

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Children and Families Scrutiny Committee

18 January 2010

Date of Meeting:

Report of:

Subject/Title:

Lorraine Butcher – Head of Children and Families

Redesign of Children's Services

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report gives an introduction to the intended redesign of children's services required to provide support to children and families earlier before their needs escalate and require specialist and expensive services to remediate their needs.
- 1.2 The report seeks to give an overview of the pressures facing children's services and the rationale for the redesign required to ensure services to children and families in Cheshire East are effective, appropriate to need and affordable.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board note the contents of the report and endorse the steps being taken to address the significant pressures within children's services.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The current design and delivery structure of children's services inherited by the Council and the wider area covered by the Children's Trust are financially unsustainable in the medium to long term and importantly are not effective in improving outcomes for many of our vulnerable children, young people and families. Nationally as well as locally services have historically been designed, delivered and organised separately, missing key opportunities to join up planning and delivery to address needs in families earlier. As a consequence, and due to the absence of well co-ordinated services targeting earlier intervention, high levels of demand are being made for specialist social care services, for costly special educational needs provision, and for specialist health support.

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 In 2003 the Government published the Green Paper Every Child Matters which established that protecting the most vulnerable children in society had to be central to improving the lives of all children.

6.2 The proposals contained in this report accords with the drive, subsequently enshrined in the Children Act 2004 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, to improve outcomes for all children, including the most vulnerable, through the development of fully integrated services for children addressing the needs and the best interests of each and every child.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 Inherited methods of working have resulted in significant budget pressures being born by the Council and partner agencies. These are unsustainable in the longer term.

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 The Council is currently facing significant budget pressures in this area over the short to medium term. An intended consequence of the redesign is that the need to recourse to specialist and expensive interventions in so many instances will be reduced.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 The Children Act 2004 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, enshrine a requirement for co-operation and partnerships between organisations with a role in improving outcomes for children and young people through a Children's Trust. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires the local authority to 'make arrangements to promote co-operation' between itself and its partners to improve children's well-being.

9.2 The proposals for redesign of children's services in Cheshire East will represent a vision for the Children's Trust in action.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 The ability of the local authority to effectively implement early intervention and targeted interventions to vulnerable children and their families is an area of high reputational risk and will be tested through the effectiveness of it's

arrangements with partner agencies to prevent the risk of 'significant harm' to children.

- 10.2 Additionally, all Council's receive an annual rating by OFSTED of the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements to support children well. Poor performance in this area can affect the overall rating through CAA.

11.0 Background and Options

Context

- 11.1 Child deaths, most recently that of Baby Peter in Haringey 12 months ago, have again placed the spot-light upon safeguarding procedures and the effectiveness of 'joined-up' working across agencies and services. Preventing 'significant harm' to children and avoidable deaths is a priority for all services working with children. Intervening earlier where appropriate with well co-ordinated and effective support should contribute towards the reduction of risk.
- 11.2 Early intervention however goes beyond purely thinking in terms of children in care or being subject to child protection plans. It embraces the wider health and well being of all children and young people. For example:
- a nurse or health visitor or even family support worker who works regularly with a new teenage mother will ensure that the baby gets good health care and their development needs are addressed by building on the parenting skills of the mother/parents;
 - a young person at risk, or on the edge of the criminal justice system works with a positive mentor to assist in redirecting them to build a better future;
 - help is given to a parent with mental health needs to be able to support their family;
 - the additional learning needs of children and young people with learning disabilities are identified early to enable specialist support to be provided locally wherever possible.
- 11.3 Additionally early intervention requires a whole system response and co-ordination across all agencies planning, commissioning and delivering services to children and families. Intervening early, targeting effective interventions with vulnerable children and their families is not the domain however of a single agency. Nor is early intervention deliverable by a single agency per se. For this reason this major project has to be owned by and driven by the Children's Trust. A key focus therefore will be upon bringing partner resources together, under the remit of a Children and Young People's Plan for Cheshire East, jointly focussed upon common priorities, combining resources and approaches to improve outcomes for all children and young people in the Borough.
- 11.4 Children's service redesign in Cheshire East will therefore focus upon:
- activities that, if delivered, can reduce the number of specialist interventions;
 - bringing partner resources together to make this happen;

- target work at those children, young people or families who are likely to experience poor outcomes (health, care and/or education) without effective support and intervention; and
- a whole family ('think family') approach to addressing need.

