

Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday 20 July 2021
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Shire Hall, Warwick

Membership

Councillor Yousef Dahmash (Chair)
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jo Barker
Councillor Brett Beetham
Councillor Barbara Brown
Councillor Peter Gilbert
Councillor Brian Hammersley
Councillor Marian Humphreys
Councillor Justin Kerridge
Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince
Joseph Cannon
John McRoberts
Rev. Elaine Scrivens
Sean Taylor

Items on the agenda: -

1. General

(1) Apologies

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

5 - 10

2. Public Speaking

3. Question Time

(1) Question to Cabinet Portfolio Holders

Up to 30 minutes of the meeting are available for members of the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to put questions to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

The work programme attached lists any briefings circulated to the Committee since the last meeting and any items listed in the Council's Forward Plan for decision by Cabinet or individual Cabinet Portfolio Holders over the coming months.

(2) Updates from Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Assistant Directors

Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Assistant Directors are invited to provide any updates they have on issues within the remit of the Committee.

4. Youth Justice Plan 2021-2022	11 - 28
5. Update on Scrutiny Review	29 - 48
6. Year End Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Progress Report (April 2020 to March 2021)	49 - 64
7. Work Programme 2021 - 2022	65 - 68

To consider the enclosed work programme, updated following the meeting of the Chair and Group Spokespersons. The programme includes an update from the Forward Plan showing items relevant to the remit of this Committee.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for 28 September 2021 at 10am. The meeting will be held at Shire Hall Warwick.

Meetings for 2021/2022 have been scheduled as follows –

- 28 September 2021
- October 2021 (date tbc)
- 16 November 2021
- 8 February 2022
- 11 April 2022

9. Minutes Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

To consider passing the following resolution:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

10. Restricted Minutes from the previous meeting (23.02.2021)

69 - 72

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

Disclaimers

Webcasting and permission to be filmed

Please note that this meeting will be filmed for live broadcast on the internet and can be viewed on line at warwickshire.public-i.tv. Generally, the public gallery is not filmed, but by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area you are consenting to being filmed. All recording will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election of appointment to the Council. Any changes to matters registered or new matters that require to be registered must be notified to the Monitoring Officer as soon as practicable after they arise.

A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless they have a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if they have not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests relevant to the agenda should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

The public reports referred to are available on the Warwickshire Web

<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

Public Speaking

Any member of the public who is resident or working in Warwickshire, or who is in receipt of services from the Council, may speak at the meeting for up to three minutes on any matter within the remit of the Committee. This can be in the form of a statement or a question. If you wish to speak please notify Democratic Services in writing at least two working days before the meeting. You should give your name and address and the subject upon which you wish to speak. Full details of the public speaking scheme are set out in the Council's Standing Orders.

Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 23 February 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Yousef Dahmash (Chair)
Councillor Pam Williams (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Margaret Bell
Councillor Jonathan Chilvers
Councillor Corinne Davies
Councillor Peter Gilbert
Councillor Daniel Gissane
Councillor Dominic Skinner
Councillor Chris Williams

Officers

Daniel Atkins, Technical Specialist - Children Transformation
Helen Barnsley, Democratic Services Officer
Ian Budd, Assistant Director - Education Services
Ross Caws, Warwickshire SEND Board Development Manager
Duane Chappell, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (SEND & Inclusion)
Anita Lekhi, Performance and Evaluation Delivery Lead
Nigel Minns, Strategic Director for People
Bern Timings, School Organisation and Planning Manager

Others Present

Simon Lomax – Executive Principal (Nuneaton MAT)
Ann Melville – Deputy Chair of the Board (Nuneaton MAT)
Marion Plant – Chief Executive (Nuneaton MAT)

1. General

Before the meeting started, the Chair announced that he had received correspondence from Marion Plant, Chief Executive of the MAT, following the October meeting of the Committee. Ms Plant felt that some of the comments made during the meeting by members of the Committee were unfair and inaccurate. The Chair confirmed that he had acknowledged the correspondence and shared it with all the members of the Committee; who will have the chance to meet with the MAT team at a future committee meeting.

(1) Apologies

None

(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17th November 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

2. Public Speaking

None

3. Question Time

(1) Question to Cabinet Portfolio Holders

None

(2) Updates from Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Assistant Directors

Councillor Jeff Morgan provided the following updates to the Committee –

- A planning application has been submitted for a new Children's Home in Stratford upon Avon. The home will be OFSTED regulatory and accommodate four children (up to 12 years' old)
- Children and Family Services are continuing to manage demand during the pandemic. However, there are a number of children in care out of the county (although this number has not increased during the pandemic). There are over 800 children in care at present and does include unaccompanied young asylum seekers. It was noted that following a recent and successful recruitment campaign by the Council for social workers, the average case load is not under 16 cases per worker.
- Councillor Morgan recommended that the Committee members look online for kooth.com; which is an online platform designed for children and young people with mental health issues. The platform is used by a number of local authorities and has had a positive impact on those using it; providing 24/7 access to help and support to some of the most vulnerable children and young people.

4. Formulation of the Education Sufficiency Strategy

Bern Timings, Education Capital, Sufficiency and Admissions Lead Commissioner presented the report to the Committee which includes the process and planning of school places within the county. The Committee noted that significant housing development across Warwickshire is leading to an increase in demand for school places. Members noted that transparency in the process was a key part of the strategy and in particular when working with schools and members. It was noted that working with academies, who control their own admissions and pupil numbers was also part of the strategy.

Councillor Margaret Bell noted that the process is extremely complex and asked how many temporary classrooms were in use across Warwickshire. The Council seem able to deal with bulge classes well, but when there is an additional class in primary schools, this is not fed through into planning for high school places; ultimately resulting in the council paying for temporary classrooms and an extension. Bern Timings confirmed that capital projects often have unforeseen delays, but the example given by Councillor Bell in relation to extra classes was as a result of a lack of planning ahead. It was agreed by officers and Members that capital forward planning must be right from the start. Councillor Bell suggested that moving forward the Committee monitor the use of temporary classrooms and the costs involved.

In relation to parental preference; the Committee noted that this can be difficult, when parents request places at schools that are not local/nearest to them. Part of the work currently underway is to ensure that existing schools remain viable. The admissions code makes it clear that if a first choice can't be met, then a place at the nearest school will be offered; and the Council follow national guidance for this and reviews trends each year.

Nationally, there are issues with mid-year moves; especially in view of the continued increase in new housing developments.

Officers review and revise the forecasting predications each year. The DfE record 'score cards' each year and the council is ahead of where we need to be – which is better than being under in terms of places.

The Committee agreed that the discussion and questions highlighted just how complex the process is and thanks officers for the report. It was agreed that the Committee would be regularly kept up to date with the strategy.

Resolved

That the Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee comment on the existing processes and methodology used to formulate the Education Sufficiency Strategy and identify areas for further discussion or where value can be added.

5. SEND & Inclusion: Report of Task and Finish Group

Ross Caws, Strategy and Commissioning Lead (SEND), presented the report to the Committee highlighting the work of the recent Task and Finish Group.

The Committee noted that the group had met four times and had strong discussions and debate which resulted in twelve recommendations (section three of the attached report). It was noted that some of the recommendations link directly to the current programme. Councillor Pam Williams commented that she had found it to be a very useful and productive group and thanked all those who had been involved.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers asked if those who had been involved now felt more confident that the Council can now meet the increased need in SEND. The Chair stated that he absolutely felt more confident, which was supported by Councillor Pam Williams. The group had worked together well and there was a complete consensus about all twelve of the recommendations.

Councillor Margaret Bell added that the key issue would be to support the schools so that they can support SEND pupils. The Committee agreed that it was vital to keep checking in with teachers, and parents, to see how things are going and that it is all moving forward positively.

Resolved

That the Committee approve the recommendations of the task and finish group set out in Section 3 of the report.

6. Child Friendly Warwickshire

Anita Lekhi, Technical Specialist - Performance and Evaluation, introduced the Committee to the initiative for Warwickshire to become child friendly. The Committee learnt that “a child friendly city, town or community is committed to improving the lives of children, and is a place where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are fundamental in decisions”.

The aim of the initiative is that all children in Warwickshire are –

- safe and secure
- happy and healthy
- live stable lives
- able to enjoy learning and have employment opportunities
- involved in decisions that shape services that impact their lives.

The initiative is being led by the Council’s Children and Families Services but with the aim that everyone in the Council will become involved, recognising the key role that children have in the county. The initiative comes from Leeds City Council, who introduced theirs some years ago and who are recognised as an outstanding local authority in this area.

The following points were noted –

- The initiative will involve talking to children and young people via surveys and virtual workshops to see what they would like.

- A brand will be created to share and promote Child Friendly Warwickshire across the county.
- Communication will not only be within the Council, but also with all partners, local communities, and businesses.

Following a question from Councillor Jeff Morgan, Daniel Atkins, Advanced Practitioner, gave an explanation of Restorative Practice; highlighting that it is about how Warwickshire County Council works with colleagues, partners, children and families. The practice recognises that relationships are at the heart of everything that the Council does, and this initiative puts the child at the centre. Restorative Practice relationships are about supporting and challenging each other to avoid any 'blockages' to the process. In simple terms, it is about restoring family relationships.

The Chair asked how important officers feel it is to install a sense of resilience in young people; to encourage them to take responsibility. Nigel Minns, Strategic Director suggested that each generation faces different challenges, perhaps none more so than the current generation facing the pandemic. Child Friendly Warwickshire will support independence and it will be a key part of the work done; recognising that it is important to do things 'with' children and young people, and not 'for' or 'to' them.

Resolved

That the Committee endorse the Child Friendly Warwickshire initiative and action plan

7. Work Programme

The work programme as per the attached report was noted and agreed by the Committee.

It was agreed that any items Members wished to be added to the work programme should be emailed through to the Chair or Democratic Services to be discussed at Chair and Spokes meetings.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on the 20th April 2021, at 10am.

The meeting will be held via Microsoft Teams.

9. Confidential Reports

Resolved

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

10. Nuneaton MAT Performance Report

Resolved

That the Committee note the briefing and supporting documents including the new 3-year Strategic Plan from Midlands Academy Trust MAT regarding the progress and performance of the Trust.

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Chair

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20 July 2021

Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan 2021/22

Recommendation

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve and Support the 2021/22 Youth Justice Plan. Associated actions will be tracked and monitored by the Youth Justice Chief Officer Board in line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the 2021/22 Youth Justice Plan and ensure that Overview and Scrutiny Panel are aware of the continuous improvement actions within the Warwickshire Youth Justice Service.

2.0 Executive Summary

- 2.1 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, there is a requirement for the production of an Annual Youth Justice Plan.
- 2.2 An exceptional decision was made by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to exempt local partnerships from this requirements for 2020/21 in the context of the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead the YJB required that an action plan was developed to sustain services during the pandemic, alongside required improvements in accordance with national 'Standards for Youth Justice' guidance. This action plan has been overseen and progressed monitored by the multiagency Chief Officer Board for the Youth Justice Service with successful outcomes that are referred to in the attached plan.
- 2.3 The 2021/22 plan is prepared in accordance with the requirements prescribed by the Youth Justice Board with a particular emphasis on a 'Child First' approach to young offenders.
- 2.4 Whilst this Youth Justice Plan is prepared in accordance with the YJB requirements and is shared by the whole partnership, this document is well aligned with the Warwickshire County Council Plan 2020-2025. The main goal of the Youth Justice Service is to prevent offending and reoffending and is in accordance with the County Council priority outcome to support our communities to stay safe and independent. An increasing area of Youth Justice delivery involves targeting young people at an early stage to stop

them progressing into the Youth Justice system. The key Council priority relating to job readiness and training is a key priority outlined in this plan and YJS resources are being realigned to ensure that we work to improve our young offender engagement in schools and training. Our work to refresh our contacts with victims as we emerge from the lockdown of the pandemic is also a key target moving forward. As outlined in the plan we are seeking opportunities to train and develop our workforce in respect of trauma informed practice , disproportionality and to refresh our longstanding commitment to relationship based practice, utilising the power and strength of family through the application of Restorative Practice. As our Council Plan states: 'we will ensure that young people understand and take responsibility for their behaviour. We will identify and manage risk in the community and ensure the voices of victims are heard and responded to'.

