

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	11 July 2022
Report Title:	Development of Family Hubs in Cheshire East
Report of:	Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Report Reference No:	CF/52/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1.** The Children and Families Committee is asked to note the proposal to develop family hubs across Cheshire East and approve expenditure related to receipt of the Department for Education (DfE) Family Hubs Transformation Fund (TF1), as a result of a successful bid, submitted in December 2021.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1.** Cheshire East Council is one of 12 local authorities that has been successful in a bid for a share of the government's £12m Family Hubs Transformation Fund, announced on 23 May 2022.
- 2.2.** A supplementary estimate is required as the associated funding will lead to an increase in the council's approved budget for 2022/23.
- 2.3.** Cheshire East's allocation is £985,289 (£830,289 revenue and £95,000 capital) over two years and is expected to be spent by March 2024.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1.** The Children and Families Committee is recommended to note the approval of Cheshire East's Family Hubs Transformation Fund bid and the intention to provide an implementation plan update to a future meeting of the committee.
- 3.2.** The committee is also recommended to approve a supplementary estimate for £985,289 and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services to incur expenditure in line with the conditions of the Family Hubs Transformation Fund.

4. **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1. The development of family hubs in Cheshire East provides the opportunity to bring council, health, and community services together to provide help to families ensuring they have access to the right support at the right time.
- 4.2. It is expected that Cheshire East will have approximately 18 months funding (over the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24) to transition to a family hub model by March 2024. Approving receipt of the grant enables the council to progress plans as soon as possible.
- 4.3. The DfE will require Cheshire East Council to confirm acceptance of the Family Hubs Transformation Fund.

5. **Other Options Considered**

- 5.1. Cheshire East could choose not to accept the grant, but this would mean that some of our most vulnerable residents would miss out on the opportunity to access enhanced family help in their local area.

6. **Background**

- 6.1. Family hubs are a way of joining up locally and bringing existing family help services together to improve access to services, connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help. Family hubs bring together services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to provide a great start for life offer.
- 6.2. In summary, family hubs are a 'front door' to a range of early help, public health, and wider support services. They serve families with children of all ages to better facilitate whole family working. They can include hub buildings and virtual offers. How services are delivered varies from place to place, but the following principles are key to the family hub model:
 - **More accessible** – through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings, virtual offers and outreach.
 - **Better connected** – family hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services and providers (state, private, voluntary) – through co-location, data sharing, shared outcomes and governance. Moving from services organised for under-fives, to families with children of all ages, reduces fragmentation (even though an emphasis on early years and the 'Start for Life' offer will remain).
 - **Relationship-centred** – practice in a family hub builds on family strengths and looks to improve family relationships to address underlying issues.
- 6.3. In November 2021, the DfE sought applications for transformation funding from local authorities that do not currently have family hubs, and that wished to

transform to a family hub model of service delivery, with a commitment to open family hubs by March 2024. The funding aims to support at least 12 areas that currently provide the six core services for the conception to age 2 period that make up the Start for Life 'Universal Offer'.

- 6.4.** The government aims to use this first tranche of the fund to learn more about the process of local transformation, to build the evidence base, and to create valuable resources and learning for those local authorities moving to a family hub model in the future.
- 6.5.** Cheshire East Council, working with teams across the council and partner agencies, submitted a bid to the fund by the deadline in December 2021. In line with the grant conditions, this bid was approved by and had the full support of the following local stakeholders:
- Executive Director of Children's Services
 - Executive Director of Adult Services
 - Director of Public Health
 - Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board
- 6.6.** The transformation fund will pay for the change process only, supporting Cheshire East to move to a family hub model through programme and capital funding. Up to £1 million was available, with up to £833k available for programme expenditure and up to £167k available in capital expenditure per local area.
- 6.7.** Sustainability of family hubs beyond the two-year period will be through the integration of existing services into the family hub model. This may involve changes to the structure of local service provision and may also involve a shift in how support is offered to families.
- 6.8.** Cheshire East's funding bid was as follows:

	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Total revenue	382,431	447,859	830,289
Total capital	95,000	60,000	155,000
Total capital and revenue	477,431	507,859	985,289

- 6.9.** 84 upper-tier local authorities applied for the transformation fund. On 23 May 2022, the DfE announced that Cheshire East had been selected to receive funding. Feedback stated that Cheshire East's vision shows a clear commitment to developing the local service offer in line with the family hubs model framework, and they were very impressed with the quality of our bid.