11.5 Key objectives of the redesign will be:

- to develop locally responsive services appropriate to need which targets and addresses the needs of vulnerable children and their families earlier without recourse to costly and specialist interventions at a later stage;
- to secure cost savings across the Children's Trust and within individual agencies across the health, social care, learning and youth justice economies;
- build momentum in the shift of investment and focus on preventative and early support;
- to improve consistency in access to early and earlier support delivered by the Children's Trust and across appropriately defined and agreed geographical footprints, (agreed within the wider context of the LSP);
- secure integrated practice which delivers flexible and well co-ordinated multi-agency response and joint ownership around managing risk.

11.6 Currently Council Services for Children and Families are projecting a budget deficit for the financial year 2009/10 of approximately £6m. While some of these costs have been incurred through the process of disaggregation a significant proportion are borne from the following:

- A significant increase in the numbers of children cared for by the Local Authority since January 2009
- A significant increase in the number of referrals to social care for assessments
- A significant overspend in the costs of providing residential care provision within Cheshire East

Proposal

11.7 That children's services are redesigned to secure the following:

- Efficient and effective arrangements for contact, referral and assessment processes for children in need and those in need of protection;
- Efficient and effective arrangements for the case management of children in need, children subject to child protection plans and cared for children;
- Securing these arrangements on a locality basis;
- For these arrangements to be implemented within a context where early identification, prevention and the targeting of support to children

and families 'at risk' of requiring statutory intervention is embedded across Council services for children and families, the wider Children's Trust in Cheshire East and by all elements of the Children's Workforce;

- Services are refocused to provide a wide range of family support and prevention whilst maintaining a clear focus on children who are most at risk;
- To halt the continuing increase in the number of children/families requiring statutory interventions, through well coordinated arrangements for early intervention and prevention;
- To integrate and 'join-up' family support across the agencies, and across the 'levels of need' so that the most vulnerable children in need receive an early, robust and targeted intervention aimed at preventing their needs escalating;
- To integrate case recording, assessment and service delivery across Children in Need and to include all Trust partners;
- To ensure adequate qualified and experienced staff are employed to meet the support needs of the most vulnerable children;
- To ensure ICT resources support the work of the Service

The New Model

11.8 Research evidence indicates that effective multi-agency working targeted at addressing needs earlier in children's lives is the most effective means by which the risks of poor outcomes to children and young people can be reduced.

11.9 The main features of this way of working are:

- Multi-agency teams co-ordinated around the needs of the child, family and community
- Services that are well co-ordinated and reduce the need for parents/carers to complete a number of assessments required by a number of separate agencies and processes;
- Effective signposting to the most appropriate services sooner;
- Good information sharing between services and agencies to prevent service duplication and the poor use of resources

Locality Teams

11.10 In order to secure locally responsive services appropriate to the needs of children and families the following is proposed:

- That with partners within the Children's Trust, a number of locality teams are formed to provide access to targeted support *appropriate* to the needs presented;
- That services are commissioned on a multi-agency basis appropriate to the needs of the locality and informed by a good needs assessment/evidence base

- That opportunities are taken to co-locate appropriate services where possible making use of shared capital assets as a step towards securing integrated service design and delivery;
- That the Children's Workforce Development Strategy continues to develop to support this model of delivery across agencies;
- That a detailed Project Plan is developed to progress chase this key area of work.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 12.1 The programme of redesign will commence in January 2010. A Programme Manager has been appointed to lead on the redesign with the Head of Service for Children and Families. Governance will be provided by the Children's Trust Executive, and for the Council a Member Steering Group comprising the Lead Member for Children, the Support Member, and the Chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

13.0 Access to Information

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

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