



## **PEOPLE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020**

**2.00 - 3.30 pm in the THIS IS A VIRTUAL MEETING - PLEASE USE THE LINK ON THE AGENDA TO LISTEN TO THE MEETING**

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward

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### **Present**

#### Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Peggy Mullock (Chairman)

Councillors Roy Aldcroft, Ruth Houghton, Christian Lea, Elliott Lynch and Kevin Pardy

### **62 Apologies and Substitutions**

62.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Cecilia Motley and Kevin Turley and from Sian Lines (Hereford Diocese).

62.2 There were no substitutions

### **63 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

63.1 There were no declarations of pecuniary interest made.

### **64 Minutes**

#### **64.1 RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the People Overview Committee held on 30 September 2020 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **65 Public Question Time**

65.1 There were no public questions received

### **66 Members' Question Time**

65.1 There were no Members questions.

### **67 Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership**

67.1 Members received the report of the Executive Director Children's Services, and the Statutory Safeguarding Business Partner which set out details of the work of the Shropshire Safeguarding Partnership.

67.2 The Chair reminded Members that in previous years it had been a legal requirement that the Committee received the annual report of the Children's

Safeguarding Board but that this had ended in 2018, and that the Board had become part of the Shropshire Safeguarding Partnership alongside the Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board and the Community Safety Partnership.

- 67.3 The Statutory Safeguarding Business Manager advised Members that the Partnership gave an opportunity for cross cutting issues to be considered in a much more joined up way and that the structure of the Partnership was based on the strategic priorities that had been identified.
- 67.4 In response to a question the Statutory Safeguarding Business Partner advised Members that the abuse of vulnerable adults by others such as in a care setting was monitored through the Assurance and Performance Group.
- 67.5 In response to a question regarding funding for domestic abuse services the Statutory Safeguarding Business Partner agreed to provide figures outside of the meeting.
- 67.6 In response to a question regarding intelligence and data sharing the Statutory Safeguarding Business Partner advised that this had improved with the closer working that the Partnership allowed, and work was ongoing to get full datasets developed.
- 67.7 The Chair of the Partnership commented that Elected Members provided a link with their local community and could have a dialogue within the community that they represent.
- 67.8 In response to a question regarding how the Partnership had strengthened work around child exploitation the Partnership Chair explained that there was a dedicated multi agency group within the Partnership which covered all aspects of criminal exploitation and that there was a great deal of work done with Partners as well.
- 67.9 In relation to a question around raising public awareness of child neglect the Statutory Safeguarding Business Partner stated that the subject was a high priority in neglect group, and that a campaign was being planned around ensuring professionals recognise what neglect is, ensuring parents were aware of what neglectful behaviour is and ensuring that children are able to recognise what neglect is so that they can see when it is happening to themselves or their friends. The Director of Children's Services advised that the Council was raising awareness of the issue of neglect through the Step up Shropshire Campaign and was asking senior managers to look at the contribution their service could make to identifying cases of neglect. She added that there would also be some work around reminding Elected Members of their role.
- 67.10 In response to a question as to whether the Partnership had contributed to more efficient working the Statutory Safeguarding Business Partner confirmed that more use of virtual meetings through the Covid pandemic had meant more engagement with partners and that there had been a reduction in duplication as previously each part of the Partnership would have held meetings which were now covered by one meeting within the Partnership.

67.11 In response to a question regarding how the Council's Digital transformation programme had supported the work of the Partnership the Director of Children's Services stated that the introduction of the Liquid Logic system had improved the management of and that feedback from social workers was that is much easier to use than the previous system. She added that the wider investment within the digital transformation programme had really proved worthwhile given the new ways of working during the current pandemic.

67.12 The Chair thanked Officer for their presentation.

**67.13 RESOLVED:**

That the People Overview Committee note and accept the content of the report

## **68 Chairs's Update**

68.1 The Director of Children's Services updated members on work with schools during the pandemic. She advised that regular dialogues took place with schools with regards to any issues, and these had been fed back to the DfE during weekly meetings. She advised the meeting that DfE had advised that schools could close one day early for the Christmas Break should they wish, and that some schools in Shropshire would be taking advantage of this.

68.2 The Director of Children's Services advised the meeting that school attendance during the pandemic had been good, current attendance being 92% which was above the national average.

68.3 The Director of Children's Services advised the meeting that all secondary schools and about half of primary schools had been subject to a covid outbreak but that this had not lead to any school closing completely, but had been dealt with by the sending home of "class bubbles".

68.4 The Director of Children's Services advised the meeting that schools had incurred extra costs during the pandemic for such things as increased staffing, extra costs involved with additional cleaning and increased heating costs arising from advice to keep windows open to improve ventilation.

68.5 In respect of a question regarding the recruitment and retention of child social workers the Director of Children's Services advised the meeting that whilst there was still some reliance on agency works the overall situation had improved.

68.6 In response to a question as to whether the council's commitment to supply meals to those in receipt of free school meals over the Christmas break would extend to the additional period of closure the Director of Children's Services advised the

meeting that if schools decided to take advantage of the additional 1 days closure it would remain their responsibility.

**69 Work Programme**

69.1 Members received the report of the overview and scrutiny officer which set out the People Overview Committee’s proposed work programme until May 2021.

69.2 It was agreed that the item on Community Safety Partnership and exploitation, should be removed from the work programme.

69.3 A Member asked whether the subject of child poverty in the county could be discussed.

**70 Date of next Meeting**

70.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the People Overview Committee would be held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 10.00am

**71 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**72 Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....