- 2.5 The report highlights our continued strong performance in the key areas of Youth Justice Performance measures. Warwickshire reoffending rates for young people remain in line with statistical comparators although the frequency of offending by those who do reoffend is higher than some. It is believed that this reflects the complexity of some of the Warwickshire young people who do offend, and also is a reflection of their involvement in Criminal Exploitation. The increase in youth violence and weapon related crime is a national trend that is reflected locally. Warwickshire Youth Justice Service is actively involved in the development of the local 'Preventing Youth Violence Strategy' and targeted efforts to address issues of serious and organised crime.
- 2.6 Through the pandemic our level of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice system has increased to become more akin to the levels of our statistical comparators. Many of these First Time Entrants remain outside the Court system being made the subject of an 'Out of Court Disposal'. This local trend of a statistical increase in lower level crime is also noted in the recent thematic (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation) report at a national level.
- 2.7 The Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan outlines our response to the COVID-19 pandemic where the Service was well supported by efforts and resources put in place by Warwickshire County Council including new technology, Personal and Protective Equipment and agile working arrangements. In line with all Public Services, Warwickshire Youth Justice will learn from the experience of working during the pandemic and ensure that we carry forward the best parts of new practice whilst restoring some features that were not part of our COVID Secure approach. An example of this would be that we have found that many young people respond very positively to exchange and challenge through virtual media, but the learning is that this needs to be supported by regular in person contact to ensure the best safeguarding and risk management approach.
- 2.8 A key area of concern as we move out of the pandemic is the under engagement of Youth Justice Service users in Education, Training and Employment which is one of the most significant protective factors in the prevention of crime. Consistent and relevant education/training provision

provides structure, occupation, peer group relationships and personal discipline for young people. Within Youth Justice we are realigning staffing to ensure that we target this area of performance moving forward and this is highlighted in the Youth Justice Plan.

- 2.9 The 'Black Lives Matter' movement has provided momentum for the Youth Justice Service to work with 'EQUIP' to look at areas of inequality in our services and an action plan is being developed moving forward to ensure we work to address any existing areas of disproportionality in our system.
- 2.10 Services to victims of youth crime are being refreshed as we emerge from the pandemic, and the use of our Referral Order Panel volunteers in the delivery of Community Justice.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan provides an outline of our response to the pandemic and key areas of development moving forward.

4.0 Analysis

- 4.1 Warwickshire is a high performing Youth Justice Service which has successfully sustained service delivery during the pandemic. There are clear plans for improvement as we emerge from the restrictions of the pandemic which also incorporate learning and practice developed during the lockdown period.
- 4.2 There are ongoing challenges in relation to emerging Youth Violence, disproportionality, and a need to continue to track performance against statistical comparators particularly in relation to First Time Entrants into the system.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct environmental implications in the Youth Justice Plan

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The overall WCC balanced budget for 2021/22 for the Youth Justice Service is £1,372,146.00. This is supplemented by two Youth Justice Board grants totalling £562,897.00

7.0 Supporting Documents

- 7.1 Appendix A - Youth Justice Plan 2021/2022

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Sally Nash	sallynash@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	John Coleman	johncoleman@warwickshire.gov.uk
Director of People Directorate	Nigel Minns	nigelminns@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jeff Morgan	cllrmorgan@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): none

Other members: none

"Working in partnership to support young people, families and victims to prevent offending and reduce re-offending to build a safer and stronger community."



WARWICKSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2021/22

1. Introduction, Vision and Strategy

- 1.1 Warwickshire Youth Justice Service (WYJS) is preparing this plan at a time when we are emerging from the lockdown arrangements necessitated by the unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. WYJS and partners are proud of the way we have sustained and appropriately modified services during this time, to ensure that our practice is as COVID secure as possible, whilst also focussing on the needs of our service users. We have maintained oversight and contact with young people and have demonstrated timely responses to the work demands generated by both the Out of Court Disposal system and also from our Youth and Crown Courts.
- 1.2 Warwickshire County Council is striving towards the achievement of a Child Friendly Warwickshire approach. In this we seek to ensure that children and young people are at the heart of everything we do, be it through direct practice or in wider decision making about life in our County. This also reflects the ambition of the Youth Justice Board (Strategic Plan 2021-24) to ensure we are a 'Child First' Youth Justice Service. As part of this ambition and as part of the preparation for this plan our Chief Officer Board commissioned dialogue with a variety of our service users so that in addition to our normal service user feedback processes, young people could share their experiences of our services during the pandemic and also assist us shape our vision and planning for our Youth Justice services moving forward.

'You're doing your best, you were still going out to see me, and phoning me'

'COVID hasn't worked for me at school, now I'm always getting into trouble because I didn't work at home and now, I'm behind and not in the top set anymore'

'You get good support, and a good bond with your YJS worker'

'My tag ripped at my hairy legs and was so uncomfortable particularly in the heat'

'Being on police bail I felt in the dark'

'People work for a month for what I can earn in a night, you want things and you can earn and you are not going to get a proper job'

'I'm sick of my order'

'The YJS helped me get my CSCS card, everyone I know doesn't have a job, it's a big problem'

'It's a bit embarrassing when you have to explain your offences'

- 1.3 Within Children and Family Services we have adopted a Restorative Practice approach to our work which is something our YJS has been able to provide leadership with, given the longstanding feature of Restorative Justice in our work. The model of high support and high challenge is something that is well placed in the Youth Justice system. The Youth Justice Board Strategic Plan 2021-24 highlights the importance of relationship based practice and our local initiatives support the ambition to embed this approach to work across the

Sector. Our understanding of trauma informed practice assists us understand the young person's journey, and helps us to focus on the reasons and context of their behaviour, whilst encouraging them to take responsibility for their current situation working WITH them to ensure they have an opportunity to move on into a more constructive lifestyle.

- 1.4 We recognise our work needs to be sensitive and relevant to our whole community. This is also emphasised in the Annual Report of our Inspectorate, HMIP. The 'Black Lives Matter' movement has brought all of these ambitions into sharper relief. We are currently working with our local provider EQUIP to scrutinise our current work and shape a bespoke plan for change that should reflect our increased awareness of the experience of minority service users and drive work for targeted and specific improvements. This will reflect the conclusions of the Lammy report which seeks explanation and actions to address disproportionality .
- 1.5 Our vision for WYJS moving forward is that young people are at the heart of everything we do, and we ensure best possible outcomes with them both in terms of quality of life and the prevention of offending. We recognise that many of our young people have increasingly complex needs and whilst our cohorts may be smaller the level of demand in respect of their risk and need is often greater.
- 1.6 Our strategy will be to work in the strength of our partnership across services to ensure best outcomes , with agreed mutual actions and philosophy. We also recognise that in implementing this strategy we are able to lean on an active and engaged Chief Officer Board to achieve this. All of this emanates out of strong partnership arrangements that exist in Warwickshire . Our 'Standards for Youth Justice' audit highlighted a lot of strengths in our work but also the challenges. Achieving our vision calls for the support and proactivity of the whole partnership in so many ways. One example is supporting the transitions that young people as experience in their lives across the breadth of partnership delivery e.g education, health and Children in Care placements, all of which can so profoundly affect them both now and also in their future life chances.
- 1.7 A draft of this plan and the feedback from our young people was shared and actively considered in our June 2021 Chief Officer Board . The vision, strategy and actions that emanate out of this plan are wholeheartedly endorsed across our whole YJS partnership.

2. Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

- 2.1 In line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, our Youth Justice Service reports into the Safer Warwickshire Partnership. The line management and oversight of the Service sits within the Local Authority Children and Family Service. The cross cutting agenda of the child and community safety is reflected in our reporting both to Elected Members and the wider partnership. Our Youth Justice partnership is well represented at our Local

Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) and is actively involved in the management of the multiagency Justice Centres located in Nuneaton and Leamington Spa. There is a positive and active connection with the Office of the Local Police and Crime Commissioner, and our Commissioner is an active member of the YJS Chief Officer Board. WYJS regularly attends Youth Court Panel meetings and at recent meetings has provided input in respect of proportionate Out of Court Decision Making, Youth Justice Planning and Youth Crime Prevention. The portfolio of responsibility of our WYJS Service Manager also includes Domestic Abuse and Child Exploitation and this facilitates the joint management of the overlapping aspects of these issues.

- 2.2 As is reflected around the country and highlighted in recent reports by HMIP and also in the YJB Strategic Plan, Warwickshire has experienced increasing prevalence and concern in respect of the growth of Youth Violence, County Lines and associated features. The YJS is a key and active partner in the development of the Warwickshire Violence Prevention Strategy, and the Warwickshire County Council lead officer for Community Safety is a regular attendee and contributor at Chief Officer Board.
- 2.3 In line with national trends, Out of Court Disposals (OOC) constitute an increasing portion of our business. The OOC Joint Decision Making outcomes are regularly reviewed by the Regional Scrutiny Panel. As we move out of the pandemic we will review and look forward to widening the membership of our weekly Decision Making Panel. Within the Children and Family Service there has been a strong move to develop our Early Help offer including the 'Pathway to Change' assessment where crime prevention and working with young people on the cusp of offending is a key priority. The Targeted Youth Support senior managers sits as part of our OOC Panel. In this way we are seeking to address the needs of young people on the cusp of our system before they move into Youth Justice, a concern that is highlighted by HMIP.
- 2.4 The WYJS Chief Officer Board (Strategic Management Board) meets quarterly and is well attended. Meetings have been sustained on a virtual basis throughout the pandemic period. The Director of Children's Services (who is also a lead member of the Warwickshire Safeguarding Board) is Chair of our Chief Officer Board. The five Youth Justice statutory partners which comprise Children's Social Care, Education, Police, Health and Probation are all represented. Our Health membership includes both Commissioner and Provider representatives. The Board also welcomes the renewed attendance from the local Youth Court Panel. In addition, our Police and Crime Commissioner and County Council lead for Community Safety are regular members and contributors. This breadth of membership within the Board ensures that there is linkage and interface with a very wide range of strategic drivers and meetings. Our Service Manager is an active member of the Safer Warwickshire partnership, the Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership, and associated subgroups.

- 2.5 Over the last two years we have worked to improve and develop ways to ensure Chief Officer Board members are in touch with WYJS front line work and understand the craft of Youth Justice. Examples of these improvements would include the participation of strategic members of the Board in the YJS Quality Assurance auditing process, as well as a 'Practice Spotlight' presentation at each Board meeting highlighting an aspect of service delivery. This latter feature is presented by frontline staff and recent examples include Court delivery, the ASSETplus assessment document and working to deliver services in the COVID environment. Several Board members have also observed and provided feedback on our Out of Court Disposals Joint Decision Making Panel. The Board receives quarterly performance reports and the associated discussions guide future improvement plans which are also tracked and reported on in Board meetings. All of this contributes to a cycle of continuous improvement. Different Board members are key strategic leads for aspects of our 'Standards for Youth Justice' audit and improvement plan. The Board receives budget and finance reports which guide the shaping of staffing and services. Learning from significant cases that highlight Safeguarding and/or Public Protection issues are shared with the Board to inform strategic thinking and service developments.
- 2.6 Both strategically and operationally we are keen that our user voice is included and impacts upon our planning and work moving forward. We continue to utilise the Viewpoint feedback system and seek other methods of feedback including our recent Black Lives Matter strategic review work and the specific conversations with service users about this plan.
- 2.7 At an operational level there are strong partnership arrangements in place to ensure support for children on the cusp of, or already part of the justice system. We hold regular meetings at an operational level with partnership providers from both the statutory and voluntary sector to ensure our mutual delivery agenda and challenges are addressed. Strong examples of this would be our regular meetings with Police Custody Sergeants, Barnardos, Health and Safety advisers, Local Early Action Partnerships, Area Behaviour Partnerships (education) and Strategy meetings within Children's Social Care. Operational and management staff access training and liaison meetings within Children and Family Support which increasingly eases professional relationships and dialogue about the needs of mutual young people.
- 2.8 There are multiple examples of joint working with Early Help and Targeted Youth Support colleagues to identify and address the needs of young people on the cusp of offending. This has been a strong challenge throughout the pandemic period, and we have worked to divert young people away from involvement in crime, and wherever possible provide constructive alternatives including a Virtual Youth Club to occupy their time and investment in proactive outreach youth work. There is an overlap of Youth Justice young people who are also known to the dedicated multiagency Child Exploitation team and we work to continually improve our mutual services to ensure that they are joined

up and streamlined so that young people caught in this cycle of behaviour receive the best possible services.

- 2.9 For those organisations with staff who are seconded into the Youth Justice Service, there are working agreements in place to ensure coherent management and regular three way delivery review meetings. All statutory partners have staff in the Service, with WCC funding both Education and Social Care staff.

3. Resources and Services

- 3.1 The grant received from the Youth Justice Board is used for the provision of staff within the Service and this is evidenced in our annual audit certificates. A full breakdown of our partnership financial contributions is provided to the Youth Justice Board as part of our July data set. These contributions are represented both in staffing and cash contributions.

- 3.2 In terms of our key statutory partners we can confirm:

- Children's Social Care provide seven qualified social worker posts to our Youth Justice Service who are also supported in their work by YJS practitioners who come from a variety of professional pathways.
- The National Probation Service second the equivalent of one full time post which comprises both Probation Officer hours and Probation Service Officer time. A small cash contribution is also made towards YJS overheads
- Warwickshire Youth Justice has two seconded police officers as part of the delivery team with an additional cash contribution towards work to prevent offending
- A YJS Practitioner post is dedicated to the delivery of effective education and training liaison services. Youth Justice has retained a budget for the provision of some specific Education Psychology Services
- Services in relation to young people's mental health are provided as part of the WCC commissioned RISE (CAMHS) services. There are two secondees one of whom focusses on statutory work, with the other targeting Out of Court Disposals. We have strong links with the local Liaison and Diversion scheme for young people at the point of apprehension/arrest.
- The YJS has two Substance Misuse secondees from our Voluntary Sector COMPASS partner. These posts are funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Other partners who actively contribute time and bespoke effort into our Youth Justice Service include Prospects (careers and training advice); Local Neighbourhood partnerships; Child Exploitation Team (WCC); Targeted Youth Support and Early Help (step downs).

