

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 18th April 2013, held at 6.00pm in Meeting Room 3, Darby House, Telford.

PRESENT: Councillors M. Ion (Chair), J. Greenaway, J. Loveridge, M. Smith, C. Turley and Co-optees R. Aveley, S. Harris and S. Rayner.

Attending: Cllr. P. Watling, Cabinet Member Children, Young People & Families; L. Johnston, Director Children & Family Services; J. Collins, Assistant Director Education & Skills; K. Swallow, School Organisation Services Manager; K. Perry, Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding; A. Yapp, CIC, EDT and Fostering Manager; S. Jones, Scrutiny Officer.

CYPSC-33 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 12th March 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising that would not be referred to later in the meeting.

CYPSC-34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs. G. Green and A. Mackenzie and Co-optees S. Ali, A. Atkinson and M. Ward.

CYPSC-35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-36 PROVISION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES

The Chair reminded members that the review of the Children in Care Placement Strategy was complete and the Committee was moving on to the next review, the provision of primary school places. The Chair tabled draft Terms of Reference and lines of enquiry which would be circulated for comment with a view to endorsement at the next meeting.

The Chair then invited the Assistant Director and School Organisation Services Manager to provide some context to the report circulated as Appendix B on the Planning of Primary School Places 2013-2018.

The School Organisation Services Manager made the following points:

- The report is updated annually every Easter.

- The census totals and projections to 2017 were shown on page 5. There had been a rise in the birth rate since 2007 but numbers had still not reached the 2002 peak.
- Successive governments had over time changed the planning guidelines. Current guidelines allowed a 5% surplus of places to allow for parental choice. When numbers dipped, surplus space within schools had been used for other activity but could be re-designated to add additional capacity. It was not always easy to reclaim the space - for example if it was occupied as a nursery or as an ICT suite which had become a working curriculum area for the whole school. Space used as a community room was easier to reclaim because a smaller room could be used instead. For example, Donnington Wood had had capacity for 70 admissions which had been reduced to 50 but was now back to 60 children per year group.
- The “PAN” is the Published Admission Number and relates to the capacity of the building i.e. the number of notional work spaces.
- There were three ways of expanding primary places:
 - a) Bringing existing accommodation back into use (re-designation)
 - b) Extending existing primary schools (e.g. Newdale Primary)
 - c) New schools (e.g. Ironstone Primary in Lawley)
- There were three main sources of funding for school places as set out on page 49:
 - a) Capital receipt – this had been used in the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. Excess land identified from a school reorganisation could be sold off if there was no overall net loss of playing field land. The Council could grant itself permission to do this but decisions had to be submitted to DfE and the Schools Adjudicator with a justification to ascertain that the land to be sold will not be needed for a free school and be granted permission to sell.
 - b) DfE Formulaic Basic Need – this is a bi-annual allocation made to local authorities to target pupil place priorities in their area. The amount of capital available had gone down. (The 2013-15 allocation had been confirmed as £1.2m.) Funding bids for the Bridge School and Ironstone Primary are to be made to the Targetted Basic Needs pot.
 - c) Section 106 contributions – a formula is applied to project the number of additional pupils a housing development will generate and the Council can command financial contributions for educational facilities from the developer through Section 106 agreements. For new housing developments, additional pupil numbers are built into projections at a rate of 0.28 primary pupils and 0.16 secondary pupils per home – the formula used and agreed by DfE. Section 106 money is usually paid on occupation of the new houses. One of the difficulties is matching the planning of school places with when new houses are ready for occupation – if new places are built in too early a) there is no money to fund the places and b) pupils can leave local schools to fill the new provision, leaving no space for children from the new development when it is occupied. If they are built in too late schools in the area surrounding the development may become oversubscribed and this has a

knock-on effect on local families. Lightmoor Primary was built to create capacity for the new houses in Lightmoor Village, and its planned admission number was increased gradually to match the number of places available as closely as possible to the rate of occupation in the development. There was a similar situation in Priorslee and Redhill primary schools when they opened to match the occupation rate of the substantial local housing development. There has been a dip in housing completions because of the recession and some developers had asked for S106 contributions to be reduced as the value of houses had dropped making it difficult for the Council to rely on the developer contribution. Also, S106 contributions are not generally levied on affordable homes which nevertheless do generate children who will need school places

