

Meeting date: 2nd March 2023

Report to: Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Board

Report title: Childrens Services Ofsted Improvement Plan Update

Report from: Pete Campbell – Director of Childrens Services

Report author/lead contact officer: Carol Douch – Assistant Director Improvement, Childrens Services

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Board with an update in relation to the Children's Services Ofsted Improvement Plan.

2. Decision(s) Recommended

- 1.2 The Board is asked to note the below matters for consideration regarding the Ofsted Improvement Plan.

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2. Matters for Consideration

- 2.1 On 24th October 2022, the Local Authority received official notification from Ofsted that they would be subject to a 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS) Inspection. Following a comprehensive 2-week inspection, inspectors gave their formal feedback and provisional judgement to the Children's Senior Management Team and Senior Leads on 11th November 2022.
- 2.2 On 13th January 2023, Ofsted published their final report which found the overall effectiveness of services to children and families in Solihull to be 'Inadequate'.
- 2.3 As of consequence of being rated 'Inadequate', the Authority is required to produce and share an action plan with Ofsted which addresses the recommendations and findings from the report. Over the next two years or so the Authority will be subject to regular monitoring visits from Ofsted which will assess the level of improvement made.
- 2.4 As per the Ofsted ILACS Framework issued in December 2022, an action planning visit is required to be undertaken between Ofsted and the Local Authority within 30 working days of the final inspection report being issued.
- 2.5 The purpose of this action planning meeting is:
- Clarify the roles, responsibilities and activities of Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE)
 - Help the local authority and its partners understand the inspection findings so that they can develop an action plan
 - Set out the implications for statutory partners, including those included in the local strategic safeguarding arrangements
 - Discuss the draft action plan
 - Confirm the calendar month of the first monitoring visit and establish the pattern of future monitoring activity
 - Agree the focus of the first monitoring visit and any subsequent monitoring visits
- 2.6 The action planning meeting with Ofsted has not yet taken place, therefore we are cannot share our draft improvement plan publicly with the Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Board.
- 2.7 Meanwhile, Children's Services Senior Management team have been proactively working to create an Ofsted improvement action plan which appropriately addresses each of the recommendations from Ofsted's report.
- 2.8 The draft improvement plan comprises of 10 sections which correlate to each of the 9 Ofsted recommendations; with each section containing a series of aims and actions which specify the improvement activity required. The tenth section focusses on Early Help.
- 2.9 Service leads are also creating their own respective actions plans which cover the operational service areas, and these link into the priority action areas outlined within the Ofsted improvement plan.

- 2.10 In addition, a Partnership Improvement plan is also being devised which will focus on those areas of improvement which cover the multi-agency areas of service delivery. This plan is to be owned by the Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 2.11 Following the Statutory Improvement Notice being issued to the Local Authority on 1st November 2022, Sir Alan Wood joined the Authority as the Department for Education's appointed Commissioner for Children's Services.
- 2.12 Sir Alan furnished his report to the Secretary of State for Education in February 2023 providing recommendation to whether Children's Services has the capacity and wherewithal to improve and deliver a good standard of services within an acceptable timescale. The SoS response to the recommendations of Sir Alan is expected in early March.
- 2.13 Any feedback or recommendations arising from Sir Alan's report will also be streamlined into the improvement plan where necessary.

3. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 3.1 N/A as this is an update report, outlining the progress of improvement activity undertaken by Childrens Services in relation to the Ofsted ILCAS report.

4. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 4.1 N/A as this is an update report, rather than recommending new proposals.

5. Implications and Considerations

- 5.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
People and Communities: 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive.	By taking the robust action as identified within the improvement plan, outcomes for our most vulnerable children, young people and their families will be improved. This will enable children and families to access a variety of services and provision to ensure they receive the right support in a timely way
Economy: 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2.	The development of our multi agency response to children and families who are at risk/in need across the borough will improve outcomes for those who are vulnerable as well as our wider communities. Investment in families and children will contribute to

Priority:	Contribution:
7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.	healthy and thriving communities with effective support structures.
Environment: 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions.	NA
9. Promote employee wellbeing	NA

5.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

5.2.1 The Ofsted Improvement Plan and subsequent improvement activity will be monitored via regular monitoring visits conducted by Ofsted, as well as regular meetings with the Department for Education. Outcomes will be monitored through the Ofsted inspection framework.

5.3 Financial implications:

5.3.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) implications of the improvement journey was last reported to Cabinet on 9th February 2023. The next public reporting of the MTFS improvement requirements will be to Council on 23rd February 2023 for final decision making on the 2023/24 budget strategy.

5.3.2 Action to improve the quality of Children's Services has required significant expenditure investment in 2022/23 and will require significant investment going forward. The MTFS proposals include an allocation of £9.7 million for 2023/24, £9.9 million for 2024/25 and £8.5 million for 2025/26 and on-going.

5.4 Legal implications:

5.4.1 In May 2022, we responded to the findings of the JTAI by submitting our Statement of Action to Ofsted.

5.4.2 In January 2023, Ofsted published their inspection report which found the overall effectiveness of services to children and families in Solihull to be inadequate. The Authority will be required to submit an action plan to Ofsted.

5.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

5.5.1 Risks identified due to inspection and improvement activity will be reflected within risk registers. These will be revised accordingly and managed within current processes

5.6 Equality implications:

5.6.1 The improvement plan will actively seek to reduce inequality and improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and their families within the borough.

5.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

5.7.1 Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS) are a key partner in delivering our services to children, young people, and families.

6. List of appendices referred to

6.1 NA

7. Background papers used to compile this report

7.1 NA

8. List of Other Relevant Documents

8.1 NA