

**Children and Young People  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**18 June 2019**

**Update on Early Help Developments**

**Recommendations:**

1. That the Committee comments on the Early Help Action Plan and the Early Help Offer.
2. That the Committee notes progress in relation to Children and Family Centres and the Priority Families Programme.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of the Council wide Doing Things Better transformation programme on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019, the Children & Families service brought together the Early Help, Targeted Support and Initial Response Team. This will provide an integrated delivery approach to early help and the front door within the Children and Families service and will encompass:
  - Early Help which includes:
    - Children and Family Centres
    - Children and Family Early Help Family Support Workers
    - Different Futures
    - Family Group Conferencing
    - Early Help Officer Team (to be known as Targeted Support Officers)
    - Syrian Families Resettlement
  - MASH
    - Emergency Duty Team
    - Domestic Abuse team
  - Initial Response (North, East, South)
  - Priority Families Programme
  - Targeted Support for Young People
  - Youth and Community Centres
  - Voice of the Child and Co-Production
- 1.2 This report seeks to provide an update on key developments in relation to Early Help within the context of these wider services and future direction

## 2. Key Developments

### Early Help

- 2.1 Developments in Early Help have followed on from the production and agreement of the Warwickshire Early Help Strategy (2018-2023) last year.
- 2.2 Work on the Early Help Action Plan commenced in late Autumn following the findings of the Strategic Review. The document has also sought to encapsulate Ofsted, LGA Peer Review, and requirements under the Priority Families Programme. Since January 2019 iterations of the actions plan have been circulated widely within the County Council and externally via:
  - Warwickshire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB)
    - Education Sub-Committee (WSCB)
    - Health and Well Being Board
    - Children and & Families Partnership Board
- 2.3 The Action Plan is a 'live' document and whilst actions are being implemented, the document is also being refined to ensure that it is multi agency in nature reflecting observations made by WSCB at their meeting in March. The Action Plan is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 To supplement the Action Plan, a draft Early Help Offer has also been developed which seeks to articulate to local communities what services are available and how they can be accessed.
- 2.5 A series of locality based roadshows have been planned for week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 which, in addition to communicating the action plan, will also seek views on the Early Help Offer and how agencies can work more collaboratively at a local level moving forward. The Early Help Offer is attached as **Appendix 2**. Any comments received from Board will help inform the final version of the offer which will then be supplemented by more visual mediums that help embed a consistent approach across Warwickshire.
- 2.6 Public Health and Children & Families are also developing a Parenting Strategy and parenting programme offer. This includes identifying parenting programmes that are evidenced based to improve outcomes for children and parents. The approach will be to widen the tool kit available to practitioners at all levels of intervention but particularly at early and targeted support. This proposal will be circulated to members and partner agencies before finalising by July 2019.
- 2.7 In developing a coherent approach best practice principles will also be applied that have been obtained through comparative observation and analysis. From recent discussions officers have identified the following areas that warrant further development and consideration:

- Improve the articulation of the principles of practice and collective objectives which all practitioners working within C&F will work towards and all partners will recognise as the best practice when working holistically with Families.
- The full implementation of Restorative Practice across Children and Families Service and exploration to how this can be implemented more widely across partner agencies.
- Pulling together Council, community and voluntary services to ensure full understanding of early help services available within Warwickshire. Expanding models that are working well into other areas such as Health Store.
- A systemic review of our Front Door System to provide an “ecosystem” approach to the management and delivery of services. This means considering a whole system approach to early help, targeted support, MASH and initial response.
- Review and redesign locality panels into multi agency forums that add value to partner agencies. This will be achieved by the implementation of a strategic locality panel board and 5 district restorative problem solving panels.
- A partnership approach to working with Education & Learning. A bid has been submitted to fund a pilot which will enable joint working to support vulnerable children/learners at risk of exclusion from school. This will include the opportunity to match locality primary consortia areas to a local Children and Family Centre to reclaim “patch” locality working.
- The exploration of implementing an Early Help Qualification which will enable the development of confidence and knowledge in universal and targeted practitioners such as Schools, Family Support Workers and Third sector organisations.
- Expand the availability of Family Group Conferencing to ensure this is available at an early help level, to support families to establish solutions themselves.
- Locality Social Workers available in areas to provide support, consultation and advice to practitioners and families at a targeted support level.
- Review our approach to delivering Parenting Programmes and consider specific roles to train practitioners and deliver group parenting programmes, rather than integrated within the Family Support Worker role.
- Review measures of success of Early Help and implement new

performance framework.

## Children and Family Centres

2.6 Committee Members will be aware from previous updates that Warwickshire County Council is redesigning services for the county's children and families which will place Children and Family Centres at the forefront. Key developments to report are:

- Successful commissioning of 14 Children's Centres, which will become Children and Family Centres offering a range of support to families with children and young people aged 0-19 (25 with additional needs). From 1<sup>st</sup> September the new providers will be Barnardo's who will deliver services across the County with the exception Bedworth and Bulkington which will be delivered by St Michael's Children Centre.
  
