

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Children & Families Change Programme Update

23 June 2020

1. Recommendation(s)

- The committee are asked to consider and comment on the programme and work completed to date.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 £12m of additional one-off funding will be invested into the Children and Families service across all areas of work between 2020/21 to 2022/23 (a small amount of funding was received in 2019/20). The council has been successfully awarded £3.993m from the Department for Education (DfE) and the remainder of the £12m is provided by the Council's Children Transformation fund (sourced from two years of social care grants and residual Children and Families Transformation funds) agreed by the Council in February 2019 and 2020.
- 2.2 Through this investment the service will continue to improve outcomes for children and families and to build an outstanding Children and Families service. All the improvement work identified within the programme is evidence based from national and local initiatives that have shown the areas of investment do work and result in improved outcomes for children and families. These changes will result in some teams in the service being expanded, some new teams/services will be created, and additional training and resources will be made available to practitioners and partners.
- 2.3 The money will be spent across an ambitious 29 different work areas and has been structured into a new Children and Families Change programme; the work areas have been grouped into four key projects focusing on the child's journey through services. The Change Programme is a 24+ month programme.
- 2.4 The report outlines the Children and Families Change Programme and work completed to date.

3. Children and Families Change Programme

3.1 Evidence base

- 3.1.1 The DFE funded element of the programme is part of the national ‘*Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme*’ (SFPC), which includes three different evidence-based models. The Children and Families service have adopted the ‘*Leeds Family Valued*’ model. The service is working with Leeds City Council and the DFE to implement this model. Leeds City Council designed this model and were judged to be outstanding by Ofsted in 2018.
- 3.1.2 The other work areas in the Children and Families Change Programme are funded by Warwickshire County Council. These work areas complement the DfE funding and reflect the other models in the SFPC programme, specifically the ‘*Hertfordshire family safeguarding*’ model, which focuses on meeting the needs of children and adults (parents and carers).
- 3.1.3 All the work areas create a programme that supports the development of a child-centred and family focused approach across the whole service.
- 3.1.4 These different projects are aligned to construct a single Programme of becoming “Child-Friendly Warwickshire”. This is the strategic core that drives forward the outputs of each project. All the projects have a clear focus on enabling services, continuous improvement and sustainability.
- 3.1.5 The programme is underpinned by Restorative Practice. Restorative Practice is about creating and maintaining respectful and trusting relationships with children and families, staff, partners and communities. Restorative Practice aims to build on the existing strengths of families to help them solve issues themselves and take responsibility for agreed solutions.

3.2 Programme overview and structure

- 3.2.1 The “Child-Friendly Warwickshire” Change Programme (Appendix 1) is structured into the following Projects:
- Early Help (including Community / Partners)
 - Child in Need / Child Protection
 - Children in Care / Care Leavers
 - Workforce, training and programme resources
- Each of these Projects has a range of work areas.
- 3.2.2 The governance of the Programme is through a 6-weekly Programme Board chaired by Nigel Minns, Strategic Director, and Steve Walker, Director of Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Improvement Programme at Leeds City Council. This Programme Board is informed by highlight reports from the four Project Boards and attended by Service Managers.

3.2.3 Delivery groups have been established for each work area to further plan, refine and review progress. Appendix 2 provides an overview of each work area and outcomes.

3.3 Outcomes and evaluation

3.2.4 The DfE have commissioned the What Works Centre (Research Institute) to evaluate the Leeds Family Valued model element of the programme, which will inform success of the programme. WCC is one of five local authorities (LAs) implementing the Leeds Family Valued model. The model will be evaluated across all five LAs and a final evaluation report will be published nationally after all the LAs have implemented the model. To support WCC's internal evaluation an interim report will be provided two years following implementation.

3.2.5 The whole programme will also be evaluated internally to understand impact. This evaluation will be used to consider if and how these work areas should be continued once the programme has ended. Key deliverables and measurable benefits are being identified for each work area. In addition, collectively the work areas will support and contribute to a key set of programme level outcomes. Appendix 2 details the programme level outcomes.

3.2.6 The programme level outcomes reflect and support the Council's priority children outcomes detailed in the Council Plan 2025, these include;

- More children will live safely at home with their families.
- There will have sufficient, high quality foster care and residential placements to meet the needs of our children in care.
- Children and young people will be able to access new technologies in non-educational environments.
- Provision of year-round access to learning and educational opportunities.
- Children and young people will have access to the support they need to maintain their emotional health.

3.4 How we will work?

3.4.1 The programme will engage and work with children, young people, families, internal and external partners, communities, schools and business to achieve improved outcomes for children and families. Key stakeholders are being identified for each of the work areas and projects. The programme also supports and reflects wider outcomes detailed in the Council Plan 2025, these include;

- There will be a noticeable improvement in mental health and well-being, and individuals will be able to access community support if they have mental health issues, dementia or are feeling lonely.
- Individuals will live in a safe environment that is connected to their community, with good air quality and opportunities for physical activity.