- Cllr. Watling said the Council needed to be conscious of the government's agenda. The Assistant Director explained that Academies which are outside education authority control can decide independently to increase pupil numbers – Priorslee Academy had done this – and if more schools become academies then the exercise of planning places which is already difficult will become very difficult because academies could do what they want without talking to the authority. The School Organisation Services Manager said it was not clear whether or how the government would adjust the allocation of non-academy places or authorities' funding allocations if the academies grow.
- The formula for projecting places was complicated and based on birth figures and data provided by the PCT on known children 0-5 then mapped by school attendance area. Figures for 2017-18 had been projected from an average of the preceding 4 years because the children for admission that year had not yet been born. Parental preference also made projections problematic.
- The report included detailed projections for each school divided into seven planning areas. Moorfield Primary was used as an example to explain the data in the tables for each school. The "census" year is the year of intake – census data is collected three times a year for pupils on-roll. Figures for 2013 are actual number enrolled. Figures for 2014 onwards are projected numbers. The Net Capacity is based on the square footage of the school (which may vary from the PAN). Guidance allows a 5% surplus of school places to allow for parental preference. If the surplus within a 2 mile radius of the school is below the 5% threshold the Council can ask for money to expand. The Weighted Reception Intake is the % of actual intake over or under the projected intake from the schools catchment area e.g. there were 30 reception admissions in Moorfield Primary in 2013 which was 236% more than projected from the number of known children living in the school's area. The Total Housing increase in the area is the number of new properties with planning permission – where additional housing is shown in the table the projected number of children created by the development had been factored into the figures. In the case of Moorfield there were no new houses planned.

Following the presentation, members asked questions and were given the following additional information:

- Mr. Reynolds asked whether the Net Capacity or the PAN was used for planning

purposes and it was confirmed that the Net Capacity was used but tailored to the PAN. SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary had reduced the PAN from 30 to 20 and surplus space had been re-designated but the governors had decided to move the PAN back from 20 to 30 and this would affect the surplus. Church of England schools tend to have a catchment area but Catholic schools don't because they attract pupils from further afield including outside the borough and this makes determining the numbers impossible. Co-optee Cllr. Aveley asked whether we talk to neighbouring authorities for information to find out the likely impact on school admissions in Telford and Wrekin and the Manager said that we do speak to other authorities but with the Catholic schools it was still difficult to project. Newport is a net importer of pupils as people over the border look to Newport rather than Staffordshire so we liaise with Staffordshire Council. Children do cross boundaries – the Priorslee primaries tend to lose out to the Idsall feeder schools.

- The Chair asked for more information about Newport Infant and Newport Junior Schools where the housing increase was 550. The Manager explained that schools with developments with planning permission in the area are given a weighting for housing and the projected increase in pupil numbers from the development are planned into the projections. Newport Infant school used to have a PAN of 90 but there had been a dip in births so space had been used for nursery provision and alterations were now being looked at that would create space without disrupting the nursery. Lead-in times for developments are difficult to plan but we need to plan ahead for developments which have planning permission.
- The Chair wanted to know who had drawn the conclusions presented in the report and the School Organisation Manager said that the conclusions were hers and her teams'. Overall, there was a diminishing surplus and with the number of new planned developments it was likely to diminish more so infant provision needed to be extended and then primary provision would need to be extended. The dilemma was planning places in the right place so people would go to where the places were. Schools are divided into planning areas and reported to DfE.
- The Chair invited comments from co-optee Ms. Harris as Head Teacher at Shortwood Primary. Ms. Harris said Shortwood had very high mobility with children moving in and out of the area very quickly so the numbers were a moveable feast. In 2013, 70 had been admitted to Reception and Year 1 was full. 70 was a diabolical number but could just about be managed at KS1, but at KS2 there would be 35 per class which is too many. The Manager asked why the governors had agreed to admit 70 and Ms. Harris explained that the PAN had been set at 70 because of the site size and the Section 106 funding. The old infant and junior school had been expected to be filled immediately from the new development on the old school sites but development had slowed down. There are some areas of development still to be completed. Mobility of families is also an issue within the schools attendance area– some children joined the school for 6 months then moved on. The governors would like to reduce the PAN to 60 but there would not be enough room for the displaced children in the other local schools. Dothill could possibly take some now, but St. Patrick's and Wrekin View

were already full. The Wellington primary schools were generally constrained by what they could do because the majority were up to the limit of their sites and so other solutions would need to be looked for.

