

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 24 August 2021

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Children's Improvement Board and Governance Arrangements

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Law, Cabinet Member for Children, email: Cordelia.law@torbay.gov.uk and Councillor Carter, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, email Christine.carter@torbay.gov.uk

Lead Officer: Anne-Marie Bond, Chief Executive, email: anne-marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals to strengthen the Council's governance arrangements for Children's Services and to provide focus and drive for Children's improvement beyond the Department for Education's (DfE) intervention.
- 1.2 The Children's Improvement Board (CIB) was established to oversee the Council's improvement plan as part of the DfE's intervention and has an independent chair. The CIB can be temporary and stepped down by the DfE when appropriate. It is proposed that the Council commits to retaining a Children's Continuous Improvement Board (CCIB) as the body to provide the focus and drive for our continuous improvement of Children's Services. The CCIB would continue with an independent chair to ensure the appropriate level of external challenge and that the CCIB oversee the Children's and Young People's Plan, rather than necessitating a separate meeting to do this. As such the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board would be stepped down.
- 1.3 There is also a need for governance structures within Children's to link to Adults Social Care to provide greater oversight for children who are transitioning into adult services. It is proposed the independent Chairs of both Adult and Children's Improvement Boards sit on the alternative boards to assist with making this linkage.
- 1.4 To further strengthen the governance and accountability of Children's Services and to ensure there is appropriate focus on children and young people by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), it is proposed that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services is added to the membership of the HWB.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

We want Torbay and its residents to thrive.

We want Torbay to be a place where we have turned the tide on poverty and tackled inequalities; where our children and older people will have high aspirations

and where there are quality jobs, good pay and affordable housing for our residents.

We want Torbay to be the premier resort in the UK, with a vibrant arts and cultural offer for our residents and visitors to enjoy; where our built and natural environment is celebrated and where we play our part in addressing the climate change emergency.

- 2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver this ambition by providing continued focus on improvement for Children's Services and the delivery of the Children's and Young People's Plan is fundamental in meeting the Community and Corporate Plan themes - in particular targeted action to 'Protect all children and give them the best start in life'.
- 2.2 The reason for the decision is to ensure the correct level and governance structure is in place to provide accountability for continued improvement and delivery within Children's Services, whilst ensuring that meetings are not unnecessarily duplicated.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That Cabinet approves the Children's Continuous Improvement Board, with an independent Chair, as a permanent arrangement and beyond DfE intervention, to provide continued focus and drive for our Children's improvement journey. The Head of Governance Support be delegated authority to review the terms of reference and membership for the CCIB in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Children's and Director of Children's Services.
2. That the Director of Children's Services, Independent Chair of the CCIB and the Director of Public Health undertake a review of the CCIBs work programme to ensure the objectives of the Children and Young People's Plan and the work of the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board are incorporated, and that an appropriate children and young people focus takes place in the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) and accordingly agree that the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board (CYPSB) be stepped down. The Monitoring Officer be requested to make any associated changes to HWB's terms of reference (in accordance with the Constitution, consulting with Group Leaders) ensuring that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services is within its membership.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Structure of Children's Services governance bodies

Background Documents

None

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Children's Improvement Board (CIB) was introduced when the Council's Children's Services went into intervention following its Ofsted inspection which rated the Council as inadequate. The CIB is a requirement of the DfE for our improvement of Children's Services. The CIB has an independent chair and its membership includes key partners.
- 1.2 The CIB can be stepped down by the DfE at the appropriate point in our improvement journey. Beyond this, it is proposed that the Council commits to retaining a CCIB as the body to provide the focus and drive for our ongoing improvement of Children's Services.
- 1.3 The Adults Improvement Board has an independent chair and it is proposed the CCIB would continue to have an independent chair to mirror the governance arrangements of the Adults Improvement Board.
- 1.4 There is also a need for governance structures within Children's to link to Adults to provide greater oversight for children who are transitioning into adult services. The proposals outlined above for both chairs to sit on the alternative boards would enable the independent Chairs to work together and strengthen the linkages between Children's and Adults.
- 1.5 The objective of the Children's and Young People's Plan is to ensure all of our children and young people are safe, happy and healthy in order that they can reach their full potential. It sets out a number of objectives and an action plan to achieve this, working across all services and partners. The Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board (CYPSB) was set up to oversee the Plan. It is proposed that the CCIB will encompass the work the CYPSB to give it more focus and accountability for children and overseeing the Children's and Young People's Plan, whilst also linking closely with the HWB to ensure that there is an appropriate children and young people focus in that arena.
- 1.6 Currently the HWB only includes the Leader of the Council or their nominee on its membership. The Cabinet Member for Adults is the Leader's nominee and it is proposed to extend the membership of the HWB to also includes the Cabinet Member for Children, to ensure that the HWB ensures that it is appropriately focussed on our children and young people
- 1.7 A structure outlining the wider Children's Services governance bodies is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 To do nothing, but the governance and accountability for children will not be strengthened.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 The CIB currently has a paid Independent Chair and this would continue with the CCIB.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 None, associated changes to the Constitution will be undertaken by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with Group Leaders.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services has been consulted on the proposals and is supportive of the way forward. The Independent Chair of the CIB and the Independent Chair of the Adults Improvement Board have also been consulted upon the proposal and are in complete support.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 Non-decision making meetings are currently being held remotely and therefore reduces the need for members, partners and officers to travel to the Town Hall for the meetings, this will help to reduce carbon emissions. In addition agendas and documents for meetings will be made available electronically to reduce the need for printing and postage. Documents still be available in an accessible format for those who require this.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 If strong governance arrangements for children are not in place, our ability to provide strategic leadership for the ongoing improvement journey for Children's Services will be impacted.

Equality Impacts

9.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups		
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	The proposals will provide stronger strategic leadership and enable service improvements and linkages between children's and adult services, along with health.		
People with caring Responsibilities	As above		
People with a disability	As above		
Women or men	As above		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>	As above		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact
People who are transgendered			No differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact

	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	As above	
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	As above	
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	As above	
10..	Cumulative Council Impact (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	The proposals will have a positive impact across Council services and partners.	
11.	Cumulative Community Impacts (proposed changes within the wider community (inc the public sector) which might worsen the impacts identified above)	None	