

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	10th April, 2017
SUBJECT:	Children's Scrutiny Panel
PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):	Cllr Aled Morris Jones
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Caroline Turner, Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Business Process Transformation) Llŷr Bryn Roberts, Interim Head of Children's Services (Operations)
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- A1 Note progress made thus far in establishing robust scrutiny arrangements for children's services**
- A2 Form a view on the proposed scope and remit of the new children's panel**
- A3 Note that the next step will be to complete the practical arrangements in order to establish the children's panel after the Election, by the Scrutiny Manager in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive (Governance & Business Process Transformation).**

2. BACKGROUND AND LOCAL CONTEXT

- 2.1 Social Services established a cross-party panel of members¹ a year ago with the objective of sharing information about the requirements of the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act² and also to oversee the delivery of the first children's services improvement plan. We now have a small

¹ Council Leader and Leader of the Opposition, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Services, Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Services, Portfolio Holder for Learning, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

² Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014

team of Elected Members who are developing a level of expertise in the field and also ownership of the main issues and key development priorities.

- 2.2 The panel has recently focused its work on matters relating to children's services partly due to a thematic review of the Authority's children's services by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW),³ in November, 2016.

3. SCRUTINY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 3.1 Keeping vulnerable children and young people safe is a critically important role and one that requires the Council and partners to work together effectively. There has been significant public attention in recent years due to high profile examples where the system has failed vulnerable individuals, with tragic consequences.
- 3.2 In reporting poor inspection outcomes, care inspectorates⁴ often cite poor scrutiny practices amongst other system failings. Ensuring meaningful and robust scrutiny of policies and also support and / or services available to protect vulnerable children and young people is therefore a key element of the leadership role of Scrutiny members.

4. THE CSSIW INSPECTION

- 4.1 14 recommendations were made by the Care Inspectorate following its recent inspection and one of those recommendations related specifically to political support for children's services, namely:

“...8. Strong political and corporate support for children's services must continue to ensure the service improvements needed are prioritized and the pace of improvement accelerated and sustained..”

5. OUR LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 The next step will be to further develop this work by establishing a standing children's scrutiny panel as a sub-panel of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, with the following elements:

³ Report on the Inspection of Children's Services at Isle of Anglesey County Council, Care and Social Services Inspectorate (March, 2017)

⁴ Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales; Care Quality Commission (England)

- Developing a model of working on children’s services matters focusing on a smaller group to enable Members to become more involved, develop a level of subject expertise, encourage good attendance and teamwork
- Strengthen the capacity of Members to challenge performance by improving the quality of information regarding services and experiences of children and families who receive support and / or services
- Forum to discuss information regarding Service risks, as a basis to inform the forward work programme of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- Forum to develop a group of members with the expertise and ownership to lead discussions with regard to children and young people’s issues in the Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- Offer support to the Young People’s Champion.

5.2 **Expectations of the Care Inspectorate**

The report of the recent inspection by the Care Inspectorate clearly states an expectation as regards political leadership:

“That Elected Members have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of practice and performance to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively.”

5.3 The attached scoping paper (**APPENDIX A**) details the scope and remit of the proposed Panel.

6. **WAY FORWARD**

The next step will be to complete the practical arrangements in order to establish the children’s panel after the Election, by the Scrutiny Manager in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Business Process Transformation).

APPENDIX
APPENDIX A: Children’s Scrutiny Panel Scoping Paper

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Job Title: Interim Scrutiny Manager

Date: 30/03/17

APPENDIX A**SCRUTINY PANEL - CHILDREN****Scrutiny of Children's Services**

Keeping vulnerable children and young people safe is a critically important role and one that requires the Council and partners to work together effectively. There has been significant public attention in recent years due to high profile examples where the system has failed vulnerable individuals, with tragic consequences.

In reporting poor inspection outcomes, care inspectorates¹ often cite poor scrutiny practices amongst other system failings. Ensuring meaningful and robust scrutiny of policies and also support and / or services available to protect vulnerable children and young people is therefore a key element of the leadership role of Scrutiny members.

Our Local Arrangements

The arrangements thus far around the cross-party panel have enabled us to develop a number of important principles that will form a strong foundation going forward as we develop a model for the scrutiny of children's services:

- Development of a model focusing on a smaller group of members
- Members develop a better understanding of children's services
- Members develop a level of expertise
- Encourage good attendance and teamwork

14 recommendations were made by the Care Inspectorate following its recent inspection and one of those recommendations related specifically to political support for children's services, namely:

".... 8. Strong political and corporate support for children's services must continue to ensure the service improvements needed are prioritised and the pace of improvement accelerated and sustained.. "

It is therefore a **natural next step** to establish a children's sub-group as a sub-panel of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. Doing this will ensure the following benefits:

- i. Develop a model of working in children's services which focuses on a smaller group to enable Members to be more involved, to develop a level of subject expertise and to encourage good attendance and teamwork
- ii. Strengthen the capacity of Members to challenge performance by improving the quality of information regarding services and experiences of children and families who receive support and / or services
- iii. Forum to discuss information regarding Service risks, as a basis to inform the forward work programme of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

¹ Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales; Care Quality Commission (England)

- iv. Forum to develop a group of members with the expertise and ownership to lead discussions with regard to children and young people matters in the Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- v. Offer support to the Young People's Champion

Proposed scope and remit of the Panel

What the Care Inspectorate expects to see in terms of political leadership:

"That Elected Members have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of practice and performance to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively."

The main role of the children's panel will be to:

1. Monitor and scrutinize in a meaningful and robust way:
 - progress and distance travelled against the service improvement plan published in response to the recent CSSIW inspection
 - quantitative and qualitative performance of the children's services. This to include developing a specific scorecard for children's services

Give specific consideration to monitoring the qualitative aspects of the service and experiences of individuals who receive support and services.
2. Ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard when considering the effectiveness and impact of services
3. Provide assurance to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the following elements:
 - adequate, timely progress in delivering the improvement plan
 - quantitative and qualitative performance of support and care services available for children and young people.

Panel Membership

The core membership of the Panel will include:

- Elected members – an element of continuity of membership is important. Initially, 2 members of the two scrutiny committees are proposed and the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Services and the Shadow Portfolio Holder along with the Council Leader and the Leader of the Opposition

- Officers – Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Transformation of Business Processes) and Statutory Director of Social Services, Head of Children's Services, Scrutiny Manager.

The Panel's work may require the attendance of other Elected Members (e.g. members of the Executive Committee) and / or officers from other service areas.

Chairing

At its first meeting, the Panel will elect a Member to chair.

Frequency of Meetings and Quorum

- **Frequency of meetings** – the panel to be established as a standing panel and therefore to meet regularly in accordance with the timeline for the submission of monitoring reports on Children's Services improvements to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- **Quorum** - this will not apply to the panel.

Recording meetings and Reporting Arrangements

- It is intended that the Panel be run in the format of a business meeting. The Scrutiny Unit will collate and distribute any papers in preparation for each meeting and provide a list of action points following each meeting
- **Reporting arrangements** - regular reporting by panel members to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.