

SOCIAL WORK – WORKING FOR FAMILIES

To: Cabinet

Date: 6th September 2011

From: Niki Clemo, Service Director: Children's Social Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable **Key decision:** No

Purpose:

- To present to Cabinet the outcome of the Social Work – Working for Families formal consultation
- To outline to Cabinet the plans to implement the Social Work – Working for Families Unit Model

Recommendation: Cabinet is asked to:

- i) Note the changes planned in response to the Social Work – Working for Families Formal Consultation
- ii) Support plans to implement the Social Work – Working for Families Unit Model

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In March 2011, Cabinet endorsed plans to develop the Social Work Unit Model in Cambridgeshire. A Formal Consultation ran from the 28th March to 27th June 2011. The following report details the changes planned in response to the consultation.

2.0 RESPONSE TO THE FORMAL CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Over 95 written responses to the consultations were received from a wide range of stakeholders including Locality Teams and health partners. The various staff and stakeholders' events involved over 350 people and were held in different parts of the county to secure wide engagement. Officers have also collated verbal and written feedback and responded to queries throughout the consultation period.
- 2.2 Overall, the feedback from staff and stakeholders to implement the Social Work Unit Model in Cambridgeshire has been positive. Much of the feedback received has supported the principles and priorities underpinning the proposals. The launch of the Munro Review of Child Protection and the Government's Response to the Munro Review has helped to further endorse Cambridgeshire's plans to improve practice through the Social Work Unit Model.

Due to its size (over 60 pages), the response to the formal consultation document published on the 18th July 2011 to accompany this report (Appendix A) has been included as part of a separate Cabinet Information pack. It provides details on the full range of themes to emerge from the proposals.

- 2.3 As anticipated, the Council did receive challenge from those staff groups most affected by plans to reconfigure the service and establish a fully qualified delivery model. However, with agreement from the unions, officers have sought to mitigate the impact of the restructure on our existing staff group by ring fencing applications for most of the Social Work - Working for Families vacancies to the Children's Social Care staff group. Officers have received strong support from the unions for their plans to establish a Social Work Unit Model in Cambridgeshire throughout the development period.
- 2.4 Full details of the key changes made as a direct result of the feedback received are detailed in Appendix A. Key changes have been summarised below:

- **Child Practitioner title**

Following the decision to only use qualified Social Worker staff in the units, this role is no longer required and the title of Child Practitioner will not be used. Instead there will be 2 Social Worker posts in the units.

- **Looked After Children (LAC) Units**

Feedback in response to the consultation challenged proposals to position all of the Looked After Children (LAC) Units in Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire and Fenland. Following a review, we have decided to locate 2 Looked After Children (LAC) Units in South Cambridgeshire and City.

- **Personal Adviser Service**

The Project Team considered all of the feedback received concerning

proposals to support care leavers in the future Social Work Unit Model. We wish to retain the specialist skill sets, knowledge and expertise that the 16+ Service currently provide and have therefore withdrawn proposals to create two time limited 18-25 Units and will instead establish a permanent Personal Adviser Service. The decision to replace the 18-25 units with a Personal Adviser Service will reduce the overall number of units from 46 to 44.

- **Boundaries**

In response to feedback from stakeholders, Gamlingay will receive services from units based in South Cambridgeshire and City, and Whittlesey and Soham from units based in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland. There will only be one boundary change so that Bottisham and Burwell both sit in the South Cambridgeshire and City Children's Social Care area. This will significantly reduce the travel time for practitioners working across East Cambridgeshire and Fenland and will improve the responsiveness of the units. This decision has been supported by the Service Director, Enhanced and Preventative Services and the Locality Team. In addition, following reassurance that cross boundary working will not cause problems, the Local Member for Burwell has also supported this decision.