- 6.10.** The other local authorities in the first wave of successful local authorities are:
- Brighton and Hove
 - Wirral
 - Stockport
 - Dorset
 - Solihull
 - York
- 6.11.** It is expected that an additional five local authorities will receive funding through the Family Hubs Transformation Fund in the coming months.
- 6.12.** Central to Cheshire East's bid was the use of our existing children and family centres and youth hubs to deliver physical hubs for families with children of all ages, to ensure that their needs are targeted and met locally. We plan to extend the reach and range to ensure an equity of access across the age range, geography, and population of the borough. Multi-disciplinary teams will work across shared buildings and communities to intervene early to reduce family breakdown and risk of harm and neglect, reducing the need for duplication of effort and onward referral. We have already started to align our services into three localities: north, mid, and south, co-terminus with our care communities.
- 6.13.** Some of the services that are planned to be delivered from family hubs include:
- Midwifery appointments, health checks, weaning and nutrition advice, early years play education and sensory development.
 - Intensive support to reduce family problems that result in family breakdown, working with the child and family to make positive changes.
 - Family help and support for children with disabilities or additional needs.
 - Practical support around finance, housing and supported learning.
 - Youth support services, including youth justice.
 - Mental health support for children, young people, families and new parents.
- 6.14.** We are working with the DfE to agree the terms of our grant. This involves discussing our proposals and clarifying plans, where necessary. The council will also be supported by the National Centre for Family Hubs (NCFH), led by the Anna Freud Centre, and funded by the Department for Education. We will seek peer support and learning from a number of local areas who have already progressed the family hub model.
- 6.15.** The development of family hubs will be overseen by the Early Help Together Board. The delivery plan and progress will be led by the Executive Director of Children's Services and championed by the lead member for children with scrutiny around impact and delivery of agreed plan and milestones undertaken annually by the Health and Wellbeing board and in public via the Children and

Families Committee. An update on the implementation plans for family hubs will be reported to a future meeting of the Children and Families Committee.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

7.1.1. The development of family hubs will be overseen by the Early Help Together Board. The delivery plan and progress will be led by the Executive Director of Children's Services and championed by the lead member for children with scrutiny around impact and delivery of agreed plan and milestones undertaken annually by the Health and Wellbeing board and in public via the Children and Families Committee. An update on the implementation plans for family hubs will be reported to a future meeting of the Children and Families Committee.

7.1.2. The duty to promote multi-agency working and improving the wellbeing of children and families is covered in a range of legislation, including the Children Act 2004 and the Childcare Act 2006.

7.1.3. The Children Act 2004 requires children's services councils to promote cooperation between local partners, including district councils, the police and health services to improve the wellbeing of children in relation to: physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing; protection from harm and neglect; education, training and recreation; the contribution made by them to society; and social and economic wellbeing.

7.1.4. The Childcare Act 2006 requires councils to improve the wellbeing of young children in their area, and reduce inequalities in relation to issues, including physical and mental health, education and social and economic wellbeing. Approaches to this will vary according to need and will likely include high level policies to support all families, however there may also be a need for early help in particular localities or with individual children and families to support this.

7.1.5. Cheshire East will be expected to comply with the grant terms and conditions. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions will affect payment of the grant. Grant conditions will include the (not exhaustive) requirements to:

- Deliver our proposal and open family hubs by March 2024.
- Agree that if the project runs past March 2024, any additional costs for overruns will be at the expense of the council.
- Report the progress of the proposal throughout its lifecycle by completing quarterly project monitoring reports.
- Inform the DfE of any changes/delays to planned project milestones and of any project overspends/underspends.
- Agree to engage and work with the DfE, other government departments and the National Centre for Family Hubs on monitoring and evaluation, to

provide local insight about the transformation process to feed into wider policy developments on family hubs and to develop resources on good practice.

- Agree to publish our Start for Life offer and set out what will be available through your family hub network by March 2024.

7.1.6. Approval of a supplementary revenue estimate requires adherence to the provisions of the Financial Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution and specifically the provisions of Chapter 3 Part 3 at para 19 shall apply:

Funded from Additional Grants

Directors may make applications for grants, where the application does not create a financial or any other commitment, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. However, if the application is for a grant in excess of £1m, or if any match funding will be required, then CLT must be consulted in advance.

