

### **Briefing Note to the Chair and Members of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny**

**8<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

#### **Performance Report**

You will be aware that the joint performance report for the period January to March 2020 was to be submitted to this Committee for scrutiny today. The purpose of me writing is to explain to members the reasons why as an Education Directorate at this juncture, we have not been able to provide this information.

You will be aware that schools closed on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and were repurposed to provide hub provision during the initial phase of the pandemic, with children being provided with an opportunity to check in and catch up for the last three weeks of what would have been the summer term prior to the whole school return commencing on a graduated basis from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

Throughout this time both the local authority, school staff and partners have flexed and responded to the daily challenges that this virus has brought. I am sure that you appreciate that despite children returning to schools at the beginning of the autumn term and the best efforts of headteachers, and governing bodies and Local Authorities to return to the new normal routine, it is far from a 'business as usual'. As such, one of the business activities that has been affected is the routine data collection of information from our schools and partners which is used to inform performance reports such as this. This, coupled with the timing of the production of this report occurring at a time of the education response moving back to an emergency response mode at the same time of whole school reopening has resulted in the information not being available for inclusion in the papers for this meeting.

Clearly and quite rightly, at this juncture headteachers are focusing on the operational leadership challenges faced by schools and to ask for historic performance information at a time when risk assessments are being regularly reviewed in response to the changing nature of the pandemic and its impact on wellbeing of staff and school organisational arrangements would not be appropriate given the current challenges that we jointly face.

However, you will be aware that there are two other education reports on today's agenda, namely the Safeguarding in Education Policy which has been updated in the light of the pandemic and the 360 Degree safe policy which is the ICT policy to support safe learning which is equally important. Moreover, it is intended that the quality assurance process to ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements continue to operate and respond to the challenges but at this stage a specific date as to when this committee will receive the historic performance information cannot be determined but the joint Chair of this Committee will be regularly updated moving forwards.