

**23 February 2016**

**Walsall Self-Assessment of Services (Performance Data)**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Councillor E Hughes – Care and Safeguarding

**Recommendations**

- Panel Members provide feedback on whether or not the identified measures meet their needs to enable their challenge and scrutiny of key performance indicators across the Children's Services Directorate.
- That Panel Members identify key areas for further exploration and information in preparation for future meetings.
- Panel members note the strengths and areas for improvement highlighted by this performance report.

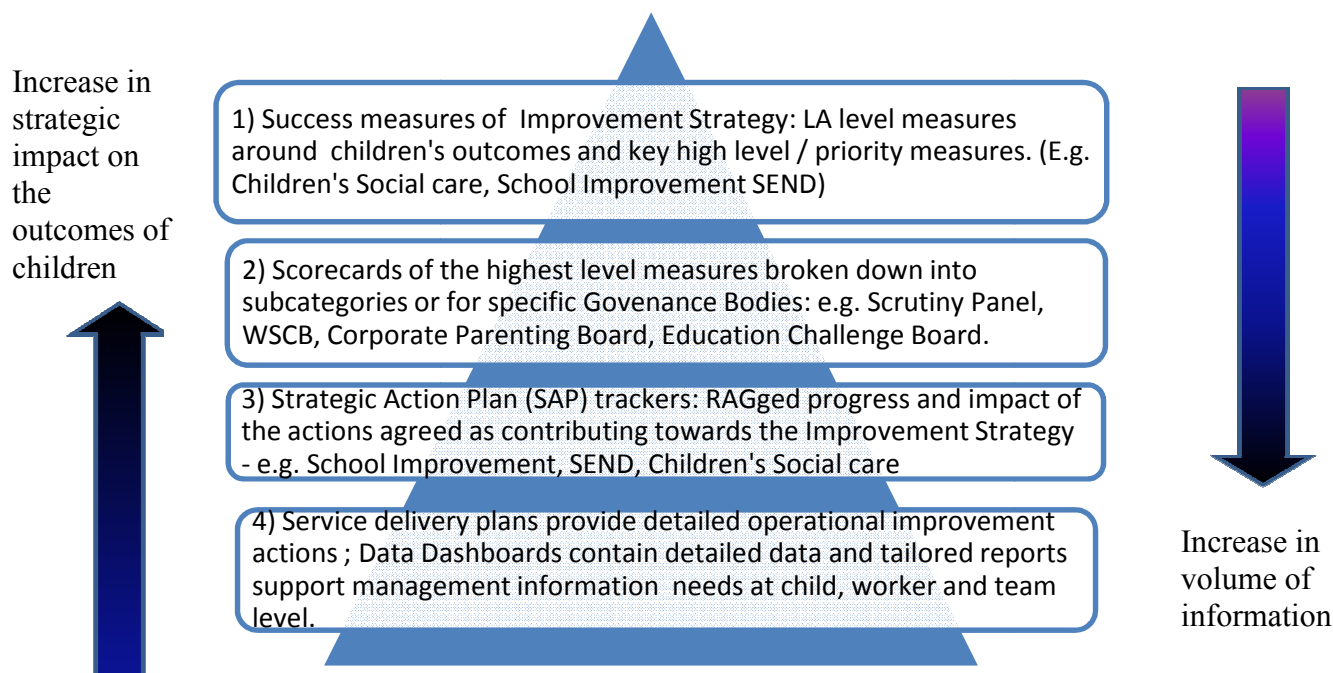
**Purpose**

- To provide an overview of the performance management framework in operation across the Children's Services Directorate.
- To outline the suggested information for regular provision to Scrutiny Panel and receive feedback on their suitability.
- To identify key areas requiring further improvement or development over the coming period.

**Background**

The performance management framework in operation in Walsall is that of a tiered hierarchy – where lower volume, high level information is provided to strategic leaders and a greater volume of more detailed information is used at operational levels.

This is typified by the diagram below:



For each of the key areas there is a Strategic Improvement Plan: for School Improvement this has been agreed by the Education Challenge Board, for Children's social care there is a refreshed version in development with a formal Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Improvement Board being established and the first meeting of the SENDI Transformation Board takes place later in February 2016 to progress improvements in the quality of provision and outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs.

### Scorecard introduction

The draft Scrutiny panel scorecard is attached **at Appendix 1**. The main part of this agenda item will be to run through this scorecard and outline the suggested content, and to receive queries and feedback about what may be useful to add/remove or amend.

The key purpose of the scorecard provided to the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel is to:

- Enable monitoring, challenge and scrutiny of progress around high level improvement needs and prioritise action.
- Support selection of areas for closer scrutiny by Panel Members
- Identify areas requiring "deep dive" work where lower level and more detailed information would be appropriate.

### Priority areas:

From the current scorecard (Quarter 3, Dec 2015), it is clear that many of the areas show progress and improvement. This is only one aspect of the ways in which we consider performance for example it may be that an assessment is fast but that does not guarantee its quality.

### Significant improvements:

- Improved pupil attainment and progress compared to 2014; the gap with national is being closed on many of the educational attainment measures
- Improved timescales of adoptions
- Improved performance in social workers sharing their reports with families before child protection conferences in the timescale required. Some other agency reports to child protection conferences are not routinely being completed and shared with families before the conference
- Good performance in completing Care proceedings within 26 week timescale
- Many high level measures show improvement and the quality is being monitored to ensure quantitative improvements are matched with qualitative outcomes Implementation of the MASH, Early Help Hub and Threshold Training is having a positive impact on beginning to reduce re-referral rates. Some further improvement is required to ensure consistent recording and reporting

From the scorecard and wider information sources, the key areas to note where further improvements are sought:

School improvement:

- Continue to improve pupil attainment and progress, particularly for children at the end of Primary School
- Gaps in attainment for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities at primary and secondary schools
- Proportion of schools judged by Ofsted as being good or better
- Persistent absence and exclusions: increasing in some schools over the Autumn Term

Child in Need/Child Protection and Looked after Children's Services:

- Safe reduction of children needing to be looked after
- Increase the number of children achieving permanency through Special Guardianship Orders
- Encourage Family and Friends Carers to apply for Special Guardianship Orders where appropriate
- Reduce number of children being placed with their parents on Care Orders
- Improve Care planning to ensure best permanency option is considered and progressed for children

Audit findings show that the quality of practice is not always consistent. Areas for improvement include ensuring that:

- Chronologies are being completed on all children within timescales
- All assessments are evidence based and analyse risk
- All plans are current and outcome focused
- Managers provide effective management oversight and record it on the child's record
- Caseloads are too high in some parts of the service and this can contribute to drift in progression planning
- Quality of Social work intervention with Child in Need is a priority to prevent escalation of cases to Child Protection or LAC

- Over reliance on costly agency staff in children's social care – continued struggle to recruit sufficient experienced social workers and managers and retain Newly Qualified Social Workers

#### Improvements for Looked After Children (LAC)

- There has been an improvement in the completion rate of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which assess the mental health and emotional wellbeing of LAC. More work is required to ensure they are completed regularly for all LAC to inform the annual health assessment
- Too many Care Leavers becoming teenage parents and there is risk of their children becoming looked after
- Improve Care Leavers' access to Education, Employment or training opportunities and suitable accommodation

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