3.0 RECRUITMENT

- 3.1 The existing Area Managers for Social Care were successfully appointed following interview to the roles of Head of Service Access, Head of Service Children in Need (CiN) and Head of Service Looked After Children (LAC) on Friday 29th July. Appointees will be assuming the role of Head of Service designate with effect from 1st September 2011 whilst retaining their current roles during the transition period.

The Head of Disability post will be advertised in September 2011 and interviews are expected to take place in October 2011.

- 3.2 The Social Work – Working for Families recruitment process was launched on 8th August 2011. Interviews for all of these vacancies will take place throughout September, October and November 2011.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 At the beginning of the project, our aim had been to complete the implementation process over a 15 month period from January 2012 to April 2013. Based on the current number of units, this would equate to a maximum of 3 units 'going live' every month. It was agreed that this approach would mean that it would be possible to implement change gradually and provide the opportunity to learn and oversee change on a smaller and more manageable scale.
- 4.2 In June 2011, the timeline for the project was revisited and an options paper was developed to consider the strengths and weaknesses associated with the existing approach. On balance, it was agreed that an accelerated approach should be adopted and that we should aim to implement the Social Work Unit Model by July 2012. It is acknowledged that this is an ambitious implementation timeline with many dependencies and that it will therefore need to be flexible and continually reviewed at key project milestones to assess the feasibility of achieving the target date set for full implementation.

- 4.3 The Project Team acknowledge, and the embedded assurance audit have highlighted, that the transition period will be a time of particular risk. A number of measures have been put in place to mitigate against such risk. This includes:
- A weekly workstream meeting attended by senior managers to monitor strategic planning and operational implementation
 - Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) have been asked to monitor progress and escalate any areas of concern if they believe that planning for a child is drifting due to the structural changes.
 - The partnership with Coram and their engagement in our permanency planning for children will be key to ensuring that plans for permanency for children are maintained.
 - The Head of Safeguarding and Standards will continue to chair the Social Care Performance Board which is held monthly and monitors case work including unallocated cases.
 - We will be monitoring the number of staff vacancies, agency workers and staff leavers moving to other parts of the service and Council
 - We have identified short term funding to recruit additional agency staff in the event of a particular team having capacity issues due to staff leaving
 - Embedded Assurance. Plans are in place to deliver a continued involvement by internal audit into the next phase of the project
- 4.4 We believe with these plans in place, we will be able to manage risk effectively throughout the transition period.

5.0 ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

- 5.1 The priorities and principles which have underpinned development of the Social Work – Working for Families Unit Model align with the following corporate priorities:

5.2 Supporting and protecting people when they need it most

- The Social Work Unit Model promotes effective Social Work practice and puts it at the heart of the service. In doing so, it creates an environment in which it is possible for the Social Work task to thrive and encourages the best possible outcomes for children and families
- An environment is created in which practitioners can share risk and spend more time with children and families
- Children's needs are considered systemically
- Children and their families experience the fewest transitions and fewest different contact points possible once they have a Social Work Service

5.3 Helping people to live independent and healthy lives in their communities

- Families will be supported and challenged to care for their children safely so that children can remain with their family, where it is safe for them to do so.

5.4 Ways of working

- Authority that is devolved to ensure a timely response and efficient service

- A structure that has the capacity to support Cambridgeshire's existing Social Work need and flexibility to respond to future need
- Continued investment in professional development

Alongside proposals to develop the Social Work – Working for Families Social Work Unit Model, we have established a comprehensive training and learning offer for roles across the Social Care Service. The 2011 – 2012 training and development plan will invest over £300k of Children's Workforce Development Council funding to support our commitment to becoming a learning service, and creating an environment in which staff can continue to grow and develop.

Clinical practitioners and leads will receive the appropriate professional supervision required.

6.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

6.1 RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1.1 Human Resources

This is a large scale Directorate review that will have implications for staff working across the Children's Social Care Service.