- The Chair asked what the particular pressures are in the borough. The Manager said that all the Reception classes in Wellington for 2013/14 were full and there was big pressure in North Telford from new developments so there was a need to predict where new buildings would be and immigration patterns. Developments in Ketley and Hadley had put pressure on HLC Primary but the school could not be expanded because of the doughnut design and the PFI arrangements. Expansion was being planned at Meadows and Teagues Bridge Primaries to relieve pressure on HLC and they were looking at creative ways of doing this. The Assistant Director said there were also more children with profound disabilities which was putting pressure on the Bridge School – early discussions were taking place with TCAT about expanding post-16 provision and this could be reported back to the Committee in due course.
- Cllr. Greenaway questioned the finances for the new Ironstone Primary which showed a deficit of £900k. The Manager explained that the expected cost shown in the report was based on an estimate for 420 places but the school would initially be built for 210 places. It would probably be cheaper to build for 420 all at once to keep construction costs low, but it was impossible to justify keeping the empty space until the housing development was completed. The initial building work would accommodate 210 but the core facilities would have capacity to accommodate up to 420 and the buildings would be extended later. Targeted funding bids are to be considered for Ironstone and for the Bridge School/TCAT.
- Cllr. Greenaway wanted to know where the pressure on the Bridge School was coming from and if it was from applicants outside the borough. The Manager said this was partially true – there was one other special school in Shropshire, so if children live in Shifnal or Albrighton the Bridge was closer. Parents can ask for a named school on a statement and can appeal a decision if they think it is not in the best interest of the child. The Assistant Director also said that under the new schools funding formula, special schools become the agent so parents can have a conversation directly with the school and do not have to go through the local authority team. There is anecdotal evidence that some entrepreneurial heads are negotiating directly with external authorities to increase admissions and the funding that flows with them. The Head Teacher at the Bridge School is clear that her priority is for Telford and Wrekin children, but other heads out of the borough can have an affect.
- Mr. Reynolds pointed out that the Context section of the report set out the Council's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in the borough and, further, that the Council will also seek to "Improve educational outcomes by ensuring access to high quality provision". He said he would like to see evidence of how the planning of places was balanced with education standards and how standards are maintained or improved – this was not just about the numbers. The Assistant Director said that the School Organisation Services Manager was part of the School Improvement Team which was looking at how to drive up standards and

the effect of “popular” schools on planning was being looked at.

When there were no further questions the Chair thanked the Assistant Director and Manager and they left the meeting.

The Chair referred back to the point raised by Mr. Reynolds about the balance between capacity and quality of provision and suggested this should be added as a line of enquiry for the scrutiny review. The Terms of Reference would be updated with this change and circulated to the Committee for comment and endorsement.

CYPSC-37 OFSTED REPORT ON THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The Chair reminded members that the Ofsted report on the fostering service had been published on the day of the previous meeting which had been too short notice to bring to this meeting for the Committee to consider the response and action plan. He invited the Cabinet Member and officers present to comment on the report.

The Assistant Director was gratified that Ofsted had endorsed the direction that the service was going in and said ideas for improvement were welcome. The Fostering Manager explained the inspection process. Ofsted had truncated inspections from 2 weeks to 4 days which was felt not enough to look at the full breadth of the service. Policies, procedures and other key documents had been provided in advance and the inspectors had also chosen other documents and records for unannounced spot checks during the inspection. They had not visited any foster homes but had done surveys and spoken to foster carers on the telephone. There had been focus groups with a mixed group of carers and mixed professionals which had been well attended. Ofsted had decided on the key lines of enquiry and then drilled down into them. By Day 4, they had decided their views and provided feedback.

The report commended a number of areas which was pleasing given that the service had been through so much change with the internal re-structuring. Steps had been taken in the re-structure to strengthen the fostering team with the creation of a new Team Leader posts for Kinship Care and Short Breaks although it had been difficult to recruit to manager posts and there had been a certain turnover of staff. The Manager felt that considering the change within the service, the new inspection process and the tougher standards, that the service had come out quite well. She felt that Ofsted’s assessment had broadly matched the Council’s self-assessment and was confident that the measures put in place provided a good platform to strengthen and improve the service.

