

<b>Report of:</b>	Helen Watson, Executive Director of Children’s Services Councillor Antony High, Deputy Mayor and Thematic Lead
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive - 18 February 2020
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<b>Subject:</b>	Outcome of the OFSTED Inspection of Children’s Services
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**Summary**

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
<p>That Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the outcome of the OFSTED Inspection of Children’s Services outlined in the report published by OFSTED on 24<sup>th</sup> January;</li> <li>• Approve the improvement plan attached at Appendix 2; and</li> <li>• Approve the resourcing plan attached at Appendix 3 to a maximum cost of £3.229m over a two year period</li> </ul>

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Key decision:</b>	<b>Confidential:</b>	<b>Is the report urgent?</b>
Decision	Yes	No	Yes - Rule 15 (general exception) applies.

<b>Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan</b>		
<b>Business</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Place</b>
The improvement and resourcing plan attached to this report set out how the Council intends to focus resource on improving services to children and achieving an improved OFSTED rating.	The Council has a statutory duty to provide services to children in Middlesbrough who are in need of help and protection. It is committed to ensuring that these services provide effective and quality help to those families and children who require support.	Not applicable

<b>Ward(s) affected</b>
Services to children cover the whole of Middlesbrough and all children and families within

it.

## What is the purpose of this report?

1. To report the outcome of the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) by OFSTED that took place between the 18<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

## Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. Services to Children in need of help and protection are one of the key statutory responsibilities of the Council and therefore the impact of an adverse OFSTED judgement is extremely important. The corporate response to this position and its implications could impact on all areas of the Council's activity and therefore require Member agreement, support and scrutiny.

## Report Background

3. The last full inspection of children's services in Middlesbrough took place in 2015 and rated services as 'requiring improvement'. Since this date there have been a number of OFSTED visits looking at specific parts of the service that were consistent with the previous judgement. The inspection of November / December 2019 is the first full inspection received by Middlesbrough under the newer ILACS framework.
4. The ILACS inspection grades services under four categories the judgement for Middlesbrough is:

<b>Judgement:</b>	<b>Grade</b>
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate

5. OFSTED uses a system of four grades in their judgements, Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate. As such the Middlesbrough judgement is the lowest possible grading that can be received and requires a timely and effective response from the Council.
6. The Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 2 sets out an initial, 12 week, focused approach to ensure that all key findings in the OFSTED report are addressed quickly, improving key services to children and rapidly improving their effectiveness.
7. In order to deliver the Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 2 there is a requirement for additional resources to provide capacity and expertise on the improvement of services to children. This requirement is set out in Appendix 3.
8. The required funding for these additional resources will be included in the 2020/21 budget report to be considered by Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

### **What decision(s) are being asked for?**

9. It is recommended that Executive accepts the findings of the OFSTED inspectorate and endorses the proposals for improvement and resourcing of the service in order to facilitate a rapid strengthening of services for children in Middlesbrough.
10. Specifically Executive is asked to:
  - Note the outcome of the OFSTED Inspection of Children's Services outlined in the report published by OFSTED on 24<sup>th</sup> January;
  - Approve the Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 2; and
  - Approve the resourcing plan attached at Appendix 3 to a maximum cost of £3.229m over a two year period.

### **Why is this being recommended?**

11. This decision is being recommended because it is not acceptable for services to children in need of help and protection in the town to be inadequate and therefore the Council needs to target the correct resources at effective action to rapidly improve the services in place to protect, help and support vulnerable children and families in Middlesbrough.

### **Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended**

12. The other potential option would be to attempt to manage improvement in the service within existing resources. This option was not recommended because the nature of the findings in the recent inspection mean that rapid improvement is necessary, for this to be successful it will need to be supported by sufficient, high quality, practitioners with the right skills and knowledge working to a focused plan.

### **Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)**

13. If agreed, the resources required to deliver the improvement journey will be allocated from within existing resources to enable recruitment to take place to press forward with rapid improvement in partnership with the Department for Education and in line with the plan attached at Appendix 2.

### ***Legal***

14. The Council has a statutory duty to provide appropriate services to children under the Children Act 1989.

### ***Financial***

15. The financial implications arising as a result of this report will be increased investment in the service to support the improvement journey in Children's Services and this will be built into the 2020/21 budget report.
16. These resources will be allocated from within existing Medium Term Financial Plan and reserve assumptions and reflected in the 2020/21 Budget Report to be considered by Full Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

## ***Policy Framework***

17.No Policy Framework implications have been identified

## ***Equality and Diversity***

18. There are no concerns that the improvement of children's services could result in policies and practices that could impact differently on individual or groups because they hold one or more protected characteristics.

19. Ensuring that services to children and families are effective and appropriate for all including those who hold one or more protected characteristics is a key responsibility for the service and will be monitored at all times as part of the improvement journey.

## ***Risk***

20. There are a number of entries on the Council's risk registers that set out the potential risks the Council could face as a result of failure to improve services to children. The investment and improvement plan set out in this report is a key control measure in managing these risks.

## **Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)**

21. If agreed, the improvement process will commence in line with the plan set out in Appendix 2 with the resources allocated in Appendix 3.

## **Appendices**

22. Appendix 1 – OFSTED Inspection Report 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
Appendix 2 – Improvement Plan  
Appendix 3 – Resourcing Requirement

## **Background papers**

23. No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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