible options.

1. Continue with current arrangements.
2. Dissolve the Children's Services Improvement Panel (CSIP) and closer align the Corporate Parenting Panel to the Transformation agenda, in order to assure Members of progress across the length and breadth of Specialist Children's Services.
3. Continue with CSIP, maintaining an informal discussion forum, but align the meeting to the Children's Transformation agenda, potentially renaming it the Children's Services Transformation Panel (CSTP).

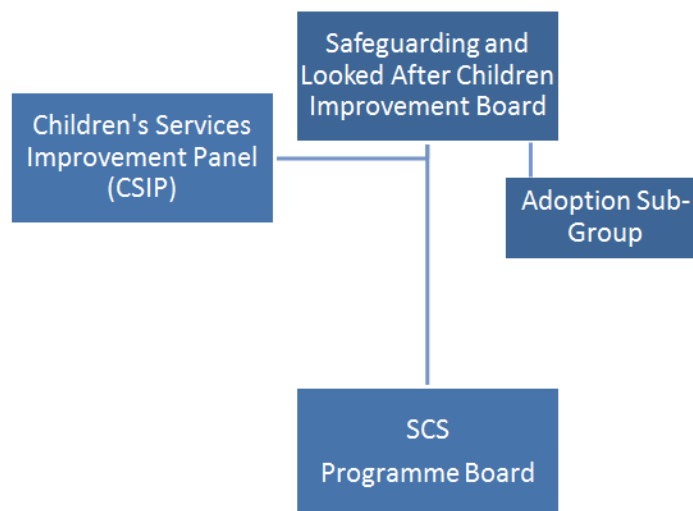
**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. In November 2010, Ofsted judged the overall effectiveness of Kent's safeguarding and services for looked after children to be 'inadequate'.
- 1.2. As a consequence of this poor performance rating, Kent County Council (KCC) was issued with an Improvement Notice. The Improvement Notice was revised in 2012, following a further Ofsted inspection in February 2012 which gave an overall rating of 'inadequate' to Kent's Adoption Service.
- 1.3. In order to ensure delivery of all the requirements outlined in the Improvement Notice, the Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Improvement Board (the Improvement Board) was instigated. This was a multi-agency meeting, externally scrutinised and led by an Independent Chair, Liz Railton, appointed by the Department for Education (DfE). The first meeting of the Improvement Board was held 21<sup>st</sup> February 2011. An Adoption sub-group was convened in July 2012.
- 1.4. Further to recommendation from the Chair of the Improvement Board - Liz Railton and evidence submitted by the Council, the Department for Education lifted the Improvement Notice from KCC in December 2013. The Ministerial letter received by Councillor Paul Carter, agreed the turnaround in Kent County Council's children's

services, and not least the outcomes of the Ofsted Inspection of looked after children in 2013, which found Children's Services to be 'adequate' with a 'good' capacity to improve.

## 2. Specialist Children's Services Improvement Programme Governance

- 2.1. The Improvement Programme was overseen internally, by an officer-led Programme Board. The Board was Chaired by the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Programme, Andrew Ireland – Corporate Director of Families and Social Care<sup>1</sup>. This Programme Board in turn, informed the Improvement Board and the Children's Services Improvement Panel.
- 2.2. The Children's Services Improvement Panel (CSIP) was initiated April 2011. The Panel's objective is to ensure effective, cross-party oversight of the Improvement priorities outlined in the Improvement Notice.
- 2.3. The CSIP was closely aligned to the Improvement Board agenda; CSIP regularly receives reports regarding the quality of delivery, and management of risk associated with the protection and safeguarding of children, including those that were submitted to the Improvement Board.



## 3. From Improvement to Transformation

- 3.1. As a result of mutual agreement between the DfE, Chair of the Improvement Board and KCC; when the Improvement Notice was lifted in December 2013, the Improvement Board held its last meeting 21 October 2013. A performance review of KCC will be conducted by Liz Railton in June 2014.
- 3.2. There has been no let-up in the detailed scrutiny of the performance of children's services in Kent. The Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) Executive Group became Kent's primary scrutiny function for all areas of the Council's performance.

