

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

3 July 2017

Subject: Children's Services Integration Project

Cabinet Member: Councillor Laura Mayes - Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary

On the 25th April 2017, Children's Services submitted a bid to the Department of Education- Children's Social Care Innovation Programme. The programme seeks to inspire whole system change with the following three key objectives:

- better life chances for children receiving help from the social care system
- stronger incentives and mechanisms for innovation, experimentation and replication of successful new approaches
- better value for money across children's social care.

The bid focusses on proposals that will deliver an effective approach to reducing the need for more intensive forms of intervention, for example child protection and taking children into care, by focusing on innovative ways to provide support to Children in Need (as defined by the Children Act 1989).

Our proposal is a system-wide change focusing on Children in Need. We will work with families and staff to co-design a whole-family/relationship based model of practice to provide a continuum of support for children and families. A singular assessment will span thresholds of need and we will work collaboratively with families to develop their own goals. We want to establish multi-disciplinary teams including adult services. We will develop a volunteering scheme to work with families alongside providing the opportunity for service users to become volunteers in the future, building resilience for both individuals and communities.

The bid is part of a wider transformation within Children's Services – the Children's Services Integration Project (CSI). This will establish a new service model to achieve the Children's Services vision of:

“One joined up approach to making a positive difference to outcomes for Wiltshire's children and young people, ensuring they are safe and have high aspirations.”

Overall the funding requested from DfE is £1.9m. This will cover set up costs, increasing short-term contract posts, backfill of seconded staff to lead and implement the programme, a new learning and development programme, the

Family Peer Coaching and Volunteering services, branding and communications and project evaluation. It is envisaged that the funding will be required for 24 months whilst the changes are implemented.

Proposal

The proposal to Cabinet is that delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Member to accept any successful grant offer from the Department for Education.

Reason for Proposal

The Department for Education has not provided a definitive date for a decision on the bid, originally stating June/July 2017. This may now be delayed due to the General Election and we are currently awaiting an update. The new service will go live in September 2017 and thus delegated authority is required so a successful offer can be accepted immediately and be accessible to progress the project at the earliest opportunity.

Corporate Director: Carolyn Godfrey

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. On 25 April 2017 Wiltshire Council's Children's Services submitted a bid to the Department of Education Children's Social Care Innovation Programme for £1.9m of funding. This report is intended to provide Cabinet with oversight of the proposal and requests approval for delegated authority.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposal submitted to the Department for Education is relevant to the Council's priorities and objectives as laid down in the Business Plan, specifically the proposal supports the following outcomes:
 - Creating stronger and resilient communities.
 - Communities where everyone can achieve their part.
 - People are protected from harm and feel safe.

Background

3. This proposal focuses on system wide change that will deliver an effective approach to reducing the need for more intensive forms of intervention for children and families; by focusing on innovative ways to provide support at the earliest opportunity. The Department for Education bid requirements are specific and as such the bid is only focused on one part of the wider transformation plan. The focus is on Children in Need, as defined by the Children Act 1989. The Council has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far, as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.
4. The Department for Education Children's Social Care Innovation Programme has three key objectives:
 - better life changes for children receiving help from the social care system.
 - stronger incentives and mechanisms for innovation, experimentation and replication of successful new approaches.
 - better value for money across children's social care.

Main Considerations for the Council

Department for Education: Social Care Innovation Programme

5. The children's social care innovation programme seeks to support the development, testing and sharing of effective ways of supporting children who need help from children's social care services. In the **Putting children first: our vision for children's social care** (DfE Policy Paper) they raised questions about whether the early help currently on offer to children on the edge of the social care system is really working to address their problems. The DfE concluded that "*we cannot leave these children and their families to languish until the conditions of some of them deteriorate to the point that intervention from the state in their lives is inevitable.*" The concept of "targeted early support" was introduced which is clearly distinct from broader, more universal early help. Via the Innovation Programme the aim is to identify best practice in supporting children suffering from, or at risk of, abuse and/or neglect from targeted early support all the way through to permanence.
6. The bid submitted by Wiltshire Council supported the requirements of the DfE Policy brief as we have committed to:
 - Provide support to children who are assessed by social workers twice within a 12-month period but do not end up receiving section 17 services. The operating model will provide a service to these children and families to build resilience and mitigate the risk of them requiring social care services in the future.
 - Provide intensive interventions which successfully address the underlying needs of children who are within the CiN space for extended periods of time, particularly for adolescents and for low level, persistent neglect. There will be additional capacity in the system in the form of the keyworker working within a whole family/relationship based theory of practice alongside increased time spent working directly with families. Further support will be in the form of the new volunteering networks.
 - Introduce a single, shared assessment to ensure that assessments are improved and proportionate to need.
 - Develop system wide approaches that address systemic barriers to cross-agency working, including looking at which workforce cultures and structures best deliver targeted support for children within the children's social care system. This will be achieved by broadening supervision practice, improving service/referral pathways (via our new 'DART' – Digital Assessment & Referral Tool), the introduction of new IT with potential for improved multi-agency interactions, maximising the use of tele-conferencing technology to increase attendance at meetings across a rural landscape and the introduction of Local Allocation Groups for local decision-making.
 - Create better collaboration and transitions between and across different services and agencies, including between children's and adults' services; supported by new IT (CMS).

