

**INTEGRATED PLAN 2012/13 - REPORT OF THE
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- To:* County Council
- Date:* 21st February 2012
- From:* Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Electoral Division(s)* All
- Purpose:* To report the outcome of the Committee's scrutiny of the Cabinet's proposals for Children and Young People's Services as set out in the Council's Integrated Plan 2012/13.
- Recommendation:* The Council is asked to consider the Committee's report including the following recommendations.
- Consider, and further test, whether the proposals in the IP are genuinely sustainable given demographic/inflationary pressures.
 - Consider whether the emphasis on preventative services is consistent with continuing to target the most vulnerable.
 - Consider the risks to Looked After Children's Services in light of the £2m proposed saving.
 - Rigorously assess the impact of the savings on performance, ie examine the impact of year one of the Integrated Plan.
 - Ensure that warning signs are identified early if savings are not being realised or risks are becoming too great.
 - Work in a more co-ordinated way with partners to ensure that funding priorities are consistent and fully understood.
 - Further embed the principles of localism:
 - consult with schools /districts who were being asked to take on greater local service provision.

- **highlight opportunities, such as the funding opportunities for Parish Councils to deliver youth work, for local communities to take a lead.**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Committee met on Tuesday 7th February 2012 and questioned Councillors David Brown and David Harty (Cabinet Members for Children and Young People's Services, and Learning respectively) on the Cabinet's proposals contained in the Integrated Plan 2012/13 which relate to those portfolio areas.
- 1.2 Adrian Loades, Executive Director Children and Young People's Services and Adult Social Care, provided officer input to the meeting along with Hannah Woodhouse, Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning, and Laura Wilkinson, Change Support Team Manager.
- 1.3 Following a brief introduction from Councillors Brown and Harty, the Committee scrutinised the proposals using a report produced by the Department which highlighted the key elements within the Integrated Plan.
- 1.4 The Committee's comments need to be read in conjunction with the Council's Integrated Plan 2012/13, which provides the context and detail of the Budget proposals.

KEY ISSUES

2. PRINCIPLES:

- 2.1 Members began by asking a series of questions and raising a number of issues regarding some of the principles underpinning the Integrated Plan.
- 2.2 Members expressed concern that ,as the service was on target to make £13.5m savings in 2011/12, whether it was realistic to be able to make £34m over the five year period to 2012/13-2016/17 given the demand led nature of the Service. The Executive Director (EDCYPS) believed they were achievable on the basis of the preventative work projects being undertaken. Stopping the escalation in demand is key to meeting the targets.
- 2.3 Members questioned the commitment of partners to taking their share of responsibility for delivering savings. This risk was acknowledged but new partnership with new responsibilities were emerging and trust was being built. Councillor Brown identified a leading role for all Councillors in building this trust.
- 2.4 In answer to a question raised on whether it was possible to achieve improved services and outcomes from fewer resources, it was explained that through earlier intervention with families it would be possible to yield savings in the longer term whilst also providing better outcomes. New ways of working are about effectiveness as well as efficiency. Officers were confident that the new creative ways of working are backed up by research.
- 2.5 In response to a question on how well the service was keeping abreast of latest

research and good practice and passing it on to relevant staff, it was indicated that there was good access to the research carried out by the Mental Health Trust and from research papers coming forward from Cambridge University. Two posts supported children's centres in developing best practice and children's centres manager network meetings took place to share best practice. A response to a follow up question asking whether up to date research was circulated on a regular basis indicated that it was the case with new legislation and key documents required, but not necessarily in respect of new detailed research.

- 2.6 There was a discussion of whether details had been provided in a transparent way in relation to transferring costs to third parties such as schools / other partners in relation to redistributing budgets etc. In relation to schools it was explained that there had been a detailed item and discussion on the implications of the Integrated Plan (IP) at the Cambridgeshire Schools' Forum December 2011 meeting.
- 2.7 Members pressed the Cabinet Members and Officers on what Plan B would look like if the planned preventative services did not yield the savings targets. The only alternative was identified as cutting non- statutory preventative services.
- 2.8 Members sought clarification around what "Ending funding for some services" referred to specifically and in relation to services for disabled children. It was reiterated that the principles were developed as part of the IP in year one and that a number of the savings had already been made through, for example, cuts to youth services and the swimming service. The main saving in respect of services for disabled children had been achieved through the closure of Norwich Road and this had not resulted in any backlash or unforeseen consequences. The executive Director stressed the need to strike a balance between early intervention services versus savings. Not all preventative services could be protected.
- 2.9 Members expressed concern that the level of savings required over the next five years was not conducive to ensuring the safety of children and protecting the most vulnerable in society. It was reiterated that one of the principles is that services would be targeted at need and based on the principle of effective, evidence based, early intervention. There would still be some universal services for early years and schools but other services such as youth services and children's centres had, had to adopt a targeted approach in line with this principle in order to achieve the necessary savings.

3. CYPS SAVINGS PLAN

- 3.1 A Member of the committee challenged the belief that early intervention worked in terms of most families with serious alcohol and drug related problems, unless it involved removing children from the environment at an early stage. In her experience the parents were often unwilling to change their behaviour and the longer the children were kept in the environment the more damage was done to their physical and mental well-being. Officers explained that the approach being taken on early intervention was tailored to each individual circumstance and that there had been no raising of thresholds to make it more difficult to admit

vulnerable children into care. Case studies showed that in hindsight a great many referrals could have been prevented if intervention to support families had been undertaken at an early stage. The procedures being put in place involved making quicker decisions, including the streamlining of adoption procedures.

