

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 26th April 2021

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PART I **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

THE FUTURE DELIVERY MODEL FOR SLOUGH CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to consider and scrutinise the future delivery model for children's services in Slough following approval by Cabinet at its meeting on 15th March 2021.

The governance arrangements for Slough Children's Services Trust have been changed to make it wholly owned by Slough Borough Council, and from 1st April 2021 the company became known as Slough Children First.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to:

(a) Scrutinise and comment on any aspect of the report and to consider the future arrangements for scrutiny of the company.

(b) Note the following resolutions of the Cabinet held on 15th March 2021.

1. *"That the Company's articles of association be approved, to make it wholly owned by the Council, including agreeing a change in its name to Slough Children First Limited, and to the reserved matters set out in paragraph 6.4 of the report;*
2. *That it be agreed that the targeted Early Help and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) services functions being transferred to the Company with a proposed start date of no later than 1 July 2021;*
3. *That the Council enter into the Governance Side Agreement with the DfE setting out details of the consent and consultation rights exercisable by the Secretary of State whilst specified functions are subject to statutory intervention;*

4. *That the Council enter into a five year (extendable by two years) service delivery contract with the Company with a proposed start date of 1 April 2021;*
5. *That the Council enter into formal support services arrangements by 1 September 2021;*
6. *That it be agreed to write off £2.4m of the accumulated Children's Services Trust Company deficit incurred in the initial years of the contract for providing services to Children, with the remainder covered by DfE grant as assumed in the Council's 2021/22 – 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy and the MHCLG Capitalisation Directive;*
7. *That a loan be approved from the Council to Slough Children First Ltd of £5m to provide the company with working capital, to be repaid within 30 days of the final payment to the Company in relation to the contract;*
8. *That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Executive Director of People (Children) and the Leader to:*
 - a. *finalise the details and commencement date of the service delivery contract and other associated documents, including licences and leases for property, and to implement the arrangements;*
 - b. *grant licences for the Company to use Council property as required from 1 April 2021;*
 - c. *finalise the terms of the loan agreement.*
9. *That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, to:*
 - a. *agree the final scope of services to transfer to the Company by 1 July 2021 and to agree any further services to transfer to the Company, subject to this not involving the transfer of more than 20 additional staff;*
 - b. *make decisions on reserved matters as the Council's member representation, including agreeing the adoption of the final agreed version of the Articles of Association;*
 - c. *finalise the details of the Governance Side Agreement."*

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3.1. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The provision of high-quality social care and other related services directly contributes to Slough's Joint Wellbeing Strategy priority of protecting vulnerable children. There are clear links between the JSNA priorities around protecting vulnerable children and the increased service integration and coordination that this change offers.

3.2. Five Year Plan Outcomes

Transferring services to the Company will allow greater service integration, contributing to outcome 1 in the Five-Year Plan - Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful.

There are opportunities for alignment with the Council's Our Futures programme, which is currently implementing a new operating model to deliver its vision to become a world class organisation. This will need to include the alignment of any SLAs for support services across the Council and the Company to maintain the consistency of corporate support service provision as much as possible. It will also facilitate opportunities for closer working as part of the locality model, with a focus on preventative services and join-up across different services.

Children's centres and family hubs will form part of the core locality networks which include a range of services aligned to locality wide objectives. It will allow improved data sharing, meaningful data insight and on the ground community insight. These will help target preventative and early help services to ensure that we are using resources where they will have the most impact to these areas, taking a more holistic view of service provision with our communities.

4. Other Implications

4.1 Financial

The cost to the Council of the contract for Slough's Children's Services is included in the Council's 2021/22 – 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy. The total contract amount is still to be finalised but is estimated to be in the region of £35m in 2021/22. This includes:

	£000s
Services in the current contract for 2021/22	30,771
less the costs of the adoption service transferred to RAA	(571)
Approximate costs of services to be transferred	2,000
Estimated costs of SLAs provided by SBC to the Company	3,000
Estimated interest costs of loan to the Company	<u>72</u>
Total	35,272

The cost of targeted Early Help and NEET services functions being transferred to the Company are still to be finalised. Pension contributions will be subject to an actuarial valuation prior to the transfer.

The additional cost of SLAs will be added to the Contract on 1st September 2021 when finalised and the cost of interest on the £5m working capital loan provided to the Company to the Council, estimated to be £72k pa. Both of these additional sums will be repaid to the Council through the year via agreements meaning a nil impact on the Council budget.

Payments for the agreed contract sum will be paid to the Company monthly in arrears.