- Provide effective 'step-down' targeted service provision for children within scope. This will be achieved via the operating model and the provision of a consistent service tailored to need. For example, as children move between thresholds they shall have a consistent worker i.e. before, during and after CiN (including a single shared assessment). We will also provide services for families as long as they need them, ensuring they can build resilience for the future.
- Developing predictive analytics and a shared workflow and frontline performance framework with partners - to support the prioritisation of CiN work and preventing escalation.

Wider Implications

7. This is part of a wider children's services transformation plan – the Children's Services Integration Project (CSI) which will establish a new service model to achieve the Children's Services vision of:

“One joined up approach to making a positive difference to outcomes for Wiltshire's children and young people, ensuring they are safe and have high aspirations.”

8. This proposal will impact on all Operational Children's Services teams including Early Help, MASH and Safeguarding and Assessment Services in Phase 1; and Children in Care, Youth Offending Team, CSE and SEND in Phase 2. The existing statutory functions will continue to be delivered as well as some non-statutory work. The key change will be the way in which services are delivered to children and families.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

9. There has been engagement with the Children's Select Committee on 14 March 2017. The report provided the committee with oversight of the Children's Services Integration Project and the committee was asked to endorse the direction of travel. The proposals were received positively and elected members from all parties gave their full support to the project and endorsed the strategy scoped. Officers took the opportunity to advise the committee that an Expression of Interest for the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme was submitted on 31 January 2017.

Safeguarding Implications

10. This proposal includes the core safeguarding and child protection statutory functions within the Council. The re-design is focussed on providing a more intensive response to families at an earlier point when needs arise to prevent them escalating into statutory social work services. Operational Children's Services is undergoing a re-design so all services provided to children and families directly by the Council are affected and safeguarding is at the core of what we do.
11. The proposals include working with adult services and housing differently, this would contribute positively in the safeguarding of vulnerable adults also.

Furthermore, the aim of the innovation is to not only support those whom are children now but also reduce generational repetition of high demand impacting both children and adult services in the future.

Public Health Implications

12. The proposals require input from Public Health and this is agreed. Public Health wrote a letter of support to the DfE outlining their commitment to provide additional expertise and support to improve the outcomes for children in Wiltshire. These include parental support for substance misuse and tackling domestic abuse to reduce the negative impact on children. Alongside this the dedicated support for young people experiencing domestic violence themselves, sexual health services and support with substance misuse.
13. The proposal will lead to improved health and wellbeing of the local child and adult population and include direct health implications, for example we aim to support improved attendance at medical appointments. In terms of sustainability the proposal will elevate the CiN provision offered, deliver more sustained change and increase the chances of achieving positive family outcomes. Furthermore, the financial modelling demonstrates sustainability and this is achievable as the funding shall be used for pump priming, capacity building, training, project back-fill, and the Family Peer Coaching and Volunteering that will support communities become more resilient.

Procurement Implications

14. If we are successful, £0.175m. of the grant will be used to commission a Family Peer Coaching and Volunteering Scheme over 2 years. In undertaking such Procurement processes we will do so in consultation with the Strategic Procurement Hub and in compliance with the Council's procurement regulations, part 10 of the constitution, to ensuring the procurement approach delivers best value.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

15. Operational Children's Services works with our most vulnerable children and families, including those impacted by poverty and facing inequality. The model supports and contributes to the Council's commitment to:
 - a) tackle inequalities and promote cohesive communities.
 - b) not discriminate in the way we provide services to the public.
 - c) not to discriminate in our employment related practices.
 - d) promote equality and good relations between different groups.
16. Thus the proposal will impact positively by reducing inequalities and barriers that exist. This applies to both those with protected characteristics as well as having wider socio-economic and human rights impacts for example;
 - improved access to education
 - employment opportunities resulting from the volunteering and,
 - the right to a family life, supporting children to remain with their families safely.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