- In terms of surplus sites the majority of these have now been transferred in a manner that ensures service provision to children and families and maximises the efficient use of the buildings. Most centres are now being used to enhance early years (nursery provision) though we have also worked with partners to develop innovative solutions of which the development of a mental health and emotional well-being hub at the former Abbey Children Centre is a notable example. In some instances partners have assumed responsibility for the buildings enabling children and family centre service provision to continue (e.g. Kenilworth, Southam)
  
- Partnership working will be at the heart of service delivery. With the broader age range we have been able to foster links with CAB, DWP and the PHIL (Preventing Homelessness Improving Lives) project to provide an integrated locality based approach to meeting the needs of children and families. Pilot working with CAB in Rugby and the North of the County is particularly yielding dividends and in 6 months, 114 clients have been worked with resulting in £52,285 of additional financial benefits. In due course it is hoped to expand the pilot throughout the County but the role that the Children and Family Centres can play in addressing poverty is clear as basic needs require addressing at the same time as family support. Interim findings have suggested the flexible approach of outreach within the centres is promoting integrated working where families receive a holistic package of support from professionals working in a co-ordinated manner.

2.7 Key work streams being conducted over May-August 2019 relate to

- a) **Mobilisation:** With contract award, detailed mobilisation plans are being implemented in collaboration with Barnardo's and St Michaels and also with outgoing providers to ensure seamless transition and minimal disruption to service users. Barnardo's are also engaging well with outgoing providers (Parenting Project and Stockingford) in terms of staff engagement and transfer whilst at the same time maintaining the momentum in terms of partner engagement (e.g. midwifery) and delivery from the centres.

- b) **Adaptation:** During the consultation in 2017 it was noted that for children centres, which offered a 0-5 service, to evolve into a Children and Family Centre model some adaptations would be required to ensure service provision to a wider age range and broaden partnership working. Following Cabinet approval in December 2018 of capital funds, works are now underway to make the necessary building and ICT adaptations needed to deliver the new model.
- c) **Family Support Workers:** Members will be aware that, under the new model, the currently commissioned family support worker element of Children Centres will be brought in-house within the Children and Families Service. An initial introductory meeting was held with Children Centre Family Support Workers on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and this will be supplemented by further meetings over the summer to ensure a smooth transition of staff within the Children & Families Service on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. It is envisaged that these staff will form the basis of a locality based early help service to families within their communities. This approach will be strengthened by the multi-agency nature of the children and family centres and will enhance partnership working with schools through the application of whole family principles across a broader age range. This model has been commented favourably by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as evidence of transforming services and embedding the approaches gleaned from the delivery of the Priority Families Programme.

### Priority Families Programme

- 2.8 Attached as **Appendix 3** is an infographic that demonstrates our penultimate year end position in relation to the Priority Families Programme. Key issues to draw to the attention of the Board are
- Performance is strong. We have met our attachment target of 2790 families, 18 months in advance of the March 2020 deadline.
  - Warwickshire has successfully claimed for 1752 families which places us 15<sup>th</sup> out of 127 participating local authorities.
  - To date, approximately £5 million of Government funding has been secured for the delivery of the programme that has benefitted children and families.
  - Warwickshire are within the top 15 local authorities and we aim to end the programme by March 2020 in the top 10.
- 2.9 A recent spot check visit was undertaken on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government who reported:
- That our compliance is good and that there are no invalid claims.
  - That partnership working in relation to the programme is strong and has provided the foundation for wider work. They were particularly impressed by the joint arrangements between the County Council and Warwick DC in relation to a Housing/Family Support Worker post and thought it should be replicated across other Boroughs/Districts
  - That Warwickshire's commitment to the programme and embedding approaches is strong.

- That our data systems are good and warrant dissemination to other Local Authorities. They thought the corporate approach to business intelligence was promising and evidence of moving in the right direction.

2.10 2019/20 represents the final year of the programme and as yet there has been no clear indication as to whether there will be an extension to the programme but an announcement is expected through the next Spending Review. Locally plans have already begun to consider the financial impact of the programme ending. We will build on the momentum to ensure successful completion of the programme and also to ensure that the learning from the programme in terms of whole family approaches and partnership working are woven within the overall fabric of services to children and families.

### 3. Summary

This report has sought to encapsulate work that is underway and also some exciting possibilities for the future. Much progress has been made and due to the recent introduction of the new Early Help and Targeted Support, MASH and Initial Response portfolio, there are now more opportunities for innovative practice.

#### Background Papers

None other than previous published report 0-5 Redesign of Children's Services Cabinet 04.11.2017

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The report was circulated to the following councillors prior to publication:

Cabinet Portfolio Holders: Councillor Jeff Morgan (Children Services).

Chair and Group Spokespersons: Councillors Yousef Dahmash, Pam Williams, Corinne Davies, Dominic Skinner and Jonathan Chilvers.