The contract with the company includes provision for additional in-year costs relating to increases in demand to be agreed with the Council subject to examination of demand KPIs.

The new contract has stronger financial controls than were in place with the initial contract, particularly on the need to provide detailed monthly accounts, the format of which has been agreed with the Council, within 10 working days of the end of the month. This includes, in addition to financial performance, operational performance and cash-flow. There is also the opportunity to examine information through open book accounting and step in rights. There is also more confidence about the budget provided and the assumptions made for 2021/22 than in the original contract as the majority of services are continuing with similar levels of service. This gives more confidence that the new company will not go into deficit and will be able to repay the £5m working capital loan provided at the end of the contract.

The regular governance meetings will track demand and oversee and challenge performance, including efficiency. Any risks of increased costs will be reported through agreed monthly reporting arrangements with the Company and reported to Cabinet as part of budget monitoring during the year.

The contract price will be reviewed each September on agreed measures in the contract that will form part of the Council's overall budget and MTFS process.

The DfE also provide funding to the Company that funds the additional cost of providing Children's Services through a Company compared to a Council run service. The Company has assumed this funding will be £2,166k pa in 2021/22. This funding is agreed with the DfE on an annual basis.

The impact of future reductions in DfE funding whether at the time that the Statutory Direction ceases or prior will need to be assessed and appropriate actions agreed with the Council, Company and DfE to ensure that DfE funded costs including any potential ancillary costs such as redundancy costs are accounted for.

In addition the Company receives grants and other income of approximately £1,736k pa. This means, the total budget for the Company is estimated to be approximately £39m pa, including:

	£000s
Council costs of	35,272
DfE grants of	2,166
Other Grants and Income	<u>1,736</u>
Total	39,174

The DfE is also providing the Company with one-off transformation funding of £1,481k in 2021/22.

4.2 Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 of the Cabinet report	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Controls	Risk level	Outcome
To approve the Company's articles of association to make it wholly owned by the Council, including agreeing a change in its name to Slough Children First Limited, and to the reserved matters set out in paragraph 6.4.	Risk that the Company is not well run and that services to vulnerable children decline and/or that the Company does not maintain suitable financial control. Opportunity to better integrate children's services within the Council.	The Council will have three seats on the Company Board and thus significant influence in the running of the Company. The Chief Executive of the Company will also be a Council employee. The Council retains reserved matters rights over significant matters to ensure adequate control over strategic decisions. There will be regular governance groups and monitoring by the Council.	Risk is reduced from the current arrangements .	All such risks are outweighed by the benefits
To agree to the targeted Early Help services function being transferred to the Company with a proposed start date of no later than 1 July 2021;	As above Real opportunity to ensure that Early Help and Social Care Services are better integrated.	The relevant Associate Director and Group Manager for Early Years Services will continue to be a Council employee, seconded part time into the Company.	Negligible	Demand on higher cost services is reduced

<p>To enter into the Governance Side Agreement with the DfE setting out details of the consent and consultation rights exercisable by the Secretary of State whilst specified functions are subject to statutory intervention.</p>	<p>The Council will be bound by the terms of the GSA.</p>	<p>The GSA clearly delineates roles and responsibilities of the Council and the Secretary of State during the period of statutory intervention and thus assists the Council in the proper fulfilment of its responsibilities.</p>	<p>Negligible</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>To enter into a five year (extendable by two years) service delivery contract with the Company with a proposed start date of 1 April 2021.</p>	<p>Risk that the short timescale will result in some matters not being satisfactorily resolved.</p>	<p>Extensive work has taken place to fully consider relevant matters with appropriate Legal advice on all sides. It is intended that the SDC will have clauses giving the Council open book accounting rights and step in rights if services are not being run in accordance with the terms of the contract.</p> <p>There will be a contract management function within the Council independent of the Children's services teams.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Appropriate levers to ensure Company operates within contract expectations.</p>