The principles underpinning the proposals include:

- **Establishing a qualified Social Care Service workforce**
Heads of Service, Group Managers, Consultant Social Workers and Social Workers will all be social work degree qualified.
- **Re-configuring the business support function to support the new model**
- **We will seek to protect our existing workforce wherever possible**
The majority of vacancies will be ring fenced to existing staff for application in the first instance before advertising jobs externally. There are a significant number of promotional opportunities and alternative options within the new structure for staff to consider.

6.1.2 Finance

The Social Work Model in Cambridgeshire will be funded from the current social care budget, this includes investments in future years to complete implementation.

6.1.3 Performance

The Head of Social Work will lead on the quality assurance framework and practice standards in the Social Work Unit Model. The Social Work – Working for Families Evaluation Workstream is in the process of commissioning an independent evaluation to measure the impact of interventions on children and families.

Internal Audit have recently conducted an embedded assurance audit during the first phase of the Social Work – Working for Families Project and assigned the project a ‘moderate risk’ verdict. The following recommendations were highlighted by the review:

Benefits realisation

We are developing a benefits realisation plan to clearly identify how the changes to the Unit Model will achieve each desired benefit. The plan will explain how the changes will be implemented and highlight the critical factors required to achieve the benefits.

Provision for redundancy payments or pension capital lump sums arising from the restructure

We have already undertaken financial modelling based on a range of scenarios to identify the potential exposure from redundancy and early retirement costs. Based on these estimates, assurance will be sought that financial allocations have been earmarked within Children & Young People’s Services to cover such payments. We are unable to produce detailed estimates until the recruitment process has been completed in November 2011.

Review of the Project Risk Log

The Project Risk Log is reviewed by the Project Board on a monthly basis and by the Project Team on a weekly basis.

Risks associated with a lengthy implementation period

We recognise that this is the most significant area of risk for the project. We have reviewed the original timescales for rolling out the Social Work Unit Model and the Project Board and Team have provisionally agreed to an accelerated implementation process. This decision will be reviewed following the end of the recruitment and allocation panel process to assess the feasibility of this approach.

6.2 Statutory Requirements and Partnership Working

- 6.2.1 We expect the Social Work – Working for Families Unit Model to have a positive impact on our work with partners. We believe that it will allow us to build on our existing partnerships and enable us to continue to work together effectively to support and protect children and families in Cambridgeshire.
- 6.2.2 We are exploring possible co-location opportunities between the Social Work Units and Locality Team to support the direction of travel and recommendations outlined in the Member Led Review of Children & Young People’s Services in new communities report presented to Cabinet on 26th October. However, some co-location is already in place e.g. The Locality Team currently based at the Old Police House will shortly be moving to Babbage House where the Cambridge based Social Work Units will be located. We do however hope to extend co-location between Locality Teams and Social Work Units further.

6.3 Access and Inclusion

- 6.3.1 Children's Social Care will continue to provide a critical needs service to the most vulnerable children and families in Cambridgeshire.
- 6.3.2 It is not considered that these changes will negatively affect groups with the following protected characteristics: Age, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Disability, Ethnicity, race, culture, Sexual orientation, Religion, Pregnancy and maternity, Rural isolation and Deprivation.

6.4 Engagement and Consultation

The consultation process for the formal consultation has been outlined in section 2 of this report.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

The table below highlights the next stages of the process:

Date	Activity	Additional Information
Recruitment & selection process	21 st July 2011- November 2011	
Allocation panels	November 2011	
Final outcome letter sent to all staff	November 2011	
Implementation Plan	December 2011	
Phased implementation and roll out of units	January 2012	
Accelerated implementation	July 2012	

8.0 RECOMMENDATION/DECISION REQUIRED

Cabinet are asked to:

- Note the content of the response to the Social Work – Working for Families Formal Consultation
- Support plans to implement the Social Work – Working for Families Unit Model

Background documents: included as Appendix A – Response to the Formal Consultation. The full document and all appendices are also available at the following link: <http://camweb/cyps/csoccare/workingforfamilies>