The service was working hard on the action plan to address the areas highlighted by the inspectors. For example, an immediate audit had been carried out of unannounced visits which had now all been done and the policy had been strengthened by increasing the number of unannounced visits from one to two per year. The Manager now received a schedule of the unannounced visits so she could pick up on any that were outstanding. Sometimes the visits were recorded as “not done” when the social worker had visited, but the foster carer had not been at home. “Unannounced visits” are exactly that – the social worker turns up without warning to

check that everything is as it should be – and there is no guarantee that the foster carer will be at home.

On the issue of participation, there were a range of activities with the children and young people but Ofsted had not recognised them all so there was a need to demonstrate the breadth of activity better. The Manager has regular meetings with the Chair of the Foster Carers' Association (FCA) about what is working, what else could be done etc. Training had already been discussed to see how it could be improved – it could be difficult for carers working full time to access training although this was usually the non-main carer. The Policy had been reviewed with the FCA and the training manager and a draft was due to go back to the FCA for discussion. Mandatory training had been separated from non-mandatory training and the mandatory sessions had been increased from 4 to 8 per year. A training pilot aimed at new/first-time carers had been put in place to help them deal with difficult situations. The carers get help through supervision but the extra training would bolster this – new carers often need more help in dealing with the reality of challenging behaviour for the first time, especially with teenagers, and this was a particular area being looked at with the training provider. The Assistant Director said this was even more necessary because more teenagers were being placed in foster care.

Cllr. Watling said that he felt the section of the report on leadership and management was particularly harsh, and he knew it was well respected by the foster carers who receive good support. He felt the service was developing the right kind of support and was disappointed that the inspectors had not seen this. He thought the report only gave a snap-shot of what the inspectors had seen at that particular time and he was very surprised that the inspectors had not interviewed him personally, or acknowledged his contribution, as the Lead member for children and young people.

The Director acknowledged it had been a struggle to recruit some of the team leaders and said that this had had an impact on the capacity of the Fostering Manager to progress strategic issues and she commended the Manager on her hard work in delivering services through this period.

Members then asked a number of questions:

- Co-optee Cllr. Aveley asked when the last inspection had been and what the judgement was. The Manager said it was three years ago and the service had been rated "Good". The inspectors this time had said they were optimistic that if they re-visited in 12 months the service showed all the signs that it would be able to achieve a Good rating. The Assistant Director said that the Fostering Manager had set aspirational standards but the service hadn't got there as quickly as they hoped due to the period of instability previously mentioned, and also Ofsted has raised the bar.
- The Chair asked whether the rating had been a surprise. The Manager said that the overall rating had not been a surprise because in general it matched the service's self-assessment. The Assistant Director said she was disappointed with the leadership and management rating because she knew what the reality was, and was very disappointed with the rating for the "Outcomes for children and young

people” when so many of the outcomes are good and the service knows they are good.

- The Chair asked whether, given the last comment, there was anything in the report that should be challenged. The Manager said they had challenged what had been written about how we engage with children and young people because Ofsted had failed to recognise the range of engagement – that one size does not fit all – and the wording in the report had been changed. Otherwise, the report was considered fair.
- The Chair wanted to know how far the rating was from Inadequate and the Assistant Director strongly assured him it was a very long way away and that the narrative reads positively. The self-assessment had rated the service as Adequate but close to Good, except the Outcomes for children and young people which had been self-assessed as Good. Ofsted had agreed with the self-assessment except on the Outcomes but if you read the report without the rating, you might assume the rating was Good. The Manager had had an interview with the inspectors and they had told her to hold onto the positive direction the service was travelling in. The Cabinet Member said there is a good relationship with foster carers - he meets the Chair of the FCA every month and brings any issues back to the Director – and this had not been recognised by Ofsted. Cllr. Aveley said that if the inspectors had been told things that were not reflected in the report then the Council should go back to Ofsted to tell them the report is inadequate. The Chair said that organisations have a right to challenge inaccuracies – and that window had now passed – but it was difficult to challenge a judgement once made and from what officers has said, it sounded as though the report had omissions but not necessarily inaccuracies. Ms. Harris said that value-added information could be used to influence prior to a rating being decided, but once a rating had been decided it could not be influenced. Cllr. Aveley wondered whether inspectors had come with the right attitude. The Chair said that the report was what it was, and the priority now was to look to the future. The Director said that in terms of the Ofsted judgement, it was overall the same as the self-assessment.
- The Chair said he was alarmed by the language around leadership and management and asked how the action plan addressed this. The Assistant Director said leadership and management underpinned delivery of the action plan and she was confident that if the action plan was delivered the service would get a Good rating next time. The report had recognised that the management structures were there, but in their infancy. The Chair said that if the outcomes were better, then it could possibly be surmised that the leadership and management was good, but he wanted to know specifically if there were any actions in the plan that would strengthen support for colleagues. The Assistant Director relied that the critical thing was to have a stable team in place and to embed the systems – there was a strong management group – and significant improvements would flow from this. Filling the senior social worker post was a priority and would help. An offer had been made for the SSW post but unfortunately the candidate had then got a job elsewhere. Additional support had been put around the Fostering Manager. Regarding record filing systems other