17. The energy consumption from transport sources is expected to reduce in Children's Services. Emissions from staff and pool vehicles used to carry out Council services are included and we would anticipate this will also positively impact on the carbon footprint.
18. Consideration has been given to fuel consumption and mileage claims as part of the Community Patch Based Model which involves social workers linking with schools and working from the school bases periodically. This has been implemented alongside mobile working and the use of smart phones and laptops to ensure that social workers do not need to return to the office between meetings purely to access emails/messages or complete recordings. This model will be developed further.
19. The project group is also keen to explore other IT and technological options. We acknowledge practice with families must be face-to-face interactions however, not every one of the 14,000 CAF/CIN/CP meetings require all engaged professionals to travel and attend. Investing in training and supporting our staff and partners to follow our ways of working that include working on the move, video- and tele-conferencing could increase partner engagement in low threshold work, reduce time spent travelling across the county and increase the time available to spend with children and families.
20. There are no environmental management issues identified.
21. The services, in one form or another are planned to last beyond 20 years. The consequence of climate change will not change because of these service changes.
- 22. Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

1.	Failure to reduce the number of children and families requiring statutory interventions and becoming Children in Need, subject to a Child Protection Plan or Looked After.
2.	Failure to exploit internal and external opportunities to redesign services to provide better outcomes for children and families.
3.	Inability to provide a sustainable service model results in increased budget pressures moving forward.
4.	Inability to offer a comprehensive training and development plan for staff moving into the new service.
5.	Inability to develop the volunteering scheme.

23. Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

	Risk	Action to mitigate the risk
1.	Failure to meet statutory duties during a phased service restructure.	To mitigate against this, a full implementation plan will be developed for each phase to include an assessment of the implications of staff changes and training requirements.
2.	Lack of cultural change inhibits success of the new service model.	To mitigate against this, staff and partners will be fully engaged in the design and transition process.
3.	Failure to effectively manage dependencies and interfaces with other projects e.g. CMS Replacement Programme, results in delays and increased costs.	To mitigate against this the interfaces with other projects will be mapped and actions put in place to manage these such as the development of groups to share key information across programmes of work

Financial Implications

24. If successful the DfE will award the Council £1.9m grant funding which will be paid at the start of the programme. A detailed financial plan over 4 years has been submitted and the funding will be spent across the phases of the project as follows:

Year 1 - £1.1m

Year 2 - £0.7m

Year 3 - £0.1m.

25. The funding will be used to support the following elements of the project:

- Backfill of seconded staff to support project capacity.
- Capacity building through employment of additional staffing over the first two years.
- Supporting a comprehensive training and development programme.
- Commissioning a volunteering scheme.
- Working with partners to identify high need families.

26. The plan is to make this project sustainable within 3 years funding additional staff costs in the first 12 months only; any subsequent staffing cost savings in the future years will contribute to the Council's financial plan as will savings from reduced placement costs. The Children's Services Integration Project is expected to achieve savings of £0.2m in the first phase. Acceptance and deployment of the grant, if the application is successful, will support the implementation of the project and enable delivery of the planned savings.

27. The Children's Services Integration Project is not dependent on the grant but if we are unsuccessful the pace of change will be slower and the delivery

harder to achieve. The elements of the project that we will be unable to deliver without the funding are the volunteering scheme.

Legal Implications

28. There has been no specific engagement with legal regarding the funding application however they shall be consulted regarding funding agreements with the DfE if the bid is successful. The decision being sought is in line with the Council's constitution.
29. There are no statutory requirements that will be imposed on the Council in respect of this proposal however there is a requirement for the Council to continue to meet its statutory requirements as defined in the Children Act 1989, specifically the duties in relation to Children in Need.

Options Considered

30. If successful, the options include accepting or rejecting the grant of £1.9m. The development of Children's Services Integration Project will be significantly enhanced with this funding and without it specific elements of the proposal, including the volunteering scheme, cannot be pursued thus we reject the option to reject the funding.
31. If successful, the acceptance can be a decision made by Cabinet or delegated to the Corporate Director. The decision is likely to be received in July 2017 and returning to Cabinet would delay the ability to accept the offer immediately and progress the project at the earliest opportunity. Thus, the option to seek Cabinet approval for delegated authority is being sought.

Conclusions

32. The conclusions reached having taken all of the above into account.

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

None