

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) – Review of Children's Social Care System Working Group

Draft notes of meeting on 24 October 2011

**Councillor Judith Chapman (Chair)
John Malone and John Nevill**

Introduction

- 1 The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) agreed in June 2011 to maintain this working group which had met during the second half of 2010/11. The remit of the group is to track implementation of the new children's social care record system.
- 2 As agreed at the last meeting of the working group in August, this meeting included a presentation on the design of the new system and lessons learned from the existing ESCR system. There was also a demonstration of the existing system and officers provided a brief update on the progress of the procurement process. Tenders were due by 30 November, followed by an intensive evaluation process.
- 3 The demonstration of the existing system showed some of the issues associated with navigating the system and accessing all the information about an individual child in an effective way, as well as new overview screens that have been developed which have partly helped to address these limitations.
- 4 In addition, management information developments were demonstrated. These have been seen as a very positive development and it was intended that these would be replicated and enhanced in the replacement system.
- 5 The chair sought reassurance from officers that the replacement system would address the problems identified with the existing system. She was told that officers were confident that the new system would meet the needs of children and young people's social care.
- 6 It was expected that closed cases would be transferred across from ESCR onto the new system, but this may be through an archive provision. The Chair indicated that this would be important for tracking the previous history of cases that are referred back to social care after a period of time.
- 7 Officers updated on the Single View that had been discussed at the previous meeting. The 'proof of concept' was now scheduled for November/December.
- 8 They also reported that senior management had allocated additional resources for the project to assist with the preparation work.
- 9 The Chair asked about costs and officers indicated that an update on the cost of the project would not be available until the tenders were received, when these could be compared with the estimated cost. It was expected that a decision on the award of the

contract would be made by Executive Board around May 2012. It would be a minimum of a further 9 months before the new system would be in operation.

- 9 The Chair expressed concern about this further delay since the last update in August and the cumulative delay since the working group began meeting. Officers explained that it had been important to get the specification right and also to allow sufficient time for the evaluation of tenders. The Chair suggested that it would have been preferable to provide a more realistic timetable at the outset of the project.
- 10 She also asked about the progress with deciding on the appropriate way forward for Adult Social Care records. As far as officers were aware, there was no recommended option yet.

Next Steps

- 1 It was agreed that the next meeting of the working group would take place in December.