<p>To enter into formal support services arrangements from 1 September 2021.</p>	<p>The Company will not have detailed Service Level Agreements in place by this date.</p> <p>Services to children will not be able to operate without appropriate support services.</p>	<p>Formal written agreements have not always been in place to date with the Trust so this does not pose increased risk. The current arrangements are anticipated to continue in the short term, to allow the Council's current restructure to complete and further analysis on the future model for support services to the Company. These arrangements will be subject to a separate support services agreement.</p>	<p>Negligible</p>	<p>SLAs will be developed over the coming six months, securing both the interests of the Council and Company.</p>
<p>To write off £2.4m of the accumulated Children's Services Trust Company deficit with the remainder covered by DfE grant as assumed in the Council's 2021/22 – 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy and the MHCLG Capitalisation Directive.</p>	<p>This enables the Company to set up, and draws a line under the historic debt.</p>	<p>In line with the rest of the Capitalisation Directive, will be covered by sale of assets over future years.</p>	<p>Very low</p>	<p>Company viability</p>
<p>To approve a loan from the Council to Slough Children First Ltd of £5m to provide the company with working capital, to be repaid</p>	<p>The Company is badly managed and runs up a deficit.</p>	<p>The Contract allows for full open book accounting and there will be regular governance and monitoring, as</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The Company has working capital in its first month and is therefore viable.</p>

within 30 days of the final payment to the Company in relation to the contract.		well as an in-year mechanism to ensure appropriate funding levels are kept under review.		
To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Executive Director of People (Children) and the Leader for various matters as set out above.	This allows the practical realisation of the above recommendations .	Expert independent legal advice is obtained as all agreements are drawn up. Arrangements can be reviewed in the future. The Executive Director of Corporate Resources will only exercise these powers where the decisions are in accordance with Council policy and internal procedures and in accordance with the Council's agreed budget.	Low	
To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council for various matters as set out above.	This allows the practical realisation of the above recommendations .	The Chief Executive will only exercise these powers where the decision is in accordance with agreed Council policy and budget.		

4.3 Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

a) Human Rights Act Implications

Under Article 8 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as given effect to in the domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998, every person has the right to respect for his family life.

The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991, provides that it is a fundamental right of every child to belong to a family, but such right is not enforceable in UK domestic law.

b) Legal Implications

The Secretary of State for Education has powers to issue a direction in relation to specified social services functions relating to children under s.497A of the Education Act 1996. Various directions have been issued in relation to statutory functions in Slough since 2014. There are two current directions one in 2017 and one in 2020.

The 2017 direction was issued to remove specific education functions from those that were subject to statutory intervention. The 2017 direction required that the remaining functions continue to be delivered by the Slough Children's Services Trust and that the Council continue to comply with instruction from the Department for Education (DfE) and the appointed commissioner.

Following an Ofsted inspection in 2019, the Council, the Trust and the DfE have worked together to identify a new operating model for statutory children's services and this resulted in the May 2020 direction. This requires the Council to work with the DfE and the appointed Commissioner to establish a future operating model and to comply with instructions from both in relation to the relevant statutory services.

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and associated regulations permit local authorities to enter into arrangements with separate organisations. This covers almost all social care functions relating to children and former care leavers, but excludes adoption functions unless the organisation is a registered adoption agency and appointment of Independent Reviewing Officers (s.25A and s.26 of the Children Act 1989). Functions contracted out must still be discharged by or under the supervision of registered social workers and any such delegation does not remove the Council's responsibility for ensuring that its statutory obligations are met.

The proposed changes to the Articles of Association and the new Governance Side Agreement will change the ownership of the Company and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Council and the DfE. This will give the Council greater control over the strategic direction of the Company, whilst ensuring operational independence for day to day functions. The reserved matters, specified below, allow the Council to make certain high level decisions as opposed to leaving these matters to the Company's board of directors. This is common in local authority controlled companies to ensure compliance with procurement rules and to fit within the Teckal exemption.

The current service delivery contract expires in September 2021; however it was proposed that a new contract was entered into on 1 April 2021 to align with the new company structure. As the company will be controlled by the Council and the statutory functions are under a formal direction from the DfE, it is not appropriate to conduct a procurement process. However, separate legal advisors have been appointed to support the Council and the Company and there has been a detailed negotiation process to ensure that the service delivery contract is fit for purpose and protects both parties' interests.

On 16 December 2019, Cabinet considered the most appropriate way of delivering its adoption functions, as part of the Government's regionalisation of adoption proposals. Legal documentation is already well advanced and it is planned that that the function will transfer on the 1 April 2021. This transfer will result in some of the Company's staff being transferred to the new provider.

c) Equalities Impact Assessment

Services within the Company are supplied under a clear legal framework that includes equalities protecting the rights of children and adults in the delivery of services. The Equalities Impact Assessment shows no adverse impact on any protected groups, and identifies a number of potential positive impacts.