- There will be a decrease in youth crime, and young people will have the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour whilst being supported into constructive and positive lives.
- Individuals and young people will have the skills they need to find the work that they want within the county.
- More of our 16 and 17 year olds will be in education, employment or training.
- There will be more supported routes into employment for our more vulnerable learners, with an increase in supported internships.
- There will be better understanding of behaviours in schools, leading to a reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions for children in care and care leavers.
- Children, young people and families will experience trained, skilled and knowledgeable staff at the first point of contact.
- Individuals will have a positive customer experience.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Change Programme is a 24+ month programme. Planning and preparation work started on the programme in January 2020 towards an official start date on 1 April 2020.
- 4.2 The programme briefly paused due to the Council's Ofsted inspection and Covid-19. The programme was reviewed, and the work areas were re-prioritised.
- 4.3 Programme and Project Management resource have been attached to the programme and work has re-established.
- 4.4 Implementation dates vary across the different work areas within the programme, as some services are being expanded and some are being created. Covid-19 is also impacting work areas differently.
- 4.5 It is currently envisaged the programme will end in August 2023.
- 4.6 The programme will be funded by DfE earmarked grant and Warwickshire County Council, the table below details the current forecasted spending profile. It should be noted that as plans for each of the work areas are developed in more depth, the figures in the table below may change.

£m	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Current estimated spending profile	£0.107	£4.614	£6.049	£1.238	£12.008

- 4.7 As mentioned in paragraph 2.1 the planned expenditure of £12.008m is funded by the County Council and the DfE. The exact funding shares are highlighted in the table below.

	Total £m
Successful bid for DfE Funding	3.933
2019/20 & 2020/21 Social Care Grant	6.666
Contribution from Children's Transformation reserve	1.409
Total	12.008

- 4.8 A sum of £0.199m of the remaining funds within the Children's Transformation reserve has been assigned for an Education Services Early Years project. This leaves a small residual contingency in the reserve of £0.070m.
- 4.9 The DfE grant is payable for the use of specific work areas set out in the original DfE bid application, although there is some flexibility to switch between these various areas. There is a stringent reporting requirement.
- 4.10 It should be noted that the funding is one off. The programme is designed to evaluate effectiveness, and this will be used to consider how effective work areas could be funded in the future through existing or new budgets. A full evaluation report including financial analysis for how the money has been spent and how successful elements may be continued in the future will be provided.
- 4.11 As established in the finance agreement agreed by Full Council on 13.02.2020, the Children & Families Service has indicative future savings of £3.4254m by 2024-2025. The investment will create savings predominantly by helping the service to manage demand for children's social care. This will be completed through the increase in early help, through the new culture of restorative practice and increased whole family support which will keep children within their families and reduce the need for children to become looked after. When children do come into care increased support to parents, family members caring for children and increased support for care leavers will enable children to achieve permanency sooner.

Indicative budget balancing plan for 2020-2025 for Children's Social Care is listed below:

What the change entails	Reduction	Indicative Additional Future Reduction			
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Children and Families					
House project - Further investment and expansion of the House Project countywide to provide accommodation for care leavers	0	0	0	(200)	0
Development of effective local provision of children's placements - Facilitate the market to develop local provision that more effectively meets needs through the improved efficiency and effectiveness of the Placement Hub	0	0	0	(500)	(500)
Integrated commissioning and delivery arrangements with NHS partners - Arrangements will form part of the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Health and Care Partnership and associated System Plan	0	0	0	0	(667)
Restorative practice and early help - Through restorative practice and an improved early help offer the impact will be to reduce demand on children's social care	0	0	(250)	(250)	(500)
Prevention and self-care - Develop and implement a prevention and self care strategy and invest in programmes, projects and services that reduce people's reliance on paid care and support	0	0	0	(167)	(167)
Business support - Reduced cost of business support as part of the wider organisation review of support functions	(194)	0	0	0	0
Customer Support - Reduced cost of customer support as part of the wider organisation review of support functions	0	(30)	0	0	0
Total Reductions - Children and Families	(194)	(30)	(250)	(1,117)	(1,834)

5 Additional improvement activity

- 5.1 This funding does not include separate proposals being planned regarding children's placement sufficiency. These are being considered separately but are intended to assist with quality of care for children in local authority care and avoid children requiring care by the local authority through increased whole family support.

6 Environmental Implications

- 6.1 Environmental implications are limited.
- 6.2 The use of virtual tools will be used to minimise travel as appropriate.

7 Supporting Information

- 7.1 None

8. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 8.1 The Children and Families service will continue to work with colleagues from the Commissioning Support Unit to manage the programme.
- 8.2 Quarterly updates on progress will be provided to the DFE.
- 8.3 An update report has been timetabled for this committee for February 2021.

Appendices

- 1. Children and Families Change Programme - overview
- 2. Children and Families Change Programme - work areas and outcomes

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