Successful grant applications will require a supplementary estimate to incur spending, in line with the approval limits set out in the table below.

If grant application or receipt commits expenditure outside of the Control Totals then a Virement or Other Supplementary Estimate will also be required.

Amount of grant to be received	Approval Level
Up to and including £100,000	Officers
Between £100,000 and £500,000	Relevant Member of CLT in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and Chair of Finance Sub-Committee
£500k and up to £1m	Committee
£1m and above	Council

7.1.7. As the level of family hub funding is above £500k and below £1m, this requires approval from the Children and Families Committee.

7.2. Finance

7.2.1. The Family Hubs Local Transformation Fund is funded through HM Treasury’s Shared Outcomes Fund, which aims to test innovative ways of working across the public sector to address complex policy challenges.

7.2.2. The DfE will make payments via a grant made under Section 31 with the intention to pay the year one allocation in full in September 2022.

7.2.3. Finance will be working with the service to establish a budget plan for use of the funds in the time available, the qualifying expenditure and ensuring that any further commitments are understood, and funding is available. That plan will be reported as part of the follow up paper on the use of the funds.

7.3. Policy

- 7.3.1. Any policy implications that arise from development of family hubs will be dealt within an individual report to Members or Officer Decision Records.

7.4. Equality

- 7.4.1. An equality impact assessment will be completed in relation to implementation of family hubs to ensure that people are not disadvantaged or treated unfairly, for example, that our processes are easy to access and to navigate.
- 7.4.2. We expect that the implementation of the grant will have a positive impact in relation to the protective characteristic of age, particularly for children and young people. It will also support the need to ensure that we have fairer and more resilient communities.

7.5. Human Resources

- 7.5.1. There will be a need for additional capacity to transform services in line with the family hub model. Cheshire East's bid included costs for these posts over the next two years. We will ensure that the costs of any additional staffing are offset against the fund.

7.6. Risk Management

- 7.6.1. Cheshire East's bid for the family hub funding set out our approach to risk management. This includes adopting a structured and coherent approach to identifying, assessing, and managing risk to ensure an appropriate level of control in place, without stifling developments. We adopt recognised best practice in the identification and evaluation of risks and opportunities and ensure that these are managed to acceptable levels in a proportionate and cost-effective way.
- 7.6.2. We will ensure that there is a clear escalation process to follow to ensure risks are proactively considered and managed.
- 7.6.3. There is a risk that we will not have the capacity to change. However, there is funding in the bid for a transformation team, organisational change programmes and resources for communication, marketing and engagement.
- 7.6.4. There is a risk that practitioners don't engage with the new approach. We aim to adopt an organisation change programme to provide a consistent and sustained approach to engaging practitioners to shape the new services.
- 7.6.5. There is a risk that parent carers who have older children do not access services from the family hubs. We will use capital funding to rebrand and adapt our current buildings into family friendly spaces. Our coproduction approach

will engage parent carers in the transformation to ensure that they help to shape services that meet their needs.

7.6.6. There is a risk that young people do not engage with the hubs as they do not identify with them. We expect to mitigate against this risk through rebranding and adapting our current buildings into youth friendly spaces. Our coproduction approach will engage young people in the transformation to ensure that they help to shape services that meet their needs.

7.7. Rural Communities

7.7.1. We will ensure that family hub services are accessible to children and families in our rural areas. We will also look to implement digital strategies for families to have easy access to our services, including out of hours, website/catch app developments, videos, online forms and use of GovDelivery.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. Family Hubs can support all families, particularly in the first 1,001 days, but they are designed to be particularly accessible to families with additional vulnerabilities, families with children who have special education needs or a disability, or those from minoritised groups who are experiencing exclusion. Family hubs aim to provide the right support at the right at the right time in the right way to positively impact on the lives of children and young people.

7.9. Public Health

7.9.1. Health inequalities poses a threat to the public health of our residents as they are less likely to be able to access the conditions that promote a healthy physical and mental lifestyle. The proposal for family hubs is to develop on child health hubs to offer health services for families from pre-birth to age 19 (or 25 for SEND children).

7.10. Climate Change

7.10.1. There are not expected to be any climate change implications from the family hubs implementation. Providing services more locally can only benefit families who don't have to travel to access these.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Claire Williamson Interim Director of Early Help and Prevention Claire.williamson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	https://www.nationalcentreforfamilyhubs.org.uk/

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