The new service delivery contract will set out a governance framework, including regular meetings at an operational and strategic level. These meetings will complement the existing framework to monitor and ensure improvement of services.

d) Data Protection Impact Assessment

The Council will undertake all necessary risk assessment and due diligence procedures mandated by data protection laws including the completion of a Data Protection Impact Assessment.

e) Workforce

There are clear workforce implications involving the transfer of staff from the Council to the Company. It is proposed that staff will transfer under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) Regulations which provides protection to the transferring staff. Council staff are protected against having their terms and conditions changed in connection with the transfer.

Currently fifty posts identified to transfer to the Company, in addition to a further two management employees who will be seconded to the Company on a part-time basis subject to any final analysis of staffing and capacity. These roles involve managers and family support staff within the Early Help Hub, team, and NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) workers from Community Services. The business case for these transfers is appended.

The Council will follow its organisational change processes and any permanent staff in roles will be consulted and subject to TUPE processes. This will include engagement of Trades Unions.

The Company will meet with all affected staff to ensure that there is clear information given in relation to the changes, and to offer question and answer opportunities.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 In 2014 Slough Children's Social Care Services were placed under Statutory Direction by the Secretary of State. For the period during which the Direction remains in place, the DfE requires that Children's Social Services have

'operational independence' from the Council, and Slough Children's Services Trust was established in October 2015.

- 5.2 On 14 October 2019, Cabinet received a report following a peer review of the Children's Services Trust. This report noted the financial position of the Trust, and made recommendations for some additional funding to be transferred to help reduce further financial pressure.
- 5.3 On 16 December 2019, Cabinet received a report updating the financial situation of the Trust, which agreed a one-off capital injection of £1m, subject to a further £1.969 being made available by the Department for Education.
- 5.4 Whilst Children's Social Care services were delivered by the Company, Universal Services, Early Help and Targeted Youth Support Services remained within the Council. Responsibility for the administration of the Troubled Families programme later moved from the Company to the Council.
- 5.5 Following an options proposal in July 2019 to look at future models of delivery and further consultation, it was proposed that Children's Services in Slough will move towards a local authority owned company (The Company), with all services under the single accountability of a new combined Director of Children's Services (DCS)/Chief Executive post. With the move to a new Company and combined DCS comes the opportunity to look at the Slough's Children's Services Target Operating Model.
- 5.6 PeopleToo were commissioned to provide an independent assessment of services to determine which should be undertaken within the new Company. Their business case for the changes proposed is shown at **Appendix 1**. Their conclusions are summarised as follows.
- 5.7 Demand for statutory social work interventions in Slough continues to rise. Although lower than statistical neighbours, Slough's child in care population has increased per 10,000. This is attributable to children staying in care for longer periods of time and an increase in appropriate decision making in respect of children's welfare. Children are being supported with increasingly high and complex needs. To be able to improve outcomes the Council, Trust and the DfE recognise the need to reconsider the current operating models and move towards a whole systems approach.
- 5.8 This Business Case outlines two options in achieving this whole system approach and considers the risks associated with each option. **Option 1** is to take a phased approach to transformation where Universal Services operating at Tier 1 and 2 and Troubled Families will remain within the Council. The Family Support Service and the Targeted Youth Prevention Service, inclusive of NEET under the new structure agreed as part of the Councils Our Futures Programme, will transition across to the new Company at a mutually agreed date no later than the 1st July 2021.
- 5.9 With Option 1 comes the recommendation to review this structure once embedded, to ensure that outcomes are being maximised in the most effective and efficient way. **Option 2** is to move all services delivered by the Council (excluding Education) into the Company at a mutually agreed date no later than the 1st July 2021.