- 3.3 In terms of our building assets, we remain active partners in our two unique Justice Centres. We support the delivery of Youth and Crown Court Services in Coventry but regret the bespoke more local facilities are currently not utilised. We are working to develop our delivery centre in Bloxham to widen its use and reach for the benefit of young people across our community.
- 3.4 The development of flexible working, in part in response to the pandemic has taught us that young people can respond positively to the virtual environment but that this must always be balanced with face to face contact with staff and providers.
- 3.5 We use our YJB grant, partner contributions and other available resources to deliver our YJS and associated prevention and step down services. This is all with the aim of supporting our vision to improve the quality of life of our young people and the wider community by preventing and reducing offending. As will be seen later in this plan the drivers for the use of our resources will be to reinstate full services and target key areas of improvement.

4. Performance and priorities

- 4.1 Our Chief Officer Board receives a quarterly performance report which provides updates on the three national indicators but also details more localised offending information and other areas that contribute towards desistance including the engagement of young offenders in Education, Training and Employment , local safeguarding and risk measurements.

What priorities is our performance information guiding us to?

- Small or individual numbers of young people can skew our performance data
- There is a continued concern about the prevalence of violence related offences
- There is an increase in the rate of First Time Entrants into our Youth Justice System which may in part reflect our embedding of an Out of Court Disposal system, but also may reflect issues that arise out of the pandemic
- There has been an increase in Remand bed nights in custody during the pandemic due to delays in the Courts listing systems. We also have evidence of being able to provide high risk alternatives to remands in custody that have kept young people and the community safe.
- We have an increase of young people in custody who are serving sentences for serious crime although numbers remain small
- The partnership has not received regular information from the centre about reoffending rates but is aware that the frequency of the reoffending of those who do reoffend has increased. This may be attributed to a small number of young people who have been found to prolifically reoffend. This reflects national trends recognised by both HMIP and the YJB. We also recognise

that the cycle of Exploitation and crime traps young people into a pattern of behaviour

- We make regular referrals to the national NRM system in an effort to address the consequence of exploitation and ensure that prosecution is proportionate and reflective of the level of culpability
- Our engagement levels in Education Training and Employment are low and require remedial action which is outlined later in this plan. This does reflect national trends following the pandemic but is a primary priority for our local partnership.

5. Responding to the pandemic and recovery from COVID-19

5.1 We asked our young people how they had experienced our services during the pandemic :

'My order finished, and I had missed some sessions because of COVID. I decided with my worker that I needed a few extra sessions and that's why I am still here.'

'They (YJS) helped me get my CSCS card, everyone I know doesn't have a job, it's a big problem'

'I wouldn't have known where to start with it all and the pandemic without X (YJS worker)'

'I've missed the transfer window in football because of COVID and I won't get the chance to play in the higher league'

- 5.2 The management of Youth Justice Services during the pandemic required an agile and flexible response to service users and all stakeholders including the Courts, Custody blocks, the Secure estate, and our staff. The issues highlighted in the November HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation) thematic report into the impact of the pandemic on services has resonance for the Warwickshire experience. Many of the key issues highlighted there reflected our local challenges and these include relationships with the Secure Estate, the prevalence of child to parent/care abuse, and the Digital Divide.
- 5.3 Warwickshire Youth Justice was well placed with the introduction of new technology hardware to enable staff to work remotely utilising the 'Microsoft Teams' system to engage with partners, young people and the Courts. The Local Authority was also able to be part of the Government issue of computer hardware to eligible young people who were struggling to access education and other services because of a lack of equipment suitable for remote working.
- 5.4 The provision of Appropriate Adult services in police cells was a particular challenge and the Local Authority moved quickly to ensure the provision of full PPE for relevant staff which also facilitated any other necessary 'in person' contacts with young people and their families. We utilised our digital

technology to keep in contact with young people in the Secure Estate or appearing in Courts. We also participated in the Public Health led meetings to address the pandemic outbreak in a local Secure Institution.

- 5.5 Many young people have engaged well in the virtual environment and have been able to undertake some reflective offending behaviour work through the use of media and technology. Our experience mirrors that in the thematic HMIP report that there were a variety of responses to our adapted services. We worked hard to address compliance with those young people for whom the virtual world did not fit so well and there is no indication of an increase in enforcement through the Courts. The key learning from this time has been that there are newly recognised benefits of working with young people in the virtual environment, but nothing replaces real time interpersonal contact where we can tailor interventions to match bespoke need. The importance of establishing relationship based practice with a young person whilst agreeing an Intervention plan is reinforced by this whole experience. We have also found effective engagement both with victims and parents was severely hampered by lock down.
- 5.6 In terms of staff care, Youth Justice Staff acquired keyworker status within the Authority and were also prioritised for early vaccination opportunities at their own choice. As indicated in the HMIP thematic report, there has never been a more important time to focus on staff support and supervision, and we have increased virtual team 'check in' opportunities and other support mechanisms. We have been particularly mindful of the induction process for new staff in a situation where they have lacked the opportunity to personally meet their colleagues. One such member of staff was part of the presentation to our Chief Officer Board on her experience of working during the pandemic.
- 5.7 Our Referral Order Panel volunteer group largely comprised vulnerable and protected groups which, combined with our large geographical area and limited access to secure technology made the provision of our Panel work a challenge. Substitute Panel arrangements were instigated which sustained the oversight of the very small number of Orders that were imposed by the Courts. This natural break in our normal cycle of Panel work has resulted in a refresh of approach and the introduction of additional technology for our volunteers. We will also undertake a refreshed recruitment drive with the ambition to ensure that moving forward our volunteers represent a more diverse demography whilst also valuing our longer standing Panel Members.
- 5.8 Much is reported about Court backlogs generated by the pandemic situation. Our existing strong and supportive mutual relationship with the Youth Court facilitated a prompt and proactive response to managing Court lists and attendance with a view to addressing the backlog. In this we also worked with our neighbouring YOT, Coventry, with whom we share a Youth Court. It is pleasing to report that this joint partnership effort by Courts and YOTs to address the backlog has resulted in our Youth Court getting back to 'real time' quicker than many comparators.

- 5.9 As part of our Local Authority responsibilities we had prepared a COVID Recovery plan which included the arrangements to ensure COVID secure practice. The existence of a Business Continuity Plan that was pre pandemic assisted us in ensuring our Recovery Plan was comprehensive but also, to plan for the move out of lockdown. Throughout the period of the pandemic we have continued to provide a reception, duty , Court and Appropriate Adult office presence supported by a duty manager. Moving forward, our original COVID Recovery Plan has been modified in accordance with the changing times within the pandemic. In respect of the removal of restrictions, there has been a challenge in the changing government timescales for those plans and we have worked hard to ensure this does not create a start/stop approach to recovery. Presently, YJS is working towards increased office presence and ensuring that routine face to face contact with young people is always the norm, whilst recognising that some young people have thrived in the virtual environment. We have learned that a developed blended approach could well be effective in preventing offending.
- 5.10 The resumption of an ' in person' presence in Court, cells and the Secure Estate assists the reach, effectiveness and Safeguarding within our practice.

6. Challenges, risks, and issues

- 6.1 Warwickshire Youth Justice Service has sustained a realistic resourcing level and has plans to refocus some interventions on the emergence from the pandemic.
- 6.2 A realignment of resources and healthy staff turnover has produced a recruitment campaign with appointed staff awaiting take up post. The induction of new staff in an environment where some COVID related restrictions are still in place is a challenge and the Service is experiencing some capacity pressure. This is seen as short term and the arrival of new staff with new focus is seen as a real opportunity within the Service as we refocus our work on the emergence from lockdown.
- 6.3 With our Court work back in real time, we continue to encounter the challenge of being based in Court buildings that are no longer utilised for Youth Court work and having to provide time and resources for staff to work outside of County when attending Courts.
- 6.4 We have noted in our performance information the increasing use of Out of Court Disposals and at both a strategic and operational level we are seeking to ensure that these Disposals are both proportionate and in accordance with risk and need of the young people involved and the wider community. We need to ensure that our First Time Entrants population is monitored, and we increase the liaison with Targeted Youth support and schools to ensure that young people are diverted from the system before matters escalated. The reflections in the HMIP annual report on Youth Offending Teams in respect of the management of First Time Entrants and ensuring those diverted get services is something that is mirrored locally.

- 6.5 As we emerge from the pandemic, we need to ensure that we re-invigorate our work with Victims ensuring they retain their voice in the Youth Justice system. Our consultation with young people in respect of this Plan has indicated that young people often have a very different perception of risk and levels of victim empathy can be varied. The reinstatement of our Referral Order Panel members will also provide the opportunity to refresh the voice or presence of victims in Panel work.
- 6.6 Our work with EQUIP and action planning to address potential discrimination in our system is a real opportunity to drive forward on these issues which is welcomed both by our strategic partnership and the operational staff group.
- 6.7 A key performance challenge is the area of engagement in Education Training and Employment of our young people, again a concern that is identified in the HMIP Annual report. We are re-aligning our resources to create a dedicated YJS practitioner post, change the role of the EP (Educational Psychologist) Service in our work. There are also plans to receive part-time Speech and Language support for our young people. All of this combined with increased performance drill down is intended to improve our performance levels over the period of this planning cycle.
- 6.8 Recent involvements in a cross border (but out of area) Serious Case Review highlighted the need for quality communication and information sharing. We are confident that our business support and data responses are fit to respond to fulfil this ambition. The issue of young people who move across local government borders as part of County Lines or exploitation activity remains a challenge, but Warwickshire now has a cross border agreement in place with our neighbours to the West.
- 6.9 Our Youth Justice data is now managed within a centralised Corporate department and much work has been undertaken to ensure that the training and data quality functions remain as strong as has been historically the case. Given the current unreliability and historical nature of centrally generated PNC reoffending data, Warwickshire is exploring the potential to implement a more up to date reoffending toolkit that over time will plan to measure reoffending of those subject to Community Resolution which is a current gap highlighted in the HMIP Annual Report.
- 6.10 During the pandemic period WYJS has refreshed its approach to Quality Assurance of our work and is looking to ensure that lessons learned from audit cycles are cascaded to staff and produce changes for process but also in outcomes for children.
- 6.11 We are aware that we have a higher number of children serving sentences in custody than has recently been the case, although numbers remain small. Custody reviews are undertaken on all cases and our Chief Officer Board receives explanation and reassurance that those committed into the Secure Estate reflect a proportionate response to risk and offending.

6.12 Warwickshire continues to track and drive changes generated by our Standards for Youth Justice Audit, in particular concerns about transitions for young people be it as placements for Children in Care, changes in education provision, changes in health status, or the transition to adulthood via services from Probation.

7. How are we contributing to and learning from wider Youth Justice sector improvements?

7.1 Three of our senior managers have been involved in the work of the national YJSIP providing coaching and mentoring, management training and participating in Peer Reviews (when pandemic restrictions permit)

7.2 We have also appreciated advice and guidance in respect of our Out of Court disposal processes from YJSIP including proportionate Youth Justice focussed assessments.