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<sup>1</sup> From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 the Families and Social Care Directorate will be renamed Social Care Health and Wellbeing, in line with the changes from Phase 1 of Facing the Challenge implementation.

There is regular and consistent multi-agency attendance at the Board, Executive and Sub Group meetings by senior managers across the partnership. KSCB recently engaged a new Independent Chair, Gill Rigg.

- 3.3. As per 'Facing the Challenge: Whole-Council Transformation', Children's (Social Care) Transformation builds on the work of the Improvement Programme, combining this with efforts to be more efficient with resource, in light of public sector austerity measures.
- 3.4. Children's (Social Care) Transformation is one part of the overarching, cross-directorate 0-25 Change Portfolio. This Portfolio the method by which Specialist Children's Services (SCS) and the new Early Help and Prevention Division are together 'Facing the Challenge'. The Children's Transformation Board feeds into the 0-25 Portfolio Board; which the Corporate Director for Families and Social Care, Director for SCS, and Head of Strategic Commissioning (Children's) attending to represent SCS.
- 3.5. The Children's Transformation Board meets monthly, and is Chaired by Andrew Ireland. The Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services is on the Board as are the Director for SCS, the Assistant Director for Safeguarding, the four area Assistant Directors (North, South, East and West), and representatives of the Children's Transformation Programme team, finance, strategic commissioning, human resources (HR), Budget Programme Board, and the Corporate Portfolio Office.
- 3.6. The Specialist Children's Services Transformation Programme team are currently working to ensure the sub-groups of the Children's Transformation Board are aligned to the three, primary strategic objectives of the Children's Transformation Programme:
  - a) **People** - having the right people in the right places, (recruitment of permanent social work staff, and staff retention - workforce development/optimisation).
  - b) **Quality** – building on the work of the Improvement Programme to achieve the best outcomes possible for the children and adolescents the services works with. Continue to implement the Social Work Contract, and associated Munro<sup>2</sup> recommendations.
  - c) **Efficiency** – making the best use of available resource.

#### **4. Current Boards and Panels with elected Member information, challenge and quality assurance**

There are currently three Boards/ Panels whose primary objectives is to keep elected Members informed and assured of progress within SCS:

##### **4.1. Kent Integrated Children's Services Board (KICSB)**

The KICSB's primary function is 'to ensure that KCC as the Local Authority (LA) is meeting the requirements of the Accountability Protocol for the Director of Children Services and Lead Member for Children's Services. The objective of the protocol is to ensure that the Council fulfils the legal requirement to designate both a single officer and a single elected member, each responsible for both education and children's social care. Between them, the

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<sup>2</sup> Munro, Eileen, (2011), 'The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report; A child-centred system' [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf)

Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services provide a clear and unambiguous line of local accountability for improving outcomes for children and young people.<sup>3</sup>

The meeting is chaired by Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for SCS and the statutory Lead Member for Children's Service (LMCS). Membership includes, but is not limited to, Paul Carter, the Leader of the Council; Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director for Social Care, Health & Wellbeing and the statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS); Corporate Director for Education<sup>4</sup>; the Cabinet Members for Education and Learning and Skills and Customer and Communities<sup>56</sup>.

#### 4.2. Children's Services Improvement Panel (CSIP)

The CSIP is an informal group which was established to provide Members with a broader reassurance and oversight of progress within SCS, particularly during the phases of the Specialist Children's Services Improvement Programme.

Terms of Reference:

- Develop expertise that enables Members to act as the champions for Kent children who are in need, with a particular focus on those in need of protection.
- Support all Members to build their understanding of the levels and responsibilities associated with Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding.
- Consider reports regarding the quality of delivery and management of risk associated with the protection and safeguarding of children, including those submitted to the Improvement Board.