- 5.10 The Transition Steering Group (a joint DFE, Trust and Council Officer group) meeting on the 15th December 2021 proposed that Option 1 would at this time be the preferred approach. Details of the posts that will transition from the Council are included within a separate confidential document. It has also been agreed that all current services (intensive intervention and statutory services) delivered by Slough Children's Services Trust operating at Tier 2,3 and 4, will transition across to the new Company on the 1st April 2021. Given the observations of how dependent the current system process is on business support, it is proposed that the business support posts move across from the Trust to the Company to ensure service stability, with the recommendation that a health check of the Children's Services Case Management System Liquid Logic is undertaken. If functionality is maximised this should be a system that is not time consuming for practitioners and allows them to manage their own workflow accordingly. This could see a reduction in the business support staff currently operating elements of this process on behalf of practitioners but would need to be carefully planned to minimise any impact on recording.
- 5.11 At the same time, the Company will complete the move to join Regional Adoption Agency arrangements, and the transfer of nine staff into this arrangement. Cabinet previously approved this move in December 2019. This should allow our children to draw from a wider pool of adopters, achieving stability and permanence more quickly than at present.
- 5.12 It should be noted that this Business Case relates to the Teams directly involved in the delivery of Children's Services including Business Support but not Corporate Support Services such as Finance and HR, which have been the subject of a separate business case.
- 5.13 The provision of corporate support services has developed historically since the establishment of the Trust with services being directly delivered by the Trust as well as by the Council. The Trust has its own Finance, HR, Communications and Customer interface functions and other services including Data and Governance, Improvement projects and executive team support. The Trust has Finance transactions, Payroll, IT services, Property and Facilities Management and Insurance provided by the Council and contracts externally for Legal services.
- 5.14 Given the current position of corporate support services and the timescales of transitioning to a Company, the key principles that have been proposed in the business case are:
- a. There is no change to service provision as of 1st April 2021 to ensure continuity and allow more development of Service Level Agreements (SLAs).
 - b. SLAs for all services in scope are critical to determining and agreeing the service requirements and how this can best be delivered from the perspective of efficiency, service quality, resilience, and sustainability. The development of SLAs is a priority particularly for Procurement, Finance, HR, IT and Digital and Property FM. This work should commence prior to 1st April 2021 and be completed by 30th June 2021 with SLAs for other services to be completed by 30th September 2021. All costs and funding sources need to be considered in the development of SLAs and any subsequent changes to SLAs and service provision need to be mutually agreed. Quality of service provision and meeting the specification set out in the SLAs will be the key

measures and if there is on-going failure to meet the requirements then there would be an option to discuss alternative provision and the financial consequences will need to be managed between the parties.

- c. The Council will charge for service at full cost including direct costs and service overheads but not corporate overheads.

6. Board Arrangements and Reserved Matters

- 6.1 The proposal to develop a wholly owned Company gives the Council significantly more influence over the running of the Company, and alongside the merging of the roles of Executive Director of Children, Learning and Skills, and Chief Executive of the Company, offers the opportunity for much closer working across the Company and the Council. This offers the potential for increased integration and better outcomes for children and young people.
- 6.2 The Chief Executive of the Company will also be an Executive Director of the Council, report to the Council Chief Executive and be a member of the Corporate Management Team. Performance Information of the Company will be shared with the Council. Governance will take place through the monthly oversight of a Council Commissioner, and quarterly formal governance meetings including the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Resources and the Lead Member. A Service Delivery Contract is being drawn up, specifying the outcomes from the Company, the manner of its functioning, and the performance to be monitored
- 6.3 The Council will nominate three non-executive Directors to the Company Board. There will be a further three independent non-executive Directors, three executive Directors, and an independent Chair.
- 6.4 Whilst the Board will have operational freedom to run the Company, the following will be reserved matters requiring Council approval as the sole owner of the Company:
 - Any appointment and/or removal of the Chief Executive or a Council Director and/or any changes to the terms of such appointments;
 - Any change to the membership of the Company;
 - The annual approval of the Business Plan and any in-year variation to the business plan;
 - Any changes/amendments to the articles;
 - The voluntary winding up of the Company or dissolution or appointing any liquidator or administrative receiver of the Company or any of its assets (save where the Company is insolvent or any action is necessary by the Directors in order to comply with their statutory duties or to avoid potential civil or criminal liability);
 - The entering into by the Company of any new third party contracts for the provision of services by the Company to third parties which are outside the

scope of the Service Delivery Contract and/or the Business Plan and which have a total value in excess of £181,302;

- The entering into by the Company of any borrowing, credit facility or investment arrangements (other than trade credit in the ordinary course of business) with third parties of more than £250,000;
- The entering into by the Company of any other contractual arrangement with the Council for the provision of other services to the Council following the service commencement date of the Service Delivery Contract, but only to the extent that any such contractual arrangement falls outside the scope of the Service Delivery Contract and/or the Business Plan;
- Any proposal by the Company to form any legal entity or undertaking in which the Company would be a member, shareholder or hold any analogous position in any jurisdiction or acquiring shares in any other company;
- Participating by the Company in any partnership or joint venture whether incorporated or not or amalgamating or merging the Company with any other company or business undertaking, but only to the extent that such arrangements fall outside the scope of the Service Delivery Contract and/or the Business Plan;
- The Company giving any guarantee, suretyship or indemnity outside the ordinary course of its business to secure the liabilities of any person or assume the obligations of any person (other than the Company or a wholly owned subsidiary of the Company);
- The selling or disposing of in any way whatsoever any part of the business (including assets) of the Company;
- Dealing with any surpluses of the Company, other than those surpluses which are agreed, pursuant to the Business Plan or Service Delivery Contract, that may be retained by the Company;
- The Company acquiring, or agreeing to acquire, any freehold or leasehold interest in or licence over land except where the Member is the seller, lessor or licensor (as applicable) of the land in question, in which case Member approval pursuant to this Article shall not be required;
- The Company creating any encumbrance over the whole or a significant part of its undertaking or assets;
- Any changes to the Company name, trading name or registered office of the Company or physically relocating the headquarters of the Company;
- The Company commencing, settling or defending any significant claim, proceedings or other litigation brought by or against it, except where they are a part of the Company's ordinary course of business and/or operations;
- Appointing or removing an auditor, and acquiring assets outside the scope of the Service Delivery Contract and/or the Business Plan.