8. Service improvement plan and the ambition for what we will achieve

8.1 Improvements for 2021/22 will focus upon:

- Engagement of young offenders in Education, Training and Employment
- Concerns about the prevalence of Youth Violence and the development of a Prevention Strategy
- Continuous improvement in our Out of Court Disposal processes and the rise in First Time Entrants into our system.
- Cycle of continuous improvement in practice and recording, supported by our improving Quality Assurance processes
- Development of a bespoke parenting approach with direct links but distinct from our work with young people.
- Provision of improved technology for sessional and volunteer staff
- Induction and training of new and existing Staff. We have an ambitious training and development programme including a focus on the trauma informed approach, Restorative Practice, practice improvements following audit findings, AIM (Harmful Sexual Behaviour), refresh of Anti discriminatory practice training and development for staff

List of Acronyms and Local Organisations

AIM	licenced model of work utilised to address Harmful Sexual Behaviour
ASSETplus	nationally prescribed core assessment for Youth Justice in respect of risk and need factors
Barnardo's	Voluntary sector provided utilised by YJS to provide intensive remand accommodation and support
COB	Chief Officer Board (local equivalent of YOT Management Board)
COMPASS	Local substance misuse service for young people

OFFICIAL

EQUIP	Local Equalities provider/consultancy approved by WCC
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (government body with mandate to inspect Youth Offending Teams)
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
OOCD	Out of Court Disposals (work in the pre Court space with lower risk offending)
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
RISE	Local Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) provider
SFYJ	Standards for Youth Justice, nationally prescribed standards of work for YJ delivery
SWP	Safer Warwickshire Partnership
Viewpoint	Provider of bespoke software for Youth Justice customer feedback
WCC	Warwickshire County Council
WSB	Warwickshire Safeguarding Board
WYJS	Warwickshire Youth Justice Service
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YJS	Youth Justice Service
YOT	Youth Offending Team

Reports referenced in this report

- **Child First Justice:**
[https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/report/Child First Justice the research evidence Summary report /14153162](https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/report/Child_First_Justice_the_research_evidence_Summary_report_/14153162)
- **YJB Strategic Plan 2021-2024 :**
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966200/YJB Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966200/YJB_Strategic_Plan_2021_-_2024.pdf)
- **A thematic review of the work of youth offending services during the COVID-19 pandemic can be viewed online here:**
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wpcontent/uploads/sites/5/2020/11/201110-A-thematic-review-of-the-work-of-youth-offendingservices-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf>
- **Ethnic disproportionality in remand and sentencing in the youth justice system:**
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/952483/Ethnic disproportionality in remand and sentencing in the youth justice system.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/952483/Ethnic_disproportionality_in_remand_and_sentencing_in_the_youth_justice_system.pdf)
- **HMIP Annual Report: Inspection of youth offending services (2019-2020) :**
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/yar2020/>
- **The Lammy Review :**
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf
- **2020 Update :** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-racial-disparity-in-the-criminal-justice-system-2020>

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Update on Scrutiny Review

20 July 2021

Recommendation

That the Committee considers and comments upon the findings of the independent review into Overview and Scrutiny

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. In February 2020, Dr Jane Martin CBE was appointed to provide advice upon appropriate principles for scrutiny in light of the statutory guidance, key opportunities to improve upon our current ways of operating scrutiny, and how WCC might move forward to develop its scrutiny approach to deliver on the Council Plan and objectives.
- 1.2. The review was conducted via a series of remote interviews with members, officers and Corporate Board, and included a desk top analysis of past agendas, minutes and Task and Finish Group outputs and covered the following themes:
 - Culture and behaviours;
 - Reinforcing the value and importance of challenge;
 - Ownership of recommendations and actions;
 - Support for scrutiny members;
 - Aligning scrutiny more effectively to our Council Plan objectives;
 - and
 - How to involve the public in scrutiny more effectively.
- 1.3. The feedback was positive and highlighted examples of good practice including the commitment of all involved to improvement and the support for the review at member level. However, despite some good examples (particularly in recent times with member working groups on Covid recovery) there is a conclusion that the scrutiny function needs to be reinvigorated and a principles-based approach was recommended to reset and drive the refreshed approach, reflecting the principles of good scrutiny embedded in statutory guidance:
 - independent ownership;
 - driving improvement;
 - critical friend challenge; and
 - public voice.
- 1.4. There was positive feedback of the role of Democratic Services officers to date and an acknowledgement of resource constraints.

2. Opportunities to Improve

2.1 The review outlined a number of opportunities for improvement. These were:

- **Parity of esteem:** Scrutiny must have an authoritative voice and support to enhance executive policy development and decision-making.
- **Scrutinising performance:** Scrutiny discussions should be clearly led so that presentations add value, there is a clear line of sight to corporate success indicators and interpretation of the data is usefully aligned to risk.
- **Build a corporate partnership:** Scrutiny should hold the executive to account where necessary. Scrutiny members own the process recognising the wider public interest for Warwickshire. The agenda should be focused on corporate business with purposeful evidence-based discussion.
- **Work smarter:** Meetings should be more flexible, proactive and responsive to corporate priorities. Meetings should be collegiate, constructive and challenging.
- **Member support and training:** Members and officers involved in training should be supported and provided with appropriate training to maximise the benefit from their roles in the scrutiny process.
- **Develop external focus:** Imaginative thinking to reach local people is needed. Scrutiny should be aligned with public consultation exercises to inform executive strategy.

3. Principles proposed

3.1 The report focussed on a series of principles that would drive the refreshed approach. These were:

- **Partnership:** The scrutiny function is an integral, authoritative corporate partner with the executive in policy development and decision-making. This partnership is focused and aligned with the council's strategic objectives, corporate performance indicators, and the corporate business and planning cycle. Whilst the function is independent of Cabinet and owned by scrutiny members it will be flexible, dynamic and pro-active in support of the executive decision-making process.
- **Purposeful:** The scrutiny function is focused on making an impact and exerting influence on corporate policy and practice to develop learning and improvement. Its main aim is to ensure WCC can be the best it can be by building corporate experience and expertise based on a sense of

place, especially in a fast-paced transformational change environment.

- **Challenging:** The scrutiny function will provide constructive cross-party challenge to hold the executive to account based on evidence and reflecting the views of local people. This includes both internal and external scrutiny. As 'critical friends', scrutiny members should respectfully ask the tough questions of the executive and professional officers of the Council, as well as external partners and providers, from an informed perspective and expect considered and informative answers.
- **Transparent:** The scrutiny function should shine a light internally and externally. It is an important vehicle for public consultation which should engage external partners, local people, and service users, and represent their views. Overview and Scrutiny should provide open and transparent scrutiny in the public interest to enhance the legitimacy of the local authority and build public trust and confidence.

4. Recommendations from the review

4.1 The recommendations reached in the review were as follows:

- The Council should relaunch the scrutiny function, championed by the Leader and Cabinet, with a corporate 'common purpose' WCC scrutiny guide setting out the ambition and expectations for the function based on a partnership of mutual respect, transparency and constructive challenge. This should highlight a behaviour code based on the 3 C's: *collegiate, constructive and challenging*.
- Create greater alignment with corporate objectives by restructuring scrutiny committees in parallel to foster greater scrutiny of corporate themes and objectives and corporate performance. In the current circumstances, restructuring to follow the change portfolio themes could be an effective way forward. Any restructure would have to take into account statutory requirements.
- Provide recognised authoritative leadership and direction for the scrutiny function by creating a new role of Chair of Overview and Scrutiny to chair a new Overview and Scrutiny Panel comprised of all scrutiny Chairs. This post could be an elected position by all council members.
- Greater use of virtual meetings technology and, where appropriate, social media to engage the public, service providers and external partners and encourage elected member active participation. A move to allow remote meetings beyond May 2021 will require legislative change
- Consider creating a dedicated team of Overview and Scrutiny officers resourced adequately, to provide data (particularly performance data) and information, advice and support to O&S Chairs and members, including liaison with strategic directors and senior staff.

- Review the timetable for scrutiny committees to ensure meetings are held at the optimum time alongside the corporate business cycle and Cabinet meetings. Allow for greater meeting and agenda flexibility and greater use of Task and Finish Groups for scrutiny work, from single issue to corporate strategic themes, conducted to a strict brief and timescale with a project planning methodology. Dynamic Task and Finish Groups should be able to conduct a review in as little as one day where appropriate. But also conduct in-depth longer pieces of work.
- Making use of virtual technology, in-house training and briefings should be provided for scrutiny Chairs and members on appointment and on-going, including subject updates as required and skills development. The Adult Health and Social Care Committee model of in-committee member briefings should be rolled out further. Committees should conduct an annual self-evaluation. A suite of scrutiny questions may be a good prompt to build confidence.

5. Points to Consider

- 5.1 The Committee is requested to consider the recommendations and suggestions summarised above and set out in more detail in the Independent Review Report at Annex 1, and to provide its views on the way forward for the refresh of scrutiny activity in Warwickshire.
- 5.2 The following points and questions are intended to help that consideration:
- 5.2.1 Does the Council wish to consider reconfiguring the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to align with the Council Plan or change portfolio themes or in some other way? If so, the practicalities of this approach would need to be considered to ensure that we meet statutory obligations, that scrutiny covers all Council functions, that there is balance across committees and that routeing is clear for cross over items.
- 5.2.2 How should agendas be reinvigorated?
- 5.2.3 What are members views on the opportunities identified to improve (Section 2 of this report) and are there any others which members would wish to highlight?
- 5.2.4 Do members support the principles that the review recommends? (Section 3 of this report)
- 5.2.5 Do members support the recommendations from the review (Section 4 of this report), and if so,
- How could we make greater use of technology to support Overview and Scrutiny? What type of meetings would be better delivered remotely or would members prefer to see continue remotely (if the law allows)?

- How would training be best delivered and should we consider a bespoke training plan for all Scrutiny members?
- From an officer perspective, creating a dedicated team of Democratic Services Officers (DSO) to support Overview and Scrutiny could create unintended recruitment and retention issues within the Service. A preferable option would be to consider how we enhance the Overview and Scrutiny support whilst retaining roles which cover both aspects of the DSO role (committee support and scrutiny support).

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The revenue implications of any change cannot be quantified at this time as it will depend upon the recommendations received and the working up the implementation plan. Full consideration will be given to the cost of any proposals which will be included within the report to council noted at para 8.2

7. Environmental Implications

- 7.1 An increase in digital meetings could reduce journeys to Shire Hall and thus have a positive impact. Whether that is possible will depend in large part upon whether legislation is permanently altered to enable such meetings to go ahead. Other environmental implications may present themselves as the proposals are developed and will be dealt with more fully in the report to council noted at para 8.2

8. Timetable for the decision and next steps

- 8.1 The Report was presented to Leaders and Deputies meeting in February 2021. A duplicate of this report was taken to the other Overview and Scrutiny committee meetings in February and March in order to obtain views and suggestions for developing proposals for future scrutiny.
- 8.2 Officers are preparing a proposal and implementation plan for discussion at Corporate Board in July, prior to a report to Cabinet and Council in the Autumn.

Appendices

1. Report of Jane Martin OBE

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Nichola Vine	nicholavine@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury	sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Director	Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Member		

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication: None

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**Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Function
Warwickshire County Council**

FINAL REPORT

**Dr Jane Martin CBE
October 2020**

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WCC (consistent with revised statutory guidance May 2019) believe effective overview and scrutiny should:

- Provide constructive ‘critical friend’ challenge;
 - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
 - Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
 - Drive improvement in public services.
- Scrutiny will not be effective unless an organisation’s culture, behaviours and attitudes support it
 - Resourcing of scrutiny is critical to its long-term success and to embedding the culture within any authority
 - Effective scrutiny requires good planning. The recommendations of scrutiny should make a tangible difference to the work of the authority and, in order to do so, require a long-term agenda and forward plan that is flexible enough to accommodate any matters of urgency that may crop up.
 - Warwickshire’s model of specialist OSCs supported by Democratic Services Officers and with expert input from specialist officers is a valid model, provided it is adequately resourced but there are other models and approaches which may provide a greater level of benefit in the new landscape we are operating in

Corporate Board agreed that now is an appropriate time to review the approach to scrutiny. The Leader of the Council is fully supportive of this review.

A final report will present recommendations to Corporate Board and subsequently members on:

- (a) appropriate principles for scrutiny (considering the challenges above and in light of the statutory guidance),
- (b) feedback on key opportunities to improve upon our current ways of operating scrutiny, and
- (c) a recommendation as to how WCC might move forward to develop its scrutiny approach to deliver on the Council Plan and objectives.

Methodology

In order to gain a broad insight into the current arrangements, challenges and opportunities of the overview and scrutiny function, telephone interviews were conducted with 27 participants during June, July and August. These included:

The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council
Cabinet Portfolio Holders
Chair of Scrutiny Committees
Representatives from each of the political parties
The Chief Executive
Strategic Directors
Democratic Services Officers

The interviews were confidential and no interviewee will be quoted. The interviewer took written notes of the discussions for the sole purpose of this report which will be destroyed when the report is received and signed off.

Interviews were based on questions organised around the following themes:

1. How do we embed scrutiny in the DNA of the organisation and drive the necessary culture and behaviours required to ensure scrutiny adds value to delivery of our organisational priority outcomes?
2. How do we give voice to and drive a change in the approach/attitude to scrutiny by members and officers; i.e. Reinforce the value and importance of challenge, remove the perception that it is “fault finding”, and drive an effective and collaborative approach to scrutiny which is impactful?
3. How do we manage disagreements in approach - i.e. executive-scrutiny protocols etc.?
4. How do we embed ownership with members and officers of recommendations from scrutiny, and ensure that the actions that arise are followed through and monitored?
5. How do we ensure scrutiny members are supported in having an independent and open mind-set and have the right skills set to fulfil their role?
6. How do we align scrutiny more effectively to our Council Plan objectives – including commitments to climate change and commercial approach to problem solving?

7. How do involve the public in scrutiny more effectively?

Desk-based background review of relevant corporate documents including minutes of scrutiny meetings was also undertaken.

Throughout this report the overview and scrutiny function will be referred to as the scrutiny function or scrutiny.

Overview

Warwickshire County Council currently operates with four Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Resources and Fire & Rescue; Communities; Children & Young People; Adult Social Care and Health with an additional joint Health Committee. The Council has a Conservative majority group of 33 elected members with small opposition groups formed by 7 Labour, 8 Liberal Democrat and 2 Green Party representatives. In addition, there are 4 Independents. There are 3 vacant seats at the current time. The Council has in the past often had no political party in overall control. The ways of working from this tradition seem to have coloured a consensus approach and some deference to officers which persists. Reflecting the current political environment, members of the majority group have been nominated for the Chairs of all Scrutiny committees. The Leader of the Council and her Deputy both value the importance of an effective scrutiny function and want to encourage a more impactful role.