The CSIP is an informal group which has been established to provide Members with reassurance and oversight of progress within SCS. The Panel is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services - Jenny Whittle.

#### 4.3. Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP)

CPP is a formal Member Panel, Chaired by Mrs Ann Allen, Deputy Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services with proportionate cross party membership.

Terms of Reference:

- To develop expertise that enables Members to fulfil their role as Corporate Parents and act as Champions for Kent children who are looked after;
- To consider statistical information that includes staffing levels, relevant indicators from the National Indicator Set (NIS) and national Looked After Children returns.

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<sup>3</sup> KISCB Terms of Reference

<sup>4</sup> From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 the Education, Learning and Skills (ELS) Directorate will be renamed Education and Young People Services (EYP), in line with the changes from Phase 1 of Facing the Challenge implementation. The corporate Director is Patrick Leeson.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Gough and Mike Hill respectively

<sup>6</sup> At the County Council meeting in December 2013, changes to the two top tiers of the organisation were agreed by elected Members. From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, the functions of the Customer and Communities Directorate will be integrated into the four new directorates. In light of this change, Mike Hill will no longer be the Portfolio holder for Customer and Communities, but hold the Portfolio for the new Early Help and Preventative Services Division (EYP).

- To consider reports from the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB), Kent Children's Trust Board, and in relation to Looked After Children, and any changes to relevant legislation and guidance;
- To work alongside the Staff Advisory Group and Children in Care Council in order to gather feedback from all those involved in and working with or on behalf of Looked After Children. This will include ongoing engagement with Foster Carers and other user groups;
- To lead on ensuring that the targeted Corporate Parenting roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority are being met.

The agenda of CPP is aligned to the multi-agency officer led Kent Corporate Parenting Group (KCPG).

## **5. Corporate Parenting in KCC**

KCPG ensures better outcomes are promoted for the following groups of children and young people in care and also those leaving care:

- Kent County Council's Looked After Children and Care Leavers – placed both in and outside of Kent (including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)
- Looked After Children and Care Leavers placed in Kent by another local authority (OLA LAC)
- Children and young people receiving short break (respite care) from Kent County Council.

5.4 Work is underway to closer align the agendas of CPP and KCPG; this work is being led by Paul Brightwell, Head of Quality Assurance. The minutes of KCPG are shared with CPP. Work is also in hand to ensure more robust cohesion between both Corporate Parenting meetings and the independent scrutiny of the KSCB.

