

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	14 May 2024
Title:	Proposal for the Dissolution of Children and Families Advisory Panel
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the reasons for seeking to dissolve of the Children and Families Advisory Panel.

Recommendation(s)

2. To approve the submission of the proposal to dissolve the Children and Families Advisory Panel to Full Council.

Executive Summary

3. This report puts forward the proposal to dissolve the Children and Families Advisory Panel.
4. The Children and Families Advisory Panel was formed in 2009. It is an Advisory Panel made up of 9 Members appointed proportionally and meeting three times a year.
5. The Panel's function is to advise the relevant Executive Lead Member on the strategic priorities that enhance the safeguarding of children and young people, the performance of Children's Services, the outcome of inspections and actions for improvement, and any other matters that may arise as a result of budgetary, organisational or legislative changes.
6. The future direction set by the Executive Lead Member in discussion with cabinet colleagues, members and senior officers of the Council is to streamline the scrutiny, oversight and decision making of Children's Services through the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children and Young People's Select Committee.

Contextual information

7. The Children and Families Advisory Panel was formed in September 2009 and had its inaugural meeting on 1 December 2009. The Terms of Reference for this newly formed Advisory Panel were approved by the County Council at its meeting on 17 September 2009 and provided the operational basis for the Panel.
8. The Terms of Reference for the Children and Families Advisory Panel were updated in November 2017 and are as follows:
 - The development of further strategies that will enhance the safeguarding of children in Hampshire and ensure that children in care in Hampshire achieve the best possible outcomes.
 - The performance of the Children and Families Branch of the Children's Services Department and that of its partners in relation to such national and local targets as may be set.
 - The outcomes of Ofsted inspection of safeguarding, children in care, children's homes, fostering services and adoption services, as they may arise from time to time and any actions that are required to improve services.
 - Excellent and innovative practice in children's social care settings from which others can learn.
 - Any matters that may arise in relation to the Council's requirement to be corporate parents for children in care.
 - The views of children in care about the services they receive from the Council.
9. The Director of Children's Services and Senior Officers now agree that the above functions are met through the Children's and Young People Select Committee and the Corporate Parenting Board.
10. In order to avoid duplication and ensure member and officer time is utilised effectively and that decisions are joined up; it is recommended that the Children and Families Advisory Panel is dissolved.
11. All the functions of this Panel will be covered by the business of the Corporate Parenting Board (at its increased frequency of four times a year) and the Children and Young People's Select Committee which will be supported by Member Services.

Finance

12. There are no financial implications for this report.

Performance

13. There are no direct performance implications for this report.

Consultation and Equalities

14. The proposal for the dissolution of the panel has been discussed with the Chair of the panel. The ELM will consult with other members ahead of ELM Decision Day in May 2024, where this proposal will be tabled. A further verbal update will be provided about the consultation with the Chair and other members in the meeting.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

15. The carbon mitigation tool and climate change adaptation tool were not applicable because the decision relates to the proposal for dissolution of a panel and is strategic in nature.

Conclusions

16. The Children and Families Advisory Panel has fulfilled its functions as per its terms of reference for a number of years now.
17. The recommendation for the dissolution of the Children and Families Advisory Panel does not pose any risk to the continuity and effectiveness of the scrutiny and service user focus of members and/or senior officers.
18. The recommendation for its dissolution reflects the iterative journey of the various Boards and Panels with focus on services for children, young people and their families, and the desire to be streamlined and joined up in demonstrating accountability and decision making about children.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Corporate Parenting Board meeting - report recommending revised TOR including increase in frequency of CPB meetings.	13 March 2024
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
None	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

This is a report adjusting the Council's committee structure so will have low or minimal impact on groups with protected characteristics.