Across all interviewees there was clear support for developing an effective scrutiny function. In most cases, from a range of perspectives, interviewees were positive about the work carried out and felt that the Cabinet were open to different views, ideas and challenge. But there is inconsistency between committees and the contribution of committee members, sometimes coloured by party politics, and often a general lack of constructive challenge. Reasons for this are not entirely clear, but it is certainly felt that scrutiny members need to be fully supported, with clearly presented information; that they need to keep their knowledge base up to date; and fully understand the role they can play and the influence that can be brought to bear on corporate policy development and decision. Frustration expressed around some of these issues demonstrates the need for change, and the willingness to change. The potential of the scrutiny function is not currently being developed or harnessed to support the strategic ambition of the Council.

There is, however, much good practice. Some Chairs are particularly mentioned for their skilled chairing and effective approach to reviews which have been greatly valued. For example, the cross-party work of the Climate Change Working Group; external scrutiny of GP provision; and the scrutiny review of Home/School Transport.

The Council clearly fosters good relationships. There is good cross-party working and a good working relationship between executive and scrutiny. Although scrutiny appears to make few recommendations back to the executive, when they do these are fairly considered. It is notable that although not formally scrutiny groups, the cross-party Cabinet Working Groups for post-Covid strategy development have been universally welcomed, not least for the clear focus and deadlines. The regular agenda setting meetings between scrutiny committee Chairs and their portfolio holder counterparts (spokes and chairs meetings) supported by officers are clearly very effective. It must be said, however, that although Council officers

are supportive of scrutiny, scrutiny committee members expressed a sense that they felt the needs of executive members were usually prioritised.

All concerned were positive about the support from Democratic Services Officers and valued the role they played. But it was acknowledged that resources had been pared back over recent years and the department was mainly focused on administration. The lack of resources was most acute in limiting the number of task and finish scrutiny groups. These groups were regarded as the most effective way of working but required proper resourcing which was now lacking. Resourcing may also have a knock-on effect on public engagement arrangements and there could be opportunities to build on the corporate 'Let's Talk' public consultation exercise. In any event, there is potential for more imaginative thinking on public involvement in scrutiny, which is often best tapped into in a task and finish group environment. Whilst there are some very good examples of external scrutiny which involve external partners and user groups, there is more that could be done. It was acknowledged that the geography of the County could mitigate against participation and that the use of technology for more remote engagement could be an opportunity

In the main, however, the scrutiny function seems to be 'stuck in a rut' and needs to be reinvigorated. Routine scrutiny committee meetings are in danger of losing their way based on a formulaic cycle with the addition of members' topics of interest. Indeed the balance currently being struck is between review of individual scrutiny members' special interests which motivate engagement, and effective scrutiny of corporate business (especially performance) and good overview of policy development which is not yet seen as meaningful by some members. There is also frustration on the part of many members at the length of some agendas, and the way business is conducted which can stifle robust discussion. Scrutiny business needs to be much more purposeful and prioritised in relation to the Council corporate cycle and forward plan. Across the piece scrutiny members need to be better engaged in this regard and scrutiny Chairs need to be both supported and more open to achieving this. The routinised approach to committee meetings with a set timetable is frustrating for many, including the executive, and means that scrutiny is not timely and too slow. Indeed, many interviewees were critical of the lack of flexibility and pro-activity. This devalues the role of scrutiny. The Council's ambitious plans for transformational change only highlights the lack of dynamism.

Appropriate principles for scrutiny

The following principles should be adopted to reset and drive a refreshed approach to the overview and scrutiny function. They reflect the principles of good scrutiny embedded in statutory guidance: independent ownership; driving improvement; critical friend challenge and public voice.

- 1. Partnership: The scrutiny function is an integral, authoritative corporate partner with the executive in policy development and decision-making.** This partnership is focused and aligned with the council's strategic objectives, corporate performance indicators, and the corporate business and planning cycle. Whilst the function is independent of Cabinet and owned by scrutiny members it will be flexible, dynamic and pro-active in support of the executive decision-making process.
- 2. Purposeful: The scrutiny function is focused on making an impact and exerting influence on corporate policy and practice to develop learning and improvement.** Its main aim is to ensure WCC can be the best it can be by building corporate experience and expertise based on a sense of place, especially in a fast-paced transformational change environment.
- 3. Challenging: The scrutiny function will provide constructive cross-party challenge to hold the executive to account based on evidence and reflecting the views of local people.** This includes both internal and external scrutiny. As 'critical friends', scrutiny members should respectfully ask the tough questions of the executive and professional officers of the Council, as well as external partners and provider, from an informed perspective and expect considered and informative answers.
- 4. Transparent: The scrutiny function should shine a light internally and externally.** It is an important vehicle for public consultation which should engage external partners, local people and service users, and represent their views. O&S should provide open and transparent scrutiny in the public interest to enhance the legitimacy of the local authority and build public trust and confidence.

Key opportunities to improve

There are a number of key areas where there are significant opportunities to improve.

Parity of esteem: Scrutiny should not be seen as a second-class function. It must have an authoritative voice. This means that all members and officers should demonstrate in their day to day practice how best to realise the potential for an effective scrutiny function to enhance executive policy development and decision-making.

Scrutinising performance: The way in which corporate performance is scrutinised is not yet satisfactory. The way in which performance data is presented to scrutiny has been carefully considered and reviewed recently, and the general view is that this is now better, but there is still room for improvement so that scrutiny members make the best use of the data. Scrutiny discussions should be clearly led so that presentations add value, there is a clear line of sight to corporate success indicators and interpretation of the data is usefully aligned to risk. Effort put into this by both officers and members will pay dividends

Build a corporate partnership: From a strong base of good working relationship and mutual member and officer respect there must be more rigorous challenge from scrutiny and acknowledgement that the scrutiny function should hold the executive to account where necessary: a 'one Council' model. The executive and senior management are open and welcome the challenge from scrutiny. It is notable that scrutiny is rarely the theatre for oppositional politics but scrutiny members must collectively own the process and not depend on officers. This means more rigour but best behaviour. It is also importance that members get the balance right between representing the views of their constituents and recognising the wider public interest for Warwickshire. They should set the agenda but be focused on corporate business with purposeful evidence -based discussion. All scrutiny members from all parties have a role to play in this endeavour.

It is also notable that the recent opportunity to work together to develop common aims in Cabinet cross-party working groups post-Covid has been universally welcomed. To build this partnership in practice, scrutiny needs to work cross-boundaries and not be silo focused. Scrutiny chairs and members should be thinking of how they can impact constructively on policy development and decisions. This does not mean routinely 'clearing' executive decisions but prioritising and acknowledging where challenge and accountability is most needed. It also means working with senior management and portfolio-holders but also holding them to account. Scrutiny needs to understand the evidence-base for policy and decisions and the impact on local people but recognise corporate objectives and understand that the executive has to work effectively and often quickly to respond to local issues and/or government initiatives. The overview function of policy is equally important in driving

transformation, improvement and learning by shaping policy throughout the annual corporate planning cycle.

Work smarter: Scrutiny meetings vary in their practice and impact but there is much potential for improvement. The 'chairs and spokes' meetings work well but still agendas can be too long and packed with pet topics. Meetings must be more flexible, pro-active and responsive to corporate priorities. The respectful environment must not be cosy but nor should it be confrontational. Behaviour in meetings should follow 3 C's: collegiate, constructive and challenging. The development of virtual meetings using remote technology has shown that more efficient use of time can be made. Many interviewees said this should be continued not least to avoid travel time and costs.

Member support and training: Scrutiny members need adequate support from officers across the Council so they are properly informed and advised. This is especially the case for scrutiny Chairs. This review presents an opportunity to redefine 'what good looks like' for scrutiny and agree how best to achieve this. It seems that resources for training and support is lacking but virtual technology provides a cost-effective opportunity for in-house briefings and scrutiny skills development. The in-committee member training initiated in the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee was acknowledged as effective and helpful

Develop external focus: There are some very good examples of external scrutiny reviews including transport providers and Academy Trusts, but this requires sufficient resources. Scrutiny is the Council function designed to gather the views and experiences of service users and providers to feed into the corporate cycle. Imaginative thinking to reach local people and not just known activists is needed. A one Council approach means that scrutiny should be aligned with and can often lead public consultation exercises to inform executive strategy.

Recommendations to develop WCC approach to scrutiny

1. The Council should relaunch the scrutiny function, championed by the Leader and Cabinet, with a corporate 'common purpose' WCC scrutiny guide setting out the ambition and expectations for the function based on a partnership of mutual respect, transparency and constructive challenge. This should highlight a behaviour code based on the 3 C's: collegiate, constructive and challenging.
2. Provide recognised authoritative leadership and direction for the scrutiny function by creating a new role of Chair of Overview and Scrutiny to chair a new Overview and Scrutiny Panel comprised all scrutiny Chairs. This post could be an elected position by all council members.
3. Create greater alignment with corporate objectives by restructuring scrutiny committees in parallel to foster greater scrutiny of corporate themes and objectives and corporate performance. In the current circumstances, restructuring to follow the four change portfolio themes; Place, Economy and Climate; Community; Health and Wellbeing and Social Care; and Organisation could be an effective way forward. Any restructure would have to take into account statutory requirements.
4. Review the timetable for scrutiny committees to ensure meetings are held at the optimum time alongside the corporate business cycle and Cabinet meetings. Allow for greater meeting and agenda flexibility and greater use of Task and Finish Groups for scrutiny work, from single issue to corporate strategic themes, conducted to a strict brief and timescale with a project planning methodology. Dynamic Task and Finish Groups should be able to conduct a review in as little as one day where appropriate. But also conduct in-depth longer pieces of work.
5. Create a dedicated team of O&S officers resourced adequately to provide data (particularly performance data) and information, advice and support to O&S Chairs and members, including liaison with strategic directors and senior staff.
6. Greater use of virtual meetings technology and, where appropriate, social media to engage the public, service providers and external partners and encourage elected member active participation.
7. Making use of virtual technology, in-house training and briefings should be provided for scrutiny Chairs and members on appointment and on-going, including subject updates as required and skills development. The Adult Health and Social Care Committee model of in-committee member briefings should be rolled out further.

Committees should conduct an annual self-evaluation. A suite of scrutiny questions may be a good prompt to build confidence.

Dr Jane Martin CBE 2 October 2020

Appendix 1

List of interviewees

1. Councillor Adrian Warwick
(Chair of Resources and Fire & Rescue OSC)
2. Councillor Alan Cockburn
(Chair of Communities OSC)
3. Councillor Andy Crump
(Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety)
4. Councillor Colin Hayfield
(Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning)
5. Councillor Heather Timms
(Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture)
6. Councillor Izzi Seccombe
(Leader of the Council and Conservative Group and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development)
7. Councillor Jeff Clarke
(Portfolio Holder for Transport & Planning)
8. Councillor Jeff Morgan
(Portfolio Holder for Children's Services)
9. Councillor Jerry Roodhouse
(Leader of the Liberal Democrats)
10. Councillor John Holland
(Labour member)
11. Councillor Jonathan Chilvers
(Leader of the Green Party)
12. Councillor Kam Kaur
(Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation)
13. Councillor Keith Kondakor

(Green Party Member)

14. Councillor Les Caborn
(Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care & Health)

 15. Councillor Peter Butlin
(Deputy Leader of the Council and Conservative Group and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property)

 16. Councillor Wallace Redford
(Chair of Adult Social Care & Health OSC)

 17. Councillor Yousef Dahmash
(Chair of Children and Young People's OSC)
-

18. Helen Barnsley – Democratic Services Officer

19. Mark Ryder – Strategic Director (Communities)

20. Monica Fogarty – Chief Executive

21. Nic Vine - Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Legal and Democratic)

22. Nigel Minns – Strategic Director (People)

23. Paul Spencer – Senior Democratic Services Officer

24. Paul Williams – Democratic Services Team Leader

25. Rob Powell– Strategic Director (Resources)

26. Sarah Duxbury - Assistant Director (Governance & Policy)

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Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

20 July 2021

Council Plan 2020 – 2025 Year End Progress Report Period under review: April 2020 to March 2021

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Considers and comments on the progress of the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 - 2025 for the period as contained in the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council Plan Year End Performance Report for the period April 1st, 2020 to March 31st 2021 was considered and approved by Cabinet on 17th June. The report provides an overview of progress of the key elements of the Council Plan, specifically in relation to performance against Key Business Measures (KBMs), strategic risks and workforce management. A separate Financial Monitoring report for the period covering both the revenue and capital budgets, reserves and delivery of the savings plan was presented and considered at the 17th June Cabinet meeting.
- 1.2. This report draws on information extracted from both Cabinet reports to provide this Committee with information relevant to its remit.
- 1.3. Comprehensive performance reporting is now enabled through the following link to Power BI [full OSC Yearend 2020/21 Performance Report](#)

2. Council Plan 2020 - 2025: Strategic Context and Performance Commentary

- 2.1 The Council Plan 2020 – 2025 aims to achieve two high level Outcomes:
 - **Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent;** and,
 - **Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure.**

Progress to achieve these outcomes is assessed against 58 KBMs.

