



Isle of Wight Council

Purpose: For Information

Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Topic	CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSITION

Background

1. The Isle of Wight Council entered a partnership with Hampshire County Council in 2013 following Ofsted judging the Isle of Wight children's services to be inadequate and with a failing schools' system. The partnership delivered positive results which led to the Island's first Ofsted judgement of 'good', in 2018.
2. Following Hampshire County Council's request for the strategic partnership to end, Cabinet agreed to the termination of the current partnership agreement with effect from 31 January 2024 returning the overall leadership and management of all Children's Services functions, including education, in-house, with arrangements for 'buy-back' of specialist service support/provision where there is a cost-benefit for a minimum period of twelve months.
3. The new Director for Children's Services will outline the ongoing plan and scrutiny will monitor the progress of the transition.

Focus for Scrutiny

4. What is the action plan and timeline moving forward?
5. What are the challenges that need to be monitored over the course of the next year?
6. How are any risks or issues being mitigated?

Approach

7. Set out the approach for the committee.

Document(s) Attached

8. Appendix 1 – School Placement Planning Presentation Feb 2024

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Scrutiny Committee Report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Title	CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSITION TO COUNCIL CONTROL
Report of	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Executive Summary

1. Previous partnership arrangements with Hampshire County Council (HCC) relating to the delivery of children's services on the Island came to an end on 31st January 2024, and the new delivery model became operational on 1st February. This report provides an update on the transition of services to Isle of Wight Council control, and an overview of priorities for the next twelve months, including school place planning.

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee notes the:

2. progress with the establishment of the Council's new Children's Services Directorate.
3. decisions that need to be made about the future delivery model for services currently delivered under service level agreements (SLAs) with Hampshire County Council (HCC).
4. other key priorities for the Directorate over the next twelve months, and the role of Members in supporting successful delivery.

Background

5. The Isle of Wight Council assumed control of children's services as planned on 1st February, with the new Strategic Director of Children's Services and the new Service Director for Education, Inclusion and Access taking up their posts on that day. The new Service Director for Children's Social Care has been appointed and is due to join the Council later in March. The post is currently filled by an experienced social care leader who has joined the Council on an interim basis until then.

6. Service level agreements (SLAs) have been agreed with Hampshire County Council (HCC) for the delivery of several important services until the 31 January 2025. These include educational psychology, school improvement and the multi-agency safeguarding hub. The Council must decide its preferred delivery model for all services currently delivered under an SLA as soon as possible, so that time is sufficient to establish any required alternatives. It also cannot be assumed that HCC would be willing to extend the duration of the current SLAs on terms acceptable to the Isle of Wight Council.
7. During this period of significant organisational change, maintaining the stability and quality of services for children, young people and their families is a key priority. Fundamental to this is contract monitoring of the SLAs; review of current, and implementation of new, processes (such as relating to quality assurance, governance, and finance); and the embedding of the new directorate within the “One Council” agenda.
8. Leaders and colleagues across the Children’s Services Directorate are also focusing on the following priorities:
 - 8.1. developing our workforce, so that colleagues are able to provide high quality support to the children, young people, families and partners who need support;
 - 8.2. listening to the voices of children, young people, families and stakeholders so that their views can be included in the work that we do;
 - 8.3. working with other teams within the Directorate who may be supporting the same children, young people and families so that they receive joined up and integrated support;
 - 8.4. collaborating with other council departments whose services may also have relevance for improving outcomes achieved by children and young people;
 - 8.5. partnering with external agencies such as the Integrated Care Board and organisations such as those in the voluntary sector so that the expertise and resource made available for the benefit of children, young people and families is maximised;
 - 8.6. focusing on maximising the independence of children and young people from as early as possible, so that they are equipped with the skills they need to achieve their potential.
9. Additional priorities for the Education, Access and Inclusion team include:
 - 9.1. the development of a new holistic education strategy for the Island to improve education outcomes for all children and young people;
 - 9.2. the inclusion within this of strategies to improve the local area’s partnership arrangements relating to the provision of support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which will be inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in the near future;

the delivery of the Council's statutory duties relating to SEND; the financial sustainability of the SEND system on the Island and performance against the terms of the Safety Valve Agreement in place between the Council and the Department for Education. The Safety Valve Agreement is the subject of a separate item on this agenda;

9.3. the inclusion within the holistic education strategy of a new school place planning strategy and a strategy to address the financial stability of the Island's school system. More information about the development of the school place planning strategy, including a draft timeline of activity, is available at Appendix 1.

9.4. Priorities for the Children's Social Care team include:

9.5. the delivery of the action plan arising from the inspection of youth offending services on the Isle of Wight, the findings of which were published in November 2023;

9.6. the finalisation and delivery of the action plan arising from the inspection of the Isle of Wight local authority children's services that took place in October and November 2023. This is the subject of a separate agenda item at this meeting;

9.7. a review of practice relating to corporate parenting on the Island, and the implementation of any necessary improvements identified.

Appendices Attached

10. Appendix 1: School Place Planning Presentation

Background Papers

11. [Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve Agreement': Isle of Wight](#)
12. [An inspection of youth offending services in Isle of Wight YJS](#)
13. [Inspection of the Isle of Wight local authority children's services](#)

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