7. The Governance Side Agreement

7.1 The Governance Side Agreement sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Secretary of State during the period of statutory intervention, including the detail of consent and consultation rights. This includes:

7.2 Consent rights:

- removal or appointment of the Chair of the Board of Directors;
- removal or appointment of the Chief Executive of the Company;
- any change to the membership of the Company;
- approval of any voluntary winding up or dissolution of the Company, duties or avoid potential civil or criminal liability;
- approval of any new contractual arrangement for provision of other services outside of the scope of the service delivery contract or business plan;
- approve the Company setting up a legal entity which it would be a member or shareholder in;
- approve the Company participating in a partnership or joint venture, where this falls outside the scope of the service delivery contract or the business plan;
- approve any exercise by the Council of a right to direct the Board to take or refrain from taking specified action.

7.3 Consultation rights:

- decisions about removal or appointment of a Council non-executive director;
- approval of the annual business plan and any in-year variances;
- the Company entering into any new third party contracts for services outside the scope of the service delivery contract or business plan and which have a total value in excess of £181,320;
- any changes or amendments to the Articles of Association.

7.4 The agreement sets out the process for seeking consent or consulting the DfE, including the period for reply. If the DfE does not reply within this time period, consent is deemed given.

8. Company Objects

- 8.1 The Trust took services from “inadequate” to “requires improvement to be good”. Now is the time to push forward to ensure services are good or better. The close partnership with the local authority, the integration of targeted early help services and the bringing together of the Executive Director of People (Children) and the Chief Executive of the Company creates a unique opportunity to realise the Council’s ambitions for vulnerable children and families in Slough.
- 8.2 Creation of the Company allows for the following benefits:
- Improved resilience of the service, and flexibility and adaptability to allow the service to strengthen and grow;
 - Improved financial benefits due to increased efficiencies;
 - Improved safeguarding of children and the quality of the delivery of service to children and their families;
 - Opportunity for the Company and SBC to work together collaboratively with increasing clarity and objectivity to build trust and mutual confidence leading to better outcomes for children and their families in Slough.
- 8.3 The objectives of the Company are to provide social care, youth offending and other related services and support to children, young people and their families for the advancement of the community, and in particular:
- To provide high quality and coordinated services in connection with children, young people and their families, including in relation to safeguarding, children in care and at the edge of care, children leaving care and adoption and fostering services;
 - To innovate and to secure improvements in the quality, effectiveness and value for money of the services provided to children, young people and their families in respect of social care, family support and youth offending services;
 - To advance and promote social care, family support and youth offending services available to children, young people and their families;
 - To work collaboratively with other agencies to identify the individual social care needs of children and young people and to establish suitable arrangements to prepare for and meet such needs;
 - To make a positive and effective contribution to multi-agency early intervention support for children, young people and their families to avoid the need for more intensive social care support;
 - To ensure that effective care planning and appropriate intervention is in place which protects children from harm, reduces the need for children to be in care unless absolutely necessary, and supports those in care;

- To establish and operate arrangements based on best practice and innovation and to work in partnership with all agencies involved with children, young people and their families to encourage and support children and young people to achieve positive outcomes; and
- To establish, promote and encourage the development of collaborative working arrangements between individuals and organisations in the field of information, advice, guidance and support to deliver high standards of social care, family support and youth offending services to children and young people.

9. Comments from Other Committees

A version of this report was presented to the Cabinet on 15th March 2021 and the resolutions are set out in Section 2 of this report.

10. Appendices

- A Peopletoo Business Case for a new target operating model for Children's Services to be delivered by the new Local Authority owned Company.
- B Equalities Impact Assessment