Outcome	No. of KBMs	No. of KBMs available for reporting at Year End
Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent	28	23
Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure	12	9
WCC making the best use of its resources	18	16

2.2 As detailed at Quarter 2 there are 8 KBMs that have been paused from reporting due to national suspension of inspection or examination regimes due to Covid-19 and the 6 KBMs pertinent to this OSC are not included in any way in this report.

- % of Year 6 children (aged 10-11 years) in Warwickshire who are classified as obese;
- % of Children receiving a 6-8 week health check (C8i);
- % of children and young people seen within 18 weeks (Referral to Treatment Time) amalgamated across the three Clinical Commissioning Group (CCGs)
- % of Warwickshire pupils attending schools (including nursery schools) judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted;
- % of Warwickshire pupils achieving the expected standard for reading, writing and maths at key stages 1 and 2, and level 4 English and maths at key stage 4; and
- % of disadvantaged pupils in Warwickshire achieving the expected standard for reading, writing and maths at key stages 1 and 2, and level 4 English and maths at key stage 4.

2.3 Overall, the Council has sustained robust performance across the board in the face of the challenges posed by the pandemic, including increasing demand, new service delivery to meet the challenges of the pandemic and significant changes in how services are delivered. As WCC returns towards a more business as usual situation as restrictions are loosened, Services are redirecting their focus onto their core work and this is reflected in KBM performance. Of the 58 KBMs, 11 are in the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Given the 6 which have been paused as discounted, of the remaining 5 available for reporting at Year End, 40% (2) are reported as being On Track and 60% (3) KBMs are reported as not being Not on Track.

Chart 1 below summarises KBM status at Year End by agreed Outcomes. for the year end.

Children and Young People OSC KBM Status

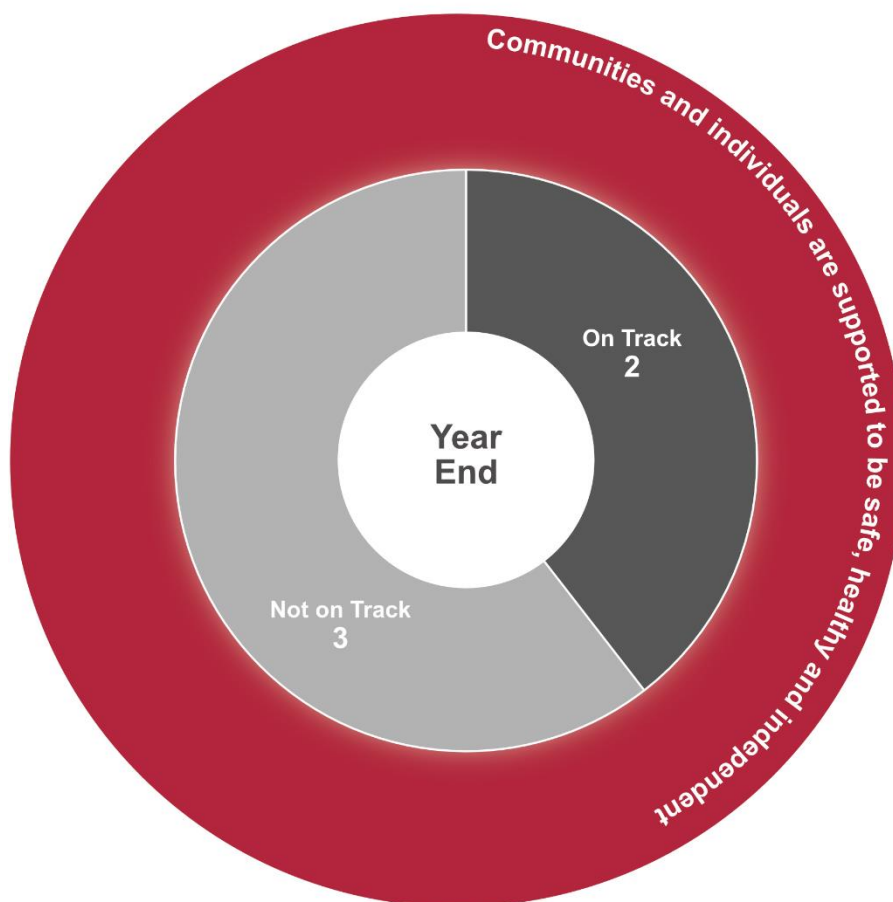
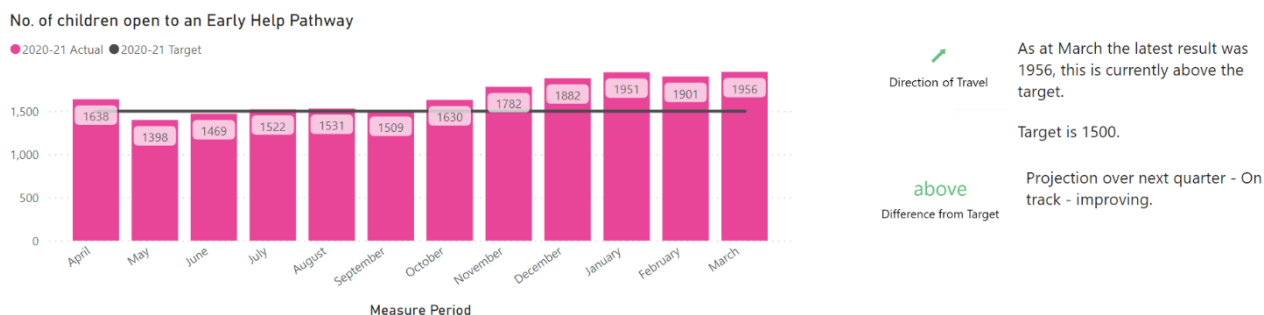


Chart 1

2.4 Of the 40% (2) KBMs which are On Track there is 1 measure where performance is of note. No. of children open to an Early Help Pathway has consistently remained On Track since Quarter 3 19/20. The detail is in Table 1 below:

Warwickshire’s communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent

No. of children open to an Early Help Pathway



Current performance narrative:
 There has been a 40% increase in Early Health Pathway to Change plans from May 2020 to March 2021. Please note a data cleanse exercise was completed in April 2020, and as such the increase has been measured from May 2020. In Quarter 4 the service has seen a high number of families stepped down from social care to early help, 74 in January 2021,

which has contributed to an increase in plans. There was a small decrease in February 2021, which reflects school half term holidays, and increase in March, ahead of the Easter summer holidays.

Improvement activity:

The service will continue to monitor management information. High demand and complex family need are leading to an increase in the number of plans. Demand is also influenced by children returning to schools and more children being identified as in need and families being transferred from social care to early help.

The service will continue to support parents access self-help and self-support, which does not require an Early Help Pathway to Change plan.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: On Track - improving

The expectation is that the trajectory will continue to increase due to the increase demand.

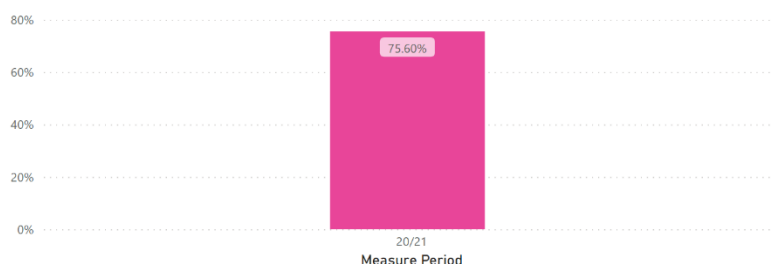
Table 1

In addition there are 4 Proxy measures that are of note:

Warwickshire’s economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training and skills and infrastructure
% of Warwickshire pupils achieving grade 4 or above in English and Maths GCSE

% of Warwickshire pupils achieving grade 4 or above in English and maths GCSE

● Actual ● Target



n/a
Difference from Target
As at 20/21 the latest result was 75.6%

n/a
Direction of Travel
Projection over next quarter - N/A

Current performance narrative:

Data cannot be compared to previous years data due to the exceptional circumstances with exams being cancelled and Centre Assessed grades being awarded. However, Warwickshire performed above the national average of 71.2% and above statistical neighbours at 72.0%.

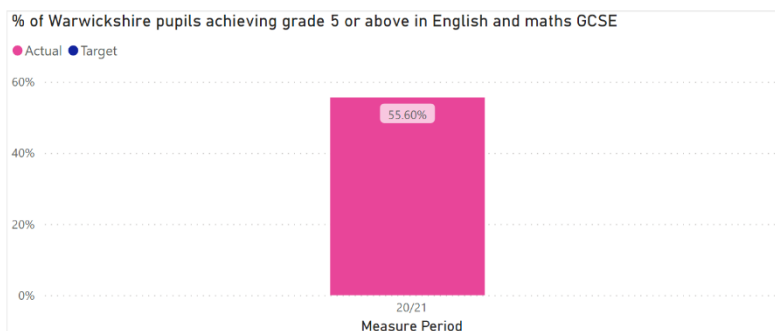
Improvement activity:

Improvement activity to support this measure remains in place to maintain or improve standards and in preparation for the reinstatement of examination frameworks in 2022.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not Applicable

Not applicable as the proxy measures will cease once the examination framework is reinstated in 2022.

% of Warwickshire all pupils achieving grades 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs



n/a
Difference from Target
As at 20/21 the latest result was 55.6%

n/a
Direction of Travel
Projection over next quarter - N/A

Current performance narrative:

Data cannot be compared to previous years data due to the exceptional circumstances with exams being cancelled and Centre Assessed Grades being awarded. However, Warwickshire performance above the national average of 49.9% and above statistical neighbours at 49.4%.

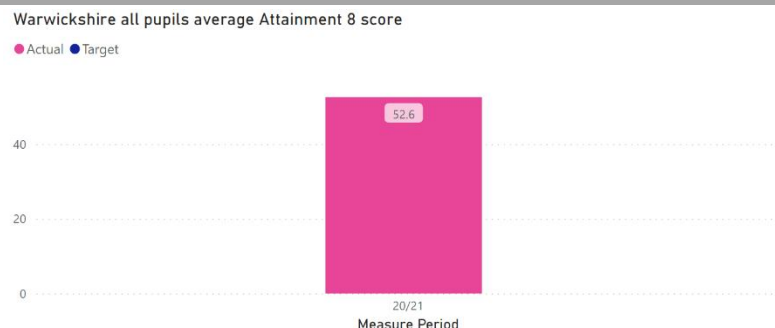
Improvement activity:

Improvement activity to support this measure remains in place to maintain or improve standards and in preparation for the reinstatement of examination frameworks in 2022.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not Applicable

Not applicable as the proxy measures will cease once the examination framework is reinstated in 2022.

Warwickshire all pupils average Attainment 8 score



n/a
Difference from Target
As at 20/21 the latest result was 52.6%

n/a
Direction of Travel
Projection over next quarter - N/A

Current performance narrative:

Data cannot be compared to previous years data due to the exceptional circumstances with exams being cancelled and Centre Assessed Grades being awarded. Again, Warwickshire performed above the national average of 50.2% and above statistical neighbours at 50.0%.

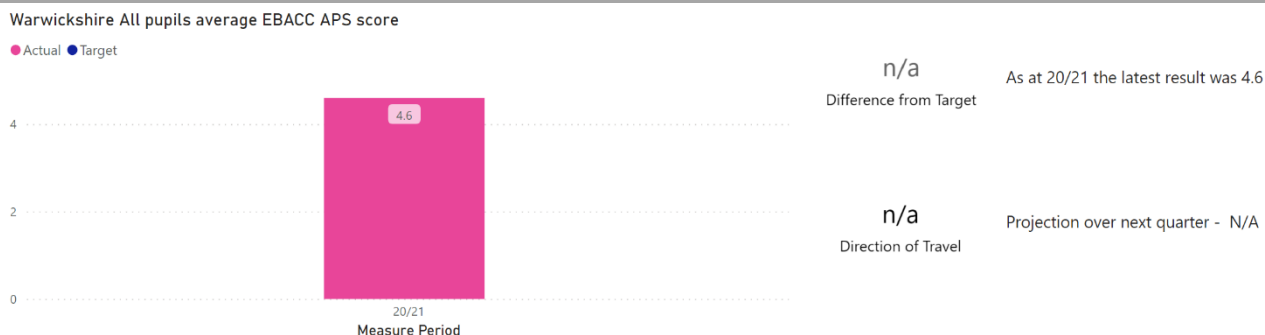
Improvement activity:

Improvement activity to support this measure remains in place to maintain or improve standards and in preparation for the reinstatement of examination frameworks in 2022.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not Applicable

Not applicable as the proxy measures will cease once the examination framework is reinstated in 2022.

Warwickshire All pupils average English Baccalaureate Average Point Score



Current performance narrative:

Data cannot be compared to previous years data due to the exceptional circumstances with exams being cancelled and Centre Assessed Grades being awarded. However, Warwickshire performed above the national average of 4.4 and statistical neighbours at 4.4.