parts of the safeguarding service were further ahead due to the phased roll out of Protocol, but the approach was not to go for a “quick fix” but for a project approach with key milestones and the corporate core had provided project support. Also, monitoring information about the service had improved and was more robust – the systems need to support staff to do their jobs.

- Ms. Harris wanted to know whether the training for foster carers was available in the evenings. The manager confirmed it was, and at weekends, and the number of sessions would be increased from 4 to 8 per year. The Assistant Director said that the concept of a “carer” was being taken into account – in a foster home there could be more than one carer but one was the main carer, plus more was being done as mentioned earlier on the expectations and training of new and support carers. The Manager said that foster carers from other authorities and agencies had been gravitating towards Telford & Wrekin because of the good level of support provided to carers by the authority. The Cabinet member also said that a number of things had been done to help retain the foster carers, for example the decision to increase the foster carer allowance was paying off. There was an annual foster care conference in November - the Manager had found sponsorship for the event so it was cost neutral – which the Cabinet member attended and said was a chance to speak to the foster carers and get a snap-shot of their views. Last year they had been very positive. Cllr. Greenaway said she had attended the previous year and it had been very good. The date of this year’s conference would be circulated to members after the meeting.
- Mr. Rayner made the point that three of Ofsted’s recommendations related to training for foster carers and that the measures of outcomes were data driven and could be tick-box exercises and no guarantee of quality – he said that the training and the measures need to take account of quality and our own self-assessment and should not be driven by data. The Director said that Ofsted had not wanted to meet her as the Director of Children’s Services and therefore it had not been possible to get over to them the critical importance of the service to the Council – she felt the comments about leadership and management were unfair because they did not reflect the corporate level of support for the service. Cllr. Watling felt the comments were inconsistent with Ofsted’s comments about leadership and management in the report on Safeguarding and Looked After Children services.
- The Chair reminded members that at the briefing in August 2012 on the Ofsted report on Safeguarding and Looked After Children, the Cabinet member and officers had been confident that when Ofsted inspected again the judgement would improve. He wanted to know when the service was likely to be re-inspected, and whether Ofsted were pro-actively invited to re-inspect. The Director replied that Ofsted had decided not to go ahead with a multi-inspectorate and to keep Safeguarding and Looked After Children separate, but that there may be a move towards a multi-inspection of safeguarding, looked after children, adoption and fostering services and it was sensible for the Council to wait until this had been decided and then to understand the new framework first.

The Cabinet member placed on record his thanks to the Delivery & Planning Team which had been hugely helpful with the inspection.

The Chair recognised the emotional and professional commitment of the Fostering Manager and thanked her for all her work. He hoped that when Ofsted returned to re-inspect, the service would achieve an improved rating.

CYPSC-38 SCRUTINY REPORT ON THE CHILDREN IN CARE PLACEMENT STRATEGY

The Chair introduced the draft report on the Scrutiny Review of the Children in Care Placement Strategy which was tabled for the Committee to consider and comment. A copy had been sent to the Cabinet member and officers before the meeting.

A cross-party sub-group including a co-optee had been set up and met a number of times throughout the review to take stock of work and had also met with social workers, foster carers, an IRO and was planning visits to two young people in residential care. The sub-group had met to draft the report and recommendations. The Committee had also met officers and Philip Shakesheff from West Mercia Police and had visited Jigsaw. The work had been thorough and robust.

The Chair summarised the main points as set out in the Executive Summary. There were three lines of enquiry for the review; safety, value for money and responsibility for children placed in the borough by other authorities. The key strengths identified were the appointment of a Director for Children's Services which had improved accountability and enhanced the capacity for improvement, and the joint working with partners in particular the Police. The creation of the Cost Improvement Plan and monthly Cabinet-led financial monitoring meetings had been highlighted as positive and reflecting a shared ambition, but had not been bullet-pointed as a strength because it was too soon to see the impact.

