

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | 26 July 2011                                      |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | Lorraine Butcher, Director of Children's Services |
| <b>Subject/Title:</b>    | Cheshire East Family Service                      |
| <b>Portfolio Holder:</b> | Cllr Hilda Gaddum                                 |

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 To discuss proposals for the development the Cheshire East Family Service.

### **2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 Agreement to the development of Cheshire East Family Service and the targeted approach to prevention.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The emerging theme of targeted prevention is at the forefront of policy development from central government. The Family Service is a direct response to this and will also address some of the issues raised from the recent inspection of Safeguarding and Looked after Children's Services.

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All

### **6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health**

- 6.1 The implementation of a new Family Service responds to a range of policy initiatives and strategies. Firstly, as mentioned in 10.5 the Allen report; Good Parents, Better Kids, Great Citizens provides the context and the evidence base to progress the prevention agenda. Secondly, the new service will be heavily involved in reducing Child Poverty and be able to meet the recommended, if accepted in the Munro report to put early intervention on a statutory footing. Finally, narrowing the gap in terms of both health and

educational achievement will provide a clear policy direction for the new service.

## **7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

- 7.1 The Cheshire East Family Service has been costed as per the agreed needs led budget. The majority of the resource for this service is allocated from the Early Intervention grant.

## **8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

- 8.1 N/A

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 A range of risks have been identified including potential dip in performance, skill shortages in staff and accommodation needs. All risks will be mitigated in the implementation of a comprehensive transition plan.

## **10.0 Background and Options**

- 10.1 There is an increasing amount of research that evidences the impact and benefits of an early intervention and prevention approach. This approach calls for a shift in the way we think about how we work with families and deliver services. Traditionally we have focused resources into services that help address problems once they have arisen.
- 10.2 Early intervention and prevention requires a different style to understand the issues facing our families, to design and develop teams and services that can address these issues and support families to support themselves, to target issues before they escalate and become bigger problems and ultimately to help make changes in behaviour – tackling some of those learned behaviours that are not helpful to families and only contribute to reinforcing inter-generational problems.
- 10.3 In reviewing and measuring the impact our services make to children and young people what has become increasingly apparent is that there is the opportunity to make a greater impact by doing things differently. Like many partnerships resources have been traditionally targeted to address symptoms of dysfunction; symptoms that in many cases have been reoccurring and steadily increasing, rather than understanding and addressing the cause of the dysfunction.
- 10.4 We believe that through adopting an early intervention and prevention approach; understanding the causes of dysfunction within our borough, focusing our resources at preventing these causes, utilising our highly skilled workforce, further strengthening the relationships with children and families and continuing to develop effective partnerships with organisations we can make a greater impact. We believe this approach

will allow children and families to have more control in facing their challenges and empower them in finding solutions. Through this approach we can work together to stop issues escalating.

- 10.5 The rationale for this approach is informed from a vast amount of research and evidence. Work undertaken by Graham Allen MP, Dame Clare Tickle, Rt Hon Frank Field MP and Professor Eileen Munro all point towards the effectiveness of identifying problems earlier and intervening to halt escalation. In particular the findings of Allen's work are being used to underpin the approach in Cheshire East. Developments have also been heavily influenced by the C&F Scrutiny report in December 2010.
- 10.6 A comprehensive plan for the development of Cheshire East Family Service was endorsed by Children and Young People SMT and Children's Trust in June 2011, see attached.
- 10.7 Within the plan, 8 key work streams were identified in order to clarify the role, activity and locality structure which will enable Cheshire East Family Service to adopt a clear identity in order to improve outcomes for families. The 8 work streams are:
- A commitment to multi-agency partnership working
  - Publication of a core offer of programme activities
  - A clearly defined front door to improve access to the service
  - A consistent set of working policies, practices and procedures
  - A comprehensive staff development programme
  - A range of effective and innovative communication methods for families, staff and other agencies
  - An intrinsic link to the process of commissioning and effective performance management
  - An operational model which allows for the effective and agile employment of resources
- 10.8 The development of the Family Service will result in a significant shift regarding how we intend to intervene earlier and adopt a 'Think Family' approach. Furthermore a new proposed operational structure will allow the flexibility to adapt to the changing partnership agenda such as developments regarding health. The proposals result in
- 10.8.1 A significant increase in front line resource

10.8.2 The development of a range of generic Family Service posts which aim to utilise the specialist skills that staff possess. Specifically it is proposed that the following posts are established

- Family Service Locality Managers

To be responsible for the strategic development of integrated early intervention and prevention services within a specific locality. To be responsible for the deployment across a locality of a set of workforce and physical resources to prevent the cause of family dysfunction using a Think Family approach. To be responsible for the effective allocation, monitoring and management of a specific locality needs led budget

- Family Service Managers

To have operational responsibility for a set of resources that enable families to receive targeted, appropriate and timely interventions across the 0-19 continuum. To build effective partnerships both internal and external to ensure the delivery of a comprehensive range of evidence based programmes.

- Family Service Workers

To work in partnership to deliver a range of evidence based programmes which ensure families receive effective preventative services.

- Family Service Assistants

To assist in the delivery of a range of evidence based programmes which ensure families receive effective preventative services

- First Contact Service

The development of an easy access front door – First Contact to improve families getting the right service which will allow resources to be targeted to intervene at the earliest stage possible

- Family Service Business Support Officers

To be responsible for the development and management of a set of administrative resources across a specific locality. To assist with the effective allocation, monitoring and management of a specific needs led locality budget

- Family Service Business Support Assistants

To deliver an effective administrative service which ensures families receive appropriate and timely interventions

## **11.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Tony Crane

Designation: Head of Service, Early Intervention and Prevention

Tel No: 01606 271105

Email: [tony.crane@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:tony.crane@cheshireeast.gov.uk)