Improvement activity:

Improvement activity to support this measure remains in place to maintain or improve standards and in preparation for the reinstatement of examination frameworks in 2022.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not Applicable

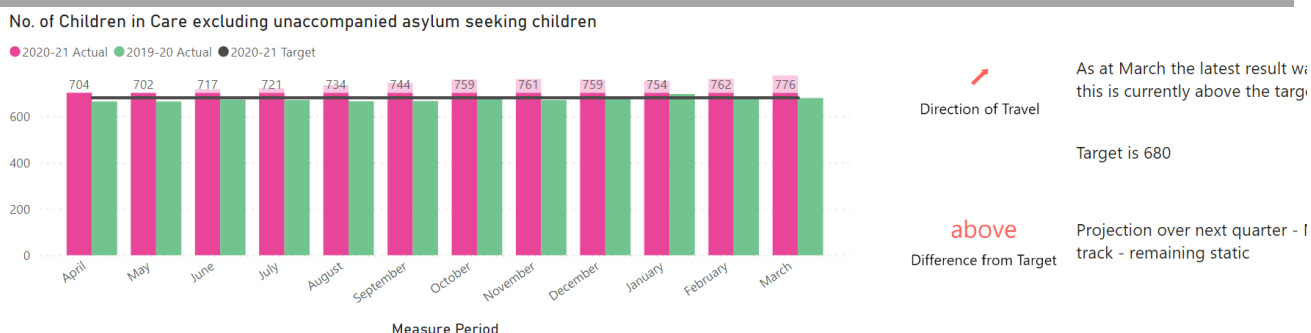
Not applicable as the proxy measures will cease once the examination framework is reinstated in 2022.

Table 2

- 2.5 Of the 60% (3) KBMs that are Not on Track, 1 KBM requires highlighting. No. of children in care (CiC) excluding unaccompanied asylum seeking children has consistently remained not on track since Quarter 3 19/20. Table 2 below details the current performance narrative, improvement activity and explanation of projected trajectory for this measure:

Warwickshire’s communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent

No. of Children in Care (CiC) excluding unaccompanied asylum seeking children



Current performance narrative:

In light of Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions, there has been a delay in court proceedings

and assessments being completed, which has led to a delay in discharging children from care, moving children to adoption or rehabilitating children home.

The courts have started hearings, however there is a backlog and the service are still waiting for court times. Due to delayed court timescales, some assessments need to be reviewed to ensure they are up to date.

As at March 2021 there are 859 children in care including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Improvement activity:

There is significant oversight and assurance that the right children are in care, these are working effectively. The throughput or flow of children leaving care has increased the number of children in care due to the pandemic.

A number of work areas within the Children and Families Change Programme will help to reduce the number of children in care, for example expanding and increasing Family Group Conferences, improving support to Special Guardians and increasing support to families. In August 2021 the service will have a new Adolescent Support Team working with young people to prevent them coming into care, in addition the team will also include a Homeless Prevention Officer working with 16-17 year olds who are being presented as homeless.

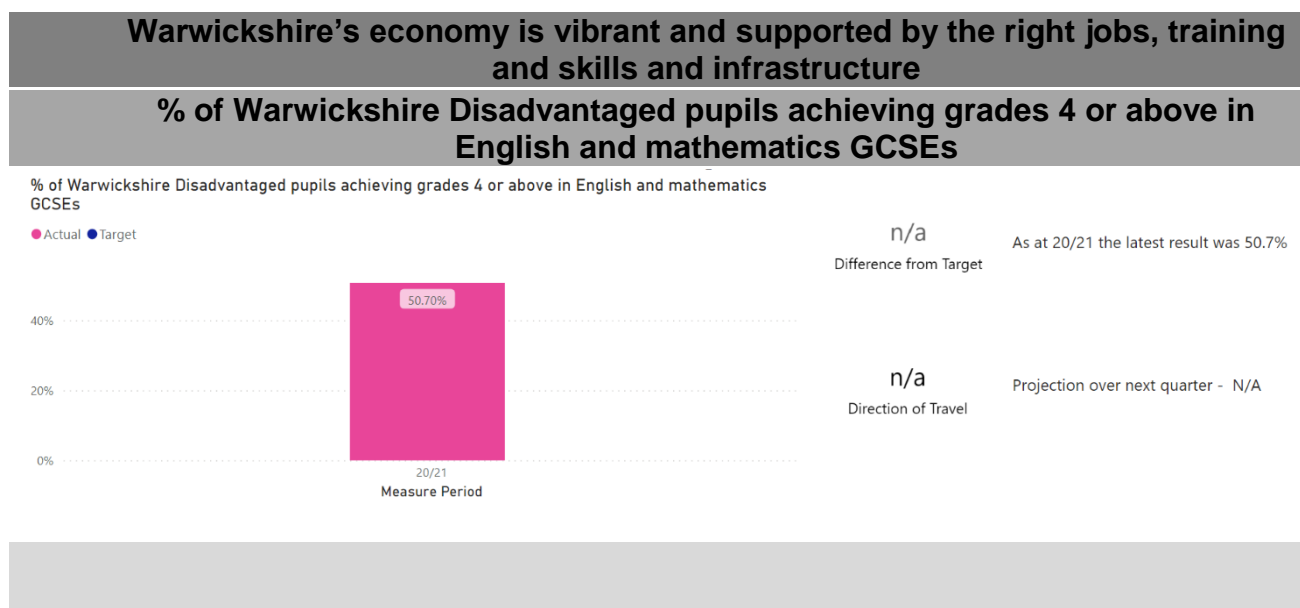
Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not on Track - static

Based on current performance, improvement activity and the current national Covid-19 climate, performance is expected to remain static next quarter. During 2021/22 some children in care will turn 17 and will no longer be classed as a child in care.

Although court proceedings are taking place, delays are likely to continue, which will impact the number of children discharged from care.

Table 3

In addition, there are 4 Proxy measures that are of note:



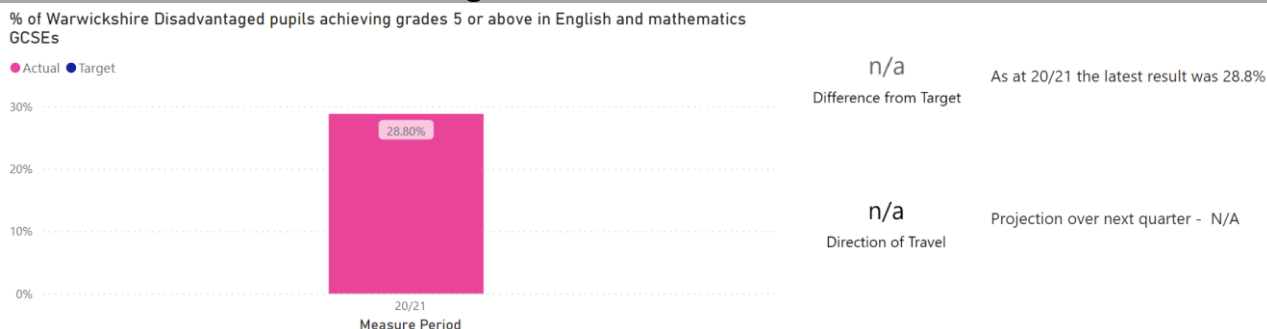
Current performance narrative:

Data cannot be compared to previous years data due to the exceptional circumstances with exams being cancelled and Centre Assessed Grades being awarded. However, Warwickshire disadvantaged pupils fell behind the national average of 52.5% but performed above statistical neighbours at 48.6%. Disadvantaged pupils are those who were eligible for free school meals at any time during the last 6 years and children looked after (in the care of the local authority for a day or more or who have been adopted from care).

Improvement activity:

Improvement activity to support this measure remains in place to maintain or improve standards and in preparation for the reinstatement of examination frameworks in 2022 The performance of disadvantaged pupils remains a high priority of the county council and is a focus of the risk assessment of schools. Recent developments include the "Tackling Poverty in Warwickshire Strategy 2021-2030" which is being developed and will complement the Closing the Gap strategy. The Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme provides free holiday activities and food to Free School Meals (FSM) pupils. Funding is £1.6m for 2021/22. Warwickshire Challenge was developed in response to the impact of Covid-19 in particular on disadvantaged pupils, the project will pilot summer 2021 with full launch in the autumn.

% of Warwickshire Disadvantaged pupils achieving grades 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs

**Current performance narrative:**

Data cannot be compared to previous years data due to the exceptional circumstances with exams being cancelled and Centre Assessed Grades being awarded. However, Warwickshire disadvantage pupils fell behind the national disadvantaged at 30.4% but performed above statistical neighbours at 25.7%. Disadvantaged pupils are those who were eligible for free school meals at any time during the last 6 years and children looked after (in the care of the local authority for a day or more or who have been adopted from care).

Improvement activity:

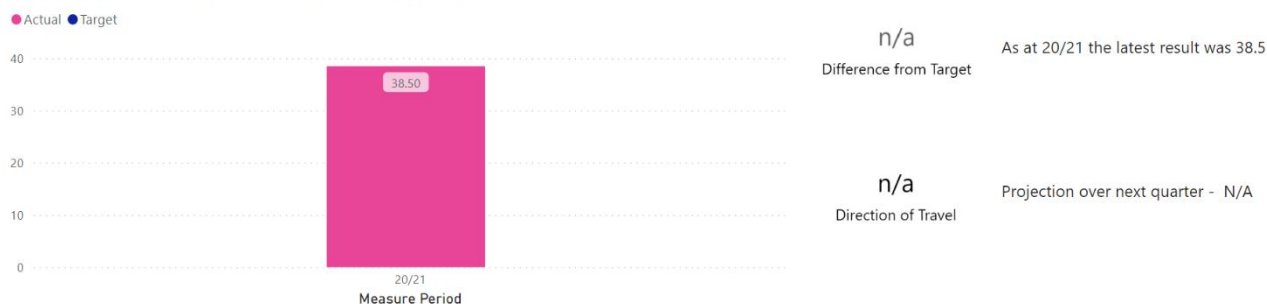
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complement the Closing the Gap strategy. The Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme provides free holiday activities and food to Free School Meals (FSM) pupils. Funding is £1.6m for 2021/22. Warwickshire Challenge was developed in response to the impact of Covid-19 in particular on disadvantaged pupils, the project will pilot summer 2021 with full launch in the autumn.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not Applicable
 Not applicable as the proxy measures will cease once the examination framework is reinstated in 2022.

Warwickshire Disadvantaged pupils average Attainment 8 score

Warwickshire Disadvantaged pupils average Attainment 8 score

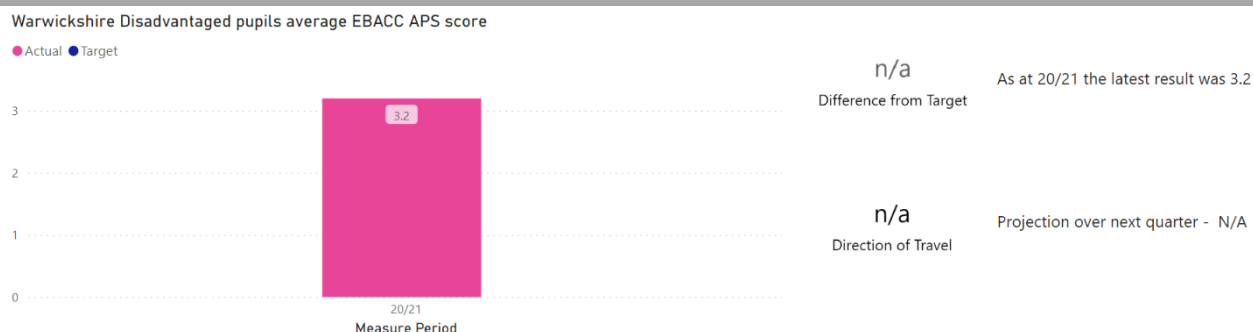


Current performance:
 Data cannot be compared to previous years data due to the exceptional circumstances with exams being cancelled and Centre Assessed Grades being awarded. Warwickshire disadvantaged pupils fell behind the national average disadvantaged at 40.2 but performed ahead of statistical neighbours at 37.9. Disadvantaged pupils are those who were eligible for free school meals at any time during the last 6 years and children looked after (in the care of the local authority for a day or more or who have been adopted from care).

Improvement activity:
 Improvement activity to support this measure remains in place to maintain or improve standards and in preparation for the reinstatement of examination frameworks in 2022. The performance of disadvantaged pupils remains a high priority of the county council and is a focus of the risk assessment of schools. Recent developments include the "Tackling Poverty in Warwickshire Strategy 2021-2030" which is being developed and will complement the Closing the Gap strategy. The Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme provides free holiday activities and food to Free School Meals (FSM) pupils. Funding is £1.6m for 2021/22. Warwickshire Challenge was developed in response to the impact of Covid-19 in particular on disadvantaged pupils, the project will pilot summer 2021 with full launch in the autumn.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not Applicable
 Not applicable as the proxy measures will cease once the examination framework is reinstated in 2022.

