

Date of meeting	Item	Members wished to make the following comments and conclusions:	Response/Comments	Follow Up Required
18-Sep-2017	Early Help and Safeguarding	<p>Members recommend that the feasibility of an online information sharing database be explored. The Committee proposed that the database should be accessible between Local Authorities, Health Boards, Police and schools – each having relevant restrictions to information to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act. Members stated that the database would also lessen the burden on our resources from enquires being made to the Directorate as to whether a child was on the Child Protection Register.</p>	<p>WCCIS will facilitate more efficient information sharing once implemented fully with Health. Our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will facilitate improved information sharing/recording through the use of Mhub (Police, Social Care, Health, Probation & Education).</p>	
		<p>Members expressed concerns in relation to Early Help being predominately supported by annual grant funding and given that the Council has a statutory placement for prevention, the Committee recommend that Cabinet/CMB actively pursue grant flexibility from Welsh Government.</p>	<p>The Local Authority has applied to Welsh Government for funding flexibilities for 2018/19. At the time of writing, the Local Authority has not been advised of the outcome. The likelihood is that if it is approved the monies will still be treated as "grant" albeit with greater flexibility to target local needs.</p>	
		<p>With reference to the statistics provided in relation to the numbers of unborn babies that will become a Looked After Child when born, Members recommend that the work being progressed to identify services to work with parents between pregnancies be accelerated.</p>	<p>Welsh Government have allocated grant funding to develop regional 'Reflect' projects across Wales. The aim of the project will be to reduce the number of children being taken into care by working with/supporting young women who have had at least one child removed, breaking the cycle of repeat pregnancies and recurrent care proceedings. The service model was piloted in Newport and a toolkit for delivery is being finalised. Discussions are underway with Cwm Taff (as agreed in principle by Welsh Government & Western Bay) about the next steps.</p>	
		<p>The Committee raised concerns in relation to the numbers of Looked After Children within the County Borough and recommend that a review be undertaken into the reasons why our Local Authority ranks so high when compared to other local authorities with similar levels of deprivation</p>	<p>Our Early Help & Permanence Strategy is being implemented and reports to the Board that oversees the activity detailed in the Action Plan contained therein. This includes monitoring of the joining data set (Social Care & Early Help) with regard to referrals, interventions and outcomes. The Institute of Public Care (IPC) have also been commissioned to undertake a review of 35 admissions over the last year to explore the rationale for decision making and any missed opportunities/gaps in service provision which could have prevented a child becoming looked after. Their findings will be shared with practitioners and stakeholders in learning events and a report produced of their overarching findings in February 2018.</p>	
		<p>The Committee requested that the subject of Early Help and Social Care be revisited by Scrutiny in the future and that the report includes the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Up to date figures presenting the numbers of Looked After Children by Local Authority; · A breakdown of referral figures, to include statistics from local pre-school nurseries; · Outcome from the review undertaken by Institute of Public Care; · What services are being provided post 16, given that research indicates shows that children who have been looked after, have the increased probability that their children will also end up in the care system; · Outcomes from the following Residential Remodelling project work streams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o For moving out-of-country residential placements to in-county o Upskilling of three internal foster carers to provide intensive, therapeutic step down placements o Review of the foster carer marketing and recruitment strategy 	<p>This will be incorporated in the forward work plan.</p>	