The Chair then ran through the recommendations and invited members to comment:

Recommendation 1 did not relate to the lines of enquiry but was an overarching recommendation aimed at increasing member up-take in Corporate Parenting briefings to improve awareness of issues and responsibilities. A briefing session had been held recently and had been well attended and was useful, but scrutiny had recommended that non-attendance should be published on the website.

Cllr. Turley said that there could be genuine reasons why members had could not attend and this needed to be taken into account when publishing names. The Cabinet Member said that the cross-party Corporate Parenting group had been working on e-learning sessions to make it easier for members to take part. Cllr. Aveyley commented this could be an issue for other meetings, but the Chair said in his view there was no greater responsibility for members than for looked after children. The Cabinet member said he was pleased with attendance at the cross-party group and believed this would improve members' understanding of the role.

Recommendation 2 (in two parts) related to the Quality Assurance of Systems and Processes. Members had not been satisfied that we have an overall view of the

progress of children in care. Cllr. Greenaway, who was on the sub-group, added that the evidence provided by the foster carers had showed that the statutory visits were not always happening and there was evidence from the social workers and IRO that reports were not always completed in a timely fashion. The Chair said that on the basis of the evidence, the sub-group had not been satisfied that the quality assurance of the systems was not robust enough and had made recommendation 2 a).

D.I. Phil Shakesheff, from West Mercia Police, had provided evidence to the Committee and had also been involved in discussions after the meeting. He had raised the issue about the Return Visits for missing children as a regional and national issue, and recommendation 2 b) was to bring a report to scrutiny to see what was happening locally.

Recommendation 3 in two parts related to the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). The meeting with the IRO had not convinced members that the IRO service was robust or independent and the recommendation was therefore for the current review to consider the management arrangements and the possibility of moving the service to the scrutiny team, with an annual report to be presented to the Committee.

Ms. Harris asked whether anything was done to review the work of the IROs and how they are QA'd. The Assistant Director said she was mystified by this view – she said the IROs quality assure the work of the social workers and they pick up issues with the social workers and senior managers and that this happened. Issues with the training of IROs were being addressed and live observation was happening. The Cabinet member said that Ofsted had picked up on capacity issues with the IROs and this was being looked at as part of the current review. The Chair emphasised that there was a unanimous view from members who had attended the meeting with the IRO about the lack of evidence of challenge and independence and there was a real strength of feeling on this point but it was up to the Cabinet member and officers to consider the recommendation and respond accordingly. Cllr. Aveley said he was not sure whether the recommendation should specify the suggestion of the move to the scrutiny team and there could be other options.

Recommendation 4 related to the framework contracts for external care and the Jigsaw care contract. Cllr. Aveley declared an interest as Governor of HLC which was running the Jigsaw school contract but the Chair said the recommendation only referred to the Jigsaw houses and Cllr. Aveley suggested this should be clarified in the report. The Chair said the Committee had heard that there were 144 providers on the regional framework contract for residential care and members had questioned the ability to drive costs down effectively with such a high number of providers. Members had had concerns about the Jigsaw care contract and had requested a report back on savings and outcomes within six months of contract award. There had been concern about the gate-keeping of quality reports for providers on the framework contracts and had recommended that this should be built into the framework.

Recommendation 5 related to clarity of reporting costs on the Dashboard and there had been much discussion about this at previous meetings.

Recommendation 6 related to other authorities' children living in the borough. A

children’s home provider conference in Shropshire had identified 40 children living in homes in Shropshire that the police had not previously been aware of and it was recommended that a similar conference should be held in Telford & Wrekin. The Director informed the Committee that she had written to Ofsted some time ago on behalf of DI Shakesheff raising the issue of sharing information this information with the police, but had received a reply advising that this would be in breach of protocol. She had passed a copy of the letter to DI Shakesheff for his use. Ofsted subsequently changed position and agreed that the information could be shared, and the authority had now passed the information on to the police.

The Chair then checked that members had no further comments and as there were none, said that it would be taken as endorsement of the report by the Committee.

The Cabinet member thanked the Chair and the Committee for the report and for a thorough investigation, and said he would present the response when the report came to Cabinet which was due to happen in May.

The Chair thanked all the officers for their time and work during the review. He made no apology for the length of the report as he felt there was no service that was more important for the authority other than adult care.

The Director welcomed the report and scrutiny’s comments.

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Officer and drew the meeting to a close.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....