

TITLE	Independent Review of Leadership and Governance in Children's Services
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 December 2015
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Assurance that services to our children, young people and families are well-led and governed.

RECOMMENDATION

The committee is recognised to note the report and its findings.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The review was commissioned by the Leader of the Council to provide assurance as to the quality of Leadership and Governance in Wokingham Borough Council as applied to meeting the needs of vulnerable children and families, and young people at risk of harm as a result of Child Sexual Exploitation.

The review reports positively on the strength of leadership and governance and makes a series of recommendations that will be picked up alongside the action plan to be developed following the recent inspection by Ofsted.

Background

This review was commissioned following the panel that met earlier in 2015 to consider the Serious Case Review published in Oxfordshire concerning Child Sexual Exploitation. It was commissioned to provide assurance that arrangements for the leadership and governance of the Council's Children's Services are sound.

Since the review Ofsted have also inspected Wokingham's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The report of the inspection will be published in January.

Analysis of Issues

This independent review found a large number of strengths and improvements in the leadership, management and governance of services for children in Wokingham. The Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member are singled out for the strength of leadership they have shown, and the impact they have had on the quality of service provided by the Council.

Its recommendations for further improvement will be taken forward alongside the action planning following the Ofsted inspection.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Cross-Council Implications

Strong Leadership & Governance

List of Background Papers

Independent Review of Leadership & Governance: Wokingham Borough Council children's services

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