Warwickshire Disadvantaged pupils average English Baccalaureate Average Point Score



Current performance narrative:

Data cannot be compared to previous years data due to the exceptional circumstances with exams being cancelled and Centre Assessed Grades being awarded. Warwickshire disadvantaged pupils fell behind the national disadvantaged at 3.4 and are in line with of statistical neighbours at 3.2. Disadvantaged pupils are those who were eligible for free school meals at any time during the last 6 years and children looked after (in the care of the local authority for a day or more or who have been adopted from care).

Improvement activity:

Improvement activity to support this measure remains in place to maintain or improve standards and in preparation for the reinstatement of examination frameworks in 2022. The performance of disadvantaged pupils remains a high priority of the county council and is a focus of the risk assessment of schools. Recent developments include the "Tackling Poverty in Warwickshire Strategy 2021-2030" which is being developed and will complement the Closing the Gap strategy. The Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme provides free holiday activities and food to Free School Meals (FSM) pupils. Funding is £1.6m for 2021/22. Warwickshire Challenge was developed in response to the impact of Covid-19 in particular on disadvantaged pupils, the project will pilot summer 2021 with full launch in the autumn.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not Applicable

Not applicable as the proxy measures will cease once the examination framework is reinstated in 2022.

Table 4

- 2.6 The performance against the 8 Education proxy measures highlights some variation in attainment for mainstream and disadvantaged children in our schools. Warwickshire all pupils performed above the national averages and statistical neighbours. Conversely, attainment of Warwickshire's disadvantaged pupils for the equivalent measures, were below the national average but above statistical neighbours. These results are summarised in Table 5.

Measure	All pupils	National Ave	Statistical Neighbour	Disadvantaged	National Ave	Statistical Neighbour
% achieving grades 4 or	75.6	71.2	72.0	50.7	52.5	48.6

above in English and mathematics GCSEs						
% achieving grades 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs	55.6	49.9	49.4	28.8	30.4	25.7
Warwickshire Average Attainment 8 score	52.6	50.2	50.0	38.5	40.2	37.9
Warwickshire average English Baccalaureate Average Point Score	4.6	4.4	4.4	3.2	3.4	3.2

Table 5

2.7 Chart 2 below illustrates the considered forecast performance projection over the forthcoming reporting period as well as 3 previous periods. Please note performance reporting for Quarter 3 20/21 was paused.

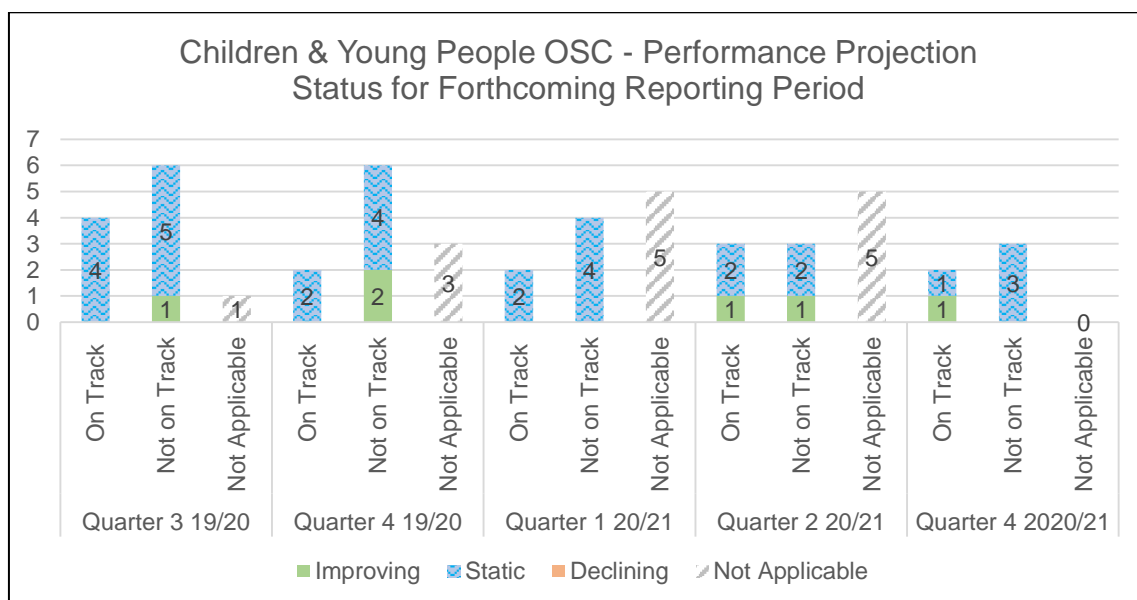


Chart 2

Of the 5 KBMs in this remit, 1 measure, No. of children open to an Early Help Pathway, is already on track, is projected to improve further, further detailed in 2.4, Table 1. The other 4 measures are projected to remain static.

2.8 The pandemic has impacted the majority of these measures leading to delays in programmes of activity and changing service demands. Positively, none are projected to decline further and improvement activity is in place to improve performance across all measures and this is under constant review to ensure it is robust. Full context on all measures is provided in the Power BI reports.

2.9 As the Organisation continues to transform the Performance Framework evolves providing a sharpened focus on performance and supports delivery of the Organisation's priorities. The light touch review of the Performance Framework for the 2021/22 period has been conducted with Strategic and Assistant Directors and Cabinet approved the new Framework as attached in Appendix A. A comprehensive review of the entire Framework is already in progress ready for implementation in 2022/23.

3. Financial Commentary – relevant finance information taken from Cabinet report

3.1 Revenue Budget

3.1.1 The Council has set the following performance threshold in relation to revenue spend: a tolerance has been set of zero overspend and no more than a 2% underspend. The following table shows the forecast position for the Services concerned.

	2020/21 Budget £'000	2020/21 Outturn '000	Revenue Variance £'000 %	Retained Reserves £'000	Financial Standing £'000
Children and Families	64,026	67,804	3,778 5.9%	0	3,778

Children and Families - (£3.778m net overspend; +6%. £3.689m Covid pressures)

- The major Covid pressures include the following:
 - £1.100m additional placement costs
 - £1.015m for additional staffing costs
 - £0.536m for increased Foster care/emergency/care leaver and UASC payments
 - £0.500m for additional costs of Legal Services due to Court delays.
- After removing the Covid related pressures, the variance for Children & Families is a £0.089m overspend. This position does mask a number of earmarked funding streams (see reserves table) which, when taken account of, result in an underlying overspend of £5.825m, an increase of £1.558m since Q3.
- The major contributors to this underlying position as well as the increased overspend position since Quarter 3 are:
 - £4.476m Children in Care / Leaving Care Placements overspend mostly related to increases in both the numbers and complexity of residential

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ placements (affecting average unit cost as well as market failure). ○ Leaving Care accommodation costs and allowances for young people (excluding delays in discharge due to Covid) overspent by £0.819m. • The Children's Transformation Programme budget was set prior to the Covid pandemic. This presented difficulties in recruitment, engagement and commissioning in 2020/21, and as such the programme underspent by £2.382m. A recent refresh of the programme has profiled much of the planned activities and expenditure into 2021/22. • As the result of less face to face contact due to Covid, there is an underspend on staff travel of £0.438m. 					
Education Services	35,123	41,948	6,825 19.43%	0	6,825
<p>Education Services Non-DSG - (£6.825m net overspend; +19%. £4.274m Covid pressures)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid Pressures consist of: £0.412m Early Years Hubs, £2.624m loss of Traded income; £0.965m of Home to School Transport; and the remainder of Covid costs relates primarily to child/family support. • Within the non-Covid overspend of £2.348m, there is a £4.506m overspend (an increase of £0.592m since Q3) relating to the cost of placements for Children with Disabilities in residential care, as well as preventative care & assistance costs (e.g. direct payments, specialist agency staff/home care, short breaks/respite) to avoid an even greater number of children going into care. • The primary area reporting underspends include the one off budget of £0.788m that is being held for the forward funding of places and the Pears site that is not needed now until 2021/22 due to the delay in the opening date from Jan'21 to Sept'21 (or later). This underspend is included in the list of requested carry forwards which are subject to Member approval. • There are other one off underspends which can be categorised as staff vacancies and delays in recruitment; reduced operational expenditure from eg travel costs; and a £0.607m underspend of earmarked funding where plans and projects have been delayed primarily due to Covid which have now been re-phased into 2021/22 onwards. 					

3.2. Delivery of the Savings Plan

3.2.1. The savings targets and forecast outturn for the Services concerned are shown in the table below.

	2020/21 Target £'000	2020/21 Actual to Date £'000	2020/21 Outturn £'000
Children and Families	194	194	194

Education Services	279	0	0
With COVID priorities of the service and the maintenance of Transport contracts, it has not been possible to progress this further at this point. As part of the MTFS and strategic projects for 21/22 onwards a series of reviews (governance through WCC PMO) of Transport have been initiated.			

3.3 Capital Programme

3.3.1. The table below shows the approved capital budget for the Services and any slippage into future years.

	Approved budget for all current and future years (£'000)	2020/21 Forecast £'000	Slippage from 2020/21 into Future Years (%)	Current quarter - new approved funding / schemes (£'000)	Newly resourced spend included in slippage figures (£'000)	All Current and Future Years Forecast (£'000)
Children and Families	711	(192)	-67%	125	0	836
<p>£0.075m of this relates to delays in projects coming forward for adaptations to carer properties. The spend is reactive to requirements which vary significantly year on year and are difficult to predict. In addition to this £0.065m is due to adaptations of Children's Centres into Children and family centres. £0.010m for Westgate children's centre safeguarding walkway which has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to this £0.042m in relation to the establishment of a residential care facility for under 18s.</p>						
Education Services	58,327	(2,443)	-13%	6,645	164	65,136
<p>The largest area of delay relates to devolved school's capital spending which has reduced by £0.691m. We have little control over the timing of this spend. In addition to this works at High Meadow Infant School have been delayed by £0.446m and the Pears School project (Warwickshire Academy) £0.588m. Most of the reported delays are for less than £0.250m, but these are spread over many individual projects. This general reduction in 2020-21 spend on Education projects is likely to result from the Covid-19 pandemic slowdown and lockdown.</p>						

4. Supporting Papers

- 4.1 A copy of the full report and supporting documents that went to Cabinet on the 17th June is available via [the committee system](#).

5. Environmental Implications

None specific to this report.

6. Background Papers

None

Authors:	Vanessa Belton, Delivery Lead Business Intelligence Performance, Planning and Quality vanessabelton@warwickshire.gov.uk Mandeep Kalsi, Performance Officer mandeepkalsi@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Directors	Ian Budd, Assistant Director Education Services; ianbudd@warwickshire.gov.uk
	Becky Hale, Assistant Director People; beckyhale@warwickshire.gov.uk
	Dr Shade Agboola, Director of Public Health; shadeagboola@warwickshire.gov.uk
	John Coleman, Assistant Director Children and Families; JohnColeman@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Nigel Minns, Strategic Director for People Directorate; nigelminns@warwickshire.gov.uk
	Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities Directorate; markryder@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Jeff Morgan, Children's, Families and Education Services; cllrmorgan@warwickshire.gov.uk
	Cllr Margaret Bell, Adult Social Care & Health; cllrbell@warwickshire.gov.uk

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee: July 2021

Meeting Date and status	Reports	Details
20 July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Scrutiny Proposals • Youth Justice Plan • The Year End Performance Report 	
30 September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Strategy • Update on Children's Change Programme 	
<i>Additional Meeting October – Date to be confirmed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation Annual Report and briefing on contextual safeguarding and interfamilial abuse 	
16 November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C&F Workforce – including social worker health check. • Progress of Integrated Front Door (MASH) 	
8 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Workers in Schools 	
11 April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Covid – impact on services 	

Outstanding Reports

None at present (16.06.2021)

Future Items to be added to the Work Programme

- The RISE Service (as part of the April 2022 meeting)

Briefing Notes/Information to be circulated outside the meeting

- Nitrous Oxide Canisters – Nigel Minns to provide data from Trading Standards and the Drug & Alcohol team.
- Social Engine
- Annual Reports; Corporate Parenting; Fostering, adoption and IRO reports to be circulated jointly (awaiting the final version of the fostering report) –

- Update relating to the Emergency Duty Team
- Information relating to children on the school roll but not currently in school
- School Placement Allocation
- The use of small children's homes
- Post Covid – impact on services/RISE/Family Support Workers etc (ahead of April meeting).

Motions from Council

Following the full council meeting on 16 March 2021 the following action was agreed;

- That the CYP OSC keeps the Family Support Workers' service under review as part of its on-going performance monitoring.

Items on the Forward Plan relevant to the remit of the Committee

Decision	Description	Date due	Decision Maker
Warwickshire Children's Strategy 2021-2030	To agree Warwickshire Children's Strategy 2021-2030	14 October 2021	Cabinet

Next Chair and Spokes Meeting

- TBC (*early September 2021*)

Next Committee Meeting – please note additional meetings may be added for additional agenda items such as performance reviews.

- 30 September 2021 @ 10am
- *Date in October to be confirmed for Exploitation Annual Report.*
- 16 November 2021 @ 10am
- 8 February 2022 @ 10am
- 11 April 2022 @ 10am

Briefing notes and reports circulated –

Keeping families together – sent 17th June 2021

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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