
Council

20 June, 2023

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor P Seaman

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Chief Legal Officer

Ward(s) affected:

City wide

Title:

Statement of Assurance (Director of Children's Services)

Is this a key decision?

N/A

Executive Summary:

This report informs Council of the interim arrangements being put in place following the departure of the current Director of Children's Services and provides a Statement of Assurance as to how, on an interim basis, the statutory responsibility of the Director of Children's Services under Section 18 of the Children Act 2004 will be met.

List of Appendices included:

Assurance Document for fulfilment of the Director of Children's Services (DCS), – **Updated June 2023.**

Background papers:

A copy of the signed decisions have been published on the Council's website at:

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13299>

Other useful documents - None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny? - No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body? No

Will this report go to Council? Yes – 20 June, 2023

Report title: Statement of Assurance (Director of Children's Services)

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 In May 2023 the Director for Children's Services (DCS) (who holds the statutory role under Section 18 Children Act 2004), resigned his post. Under his leadership, Children's Services had moved from a service requiring improvement to a service that is deemed by the inspectors to be Good. He is therefore leaving the organisation with the service in a secure position.
- 1.2 The DCS reports to the Chief Partnerships Officer (CPO) whose role is to drive forward the One Coventry Plan working with partners to deliver for the residents of Coventry. The One Coventry Leadership Team (OCLT) is the driver for these changes led by the Chief Partnerships Officer and Chief Operating Officer. The DCS sits on OCLT enabling a unified cross directorate approach which allows for a collective oversight of an integrated service for children.
- 1.3 The resignation of the DCS has coincided with the appointment of a new Chief Executive for the City Council. It is therefore considered that interim arrangements for the DCS should be put in place pending the arrival of the new Chief Executive and her further consideration as to what arrangements she considers would best serve the organisation on a permanent basis moving forward.
- 1.4 Interim arrangements are being put in place for approximately six months for a comprehensive recruitment process to take place. The appointment of a new DCS will be made by an Appointments Panel.
- 1.5 Therefore, on a temporary basis, an Interim Director of Children's Services has been internally recruited who will be responsible for Children's Social Care including Child Protection, Youth Justice and Early Help services.
- 1.6 Further, on an interim basis, the Chief Partnerships Officer will be the statutory Director of Children's Services under Section 18 Children Act 2004 to discharge the education and children's social services functions of the local authority.
- 1.7 A Statement of Assurance is appended to this report and has been prepared to outline these arrangements and provide assurance as to how the statutory functions of the Director of Children's Services will be met.

2. Options considered

- 2.1 There is a statutory responsibility for the local authority to have an officer designated as the Director of Children's Services responsible for education and children social care.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The efficacy of more permanent arrangements will be subject to peer challenge and review, as part of the process of securing continuous sector-led improvement in the quality of services. This will include listening to the young people of Coventry to establish their experiences and confidence in the new arrangements.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The new arrangements will be put in place from the 30th June following the departure of the current Director of Children's Services

5. Comments from Interim Chief Executive (Chief Operating Officer) and the Chief Legal Officer

Financial implications

There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

Legal implications

A local authority in England must appoint an officer as the Director of Children's Services for the purposes of discharging functions relating to education and children's social care

Local authorities will, as a matter of course, want to ensure their structures and organisational arrangements enable them to:

- fulfil their statutory duties effectively (including ensuring that children, young people and families receive effective help and benefit from high educational standards locally);
- be transparent about responsibilities and accountabilities,
- support effective interagency and partnership working.

A local authority should carry out effective assurance checks, integrated as part of their usual decision-making and scrutiny work, of their structures and organisational arrangements. Once any new arrangements are in place, local authorities should review their arrangements regularly to satisfy themselves that they continue to be effective.

Report author(s):

Name and job title:

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Finance: Barry Hastie	Interim Chief Executive (Chief	Finance	07/07/2023	12/06/23

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Members: Councillor P Seaman	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People		08/06/23	12/06/23

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