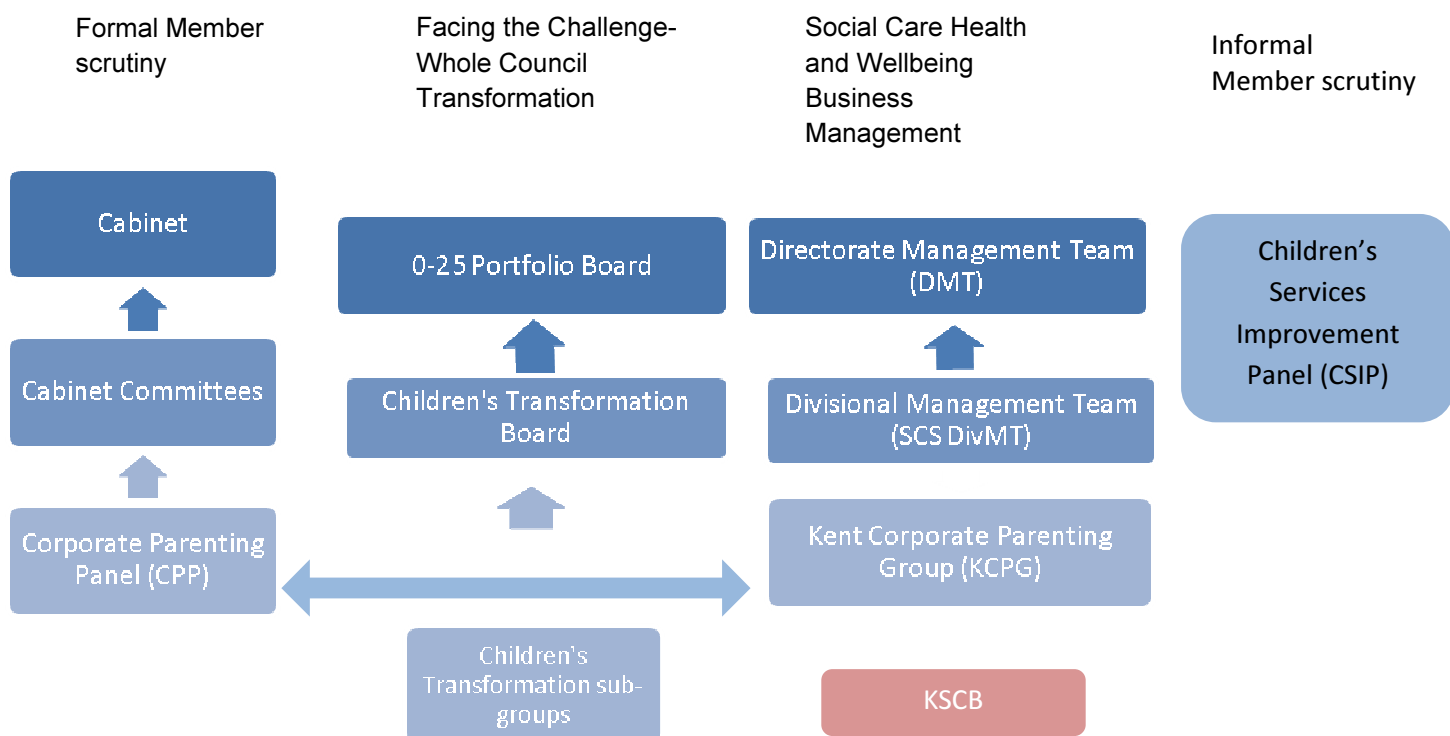
5.5 The KCPG closely monitors the emerging trends and shortfalls of the experiences of other Local Authorities who have been inspected under the new Single Inspection Ofsted Framework.

5.6 KCC SCS engages closely with the work of the South East Region Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP). SESLIP brings together Directors, Assistant Directors and managers from across the south-east (up to, and including Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes and Reading, and west to Portsmouth and Southampton). KCC is participating in a number of SESLIP activities, including Director Action Learning Sets to share and learn best practice, and Data Benchmarking workshops. KCC is also very active with SESLIP's Leadership Development work, as this synergises with KCC's 'Grow your own' succession planning strategy. A number of SCS team managers have and will continue to join workshops which offer coaching to improve performance.

5.7 KCC is joining a Self-Evaluation and Peer Challenge of Ofsted Annexe A preparations (Round 7) in summer 2014. It is between Local Authorities in the South East Region Sector Led Improvement Programme. Kent will lead a visit to review Oxfordshire, and in turn West Sussex will lead a review of Kent.

5.8 KCC is working closely with Essex County Council to share experiences of Local Authorities previously judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted, and which have undergone a robust and extensive Improvement process. In March 2014, Essex County Council children's services were rated 'good' by Ofsted, with their LSCB 'requiring improvement'. As part of this work, representatives from Essex County Council are going to give a presentation of lessons learnt to SCS senior management. Kent and Essex are also going to conduct a two-way peer review of each other's adoption services.

## 6. Current Specialist Children's Services governance



## 7. Options

The options put forward below offer suggestion as to how Members would like to be kept informed and assured of future progress in Specialist Children's Services.

Members are asked to **consider** the possible options:

1. Continue with current arrangements.
2. Continue with CSIP, maintaining an informal discussion forum, but align the meeting to the Children's Transformation agenda, potentially renaming it the Children's Services Transformation Panel (CSTP).
3. Dissolve the Children's Services Improvement Panel (CSIP).

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**Background Documents:** None