- 3.2 Members raised the issue of the National Government's initiative to streamline what was considered an extremely lengthy, inefficient adoption process. A report had indicated that councils needed to do better in this area. Officers highlighted that a lot of work was being undertaken in this area, including working closely with a partner who were challenging management processes in relation to placements. Cambridgeshire was in a much better position compared to other authorities but improvements could still be made and the balance between achieving an early placement and ensuring a child's safety had to be maintained.
- 3.3 Members expressed concern that the inflationary and demographic pressures over the next five years were projected to be just under £40m, while the budget was unchanged over the same period. Members continue to seek reassurance that the Council has the capacity to cope with that additional demand from within existing resources.
- 3.4 In response to a question on whether resources were being provided to CYPS as a result of the proposed Council tax increase in the IP for 2012/13, it was explained that additional monies were being allocated, but not in terms of resource streams to particular services and if this had not been the case, the scale of cuts would have had to have been even greater. The challenge being undertaken was for greater partnership working with the Police, Mental Health Trust, GPs etc. to work closer and in a different way to make better use of shared resources.
- 3.5 Members questioned whether the IP proposals genuinely represented service redesign as opposed to "salami slicing" budgets. In response it was indicated that examples of service redesign included:
- The partnership approach to reducing the numbers of children in local authority care through the Looked after Children Placement Strategy which was transforming the service without having to change thresholds.
 - £1m being put into a parenting family support programme.
 - Being one of the first authorities to move to the new Children Social Care Unit model.
 - Redirecting proposed savings from the teenage pregnancy service to ensure a co-ordinated approach was still provided with services being delivered through locality teams/ schools etc.
- 3.6 In respect of the discussion on teenage pregnancies it was highlighted that as the previous savings had not resulted in a dramatic increase in teenage pregnancies, why was there an identified need to maintain a post with specific co-ordination

responsibilities and to help avoid duplication? One member made the point that some teenagers were more likely to get pregnant if they were not working or training and that teenage pregnancies for those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) could be a useful measure and to also judge the effectiveness of programmes in future years linked to creating jobs etc.

- 3.7 There was a request for more data supporting the savings e.g. the performance indicator data for % young people in in Education, Employment or Training was blank in terms of future years. It was explained that the information was blank in some cases as targets had not yet having been set.
- 3.8 A question was raised regarding whether existing children's centres were working, as those established in highly deprived areas still had the same issues, which could suggest that the children centre had not made a difference. Members were advised that the savings proposals were in relation to developing a more targeted approach to ensure that resourcing was better directed to higher needs families. While there was a preference for a universal offer if funding was available, there was evidence of an improved impact in targeting of those families in most need with social workers and GPs now referring them to children's centres. However in terms of improving deprived areas, this would take a lot longer to evidence.
- 3.9 Members also raised the issue of the large increase in Eastern European communities population and that they are a minority group not currently accessing children's centres and require more outreach work in order to contact hard to reach children. It was indicated that the large resource allocation for two year olds was an area that was to be rolled out through referrals from the children's centres and was an option to help hard to reach children

Home to School Transport

- 3.10 In respect of Home to School transport (HtST) a question was raised regarding the capacity to review routes / contracts and make the necessary savings of over £1.07m as proposed, as they had not been achieved in the current year. It was explained that they had not been achieved in 2011/12 due to inflationary pressures, such as the much larger than expected rise in fuel prices. Lessons had been learnt that it was necessary to include an inflation element in such contracts. In terms of Special Education Needs (SEN) Transport this had been a difficult area and as a result, there had been an adjustment to the expectation on savings.
- 3.11 One member suggested that an area that savings could be made was in relation to the current subsidised travel allowance for siblings which was currently not means tested. Making this change in the current year also embraced the philosophy of moving away from providing universal provision to just providing those with most need.
- 3.12 In response to a question raised regarding how much work was being undertaken to link HtST to Cambridgeshire Future Transport (CFT) the point was made that the starting point had to be getting children to school.

NEW SPENDING PROPOSALS

4. Members raised the following issues in respect of the CYPS new spending proposals.

Multi Systemic Therapy Child Abuse and Neglect (MSTCAN)

- 4.1 Concern was expressed that there was no reference to domestic violence and the damage that it caused to children. In reply it was indicated that while there were no specific proposals, the project would pick up on domestic violence and would be a reason for referral to a social worker. The member who raised the issue highlighted that the biggest problem was that it needed to be at a certain level to trigger support and that this resulted in 70% of families not receiving the support they needed. Reference was made in reply to the Family Intervention Project's work and the fact that a lot of "at risk" families were known to the Council and other agencies, such as the police. The proposals in the report related to where savings could be made in the future. Officers did however indicate that they could consider a business plan specifically related to domestic Violence.
- 4.2 One member highlighted that having visited what he considered was an excellent unit noted that it only had small capacity and the cohort of children was very small 8-16 and therefore asked what the value to the Council was and whether the resources would be better invested in other children related services. In response it was explained that the small number involved would have cost a considerable sum of money in other services and that the Service itself was already saving money due to the success rates of those involved.

Youth Provision.

- 4.3 Members raised the issue of detached Youth Worker provision and whether it could be increased. It was indicated in response to a question that officers had not put forward proposals to increase capacity but there were no plans to reduce the function any further.
- 4.4 Another Member indicated that a number of parishes were prepared to take on youth work activities and that it should be further encouraged. In response it was indicated that, that had been the purpose of providing a one-off funding start up support to encourage take up, whilst also not wishing to raise unrealistic expectations of all provision being replaced. With the move away from universal provision, take up would vary from area to area. The suggestion in response from the member was that more publicity regarding the funding start up support should be provided.
- 4.5 Members highlighted the lack of reference to localism in CYPS services. In response it was indicated that locality teams were a way to focus on the needs of local communities and it was highlighted that children's social work had been refocused to the locality level. A member suggested that it might be better for

each area to be allocated a set budget with the locality manager deciding how to spend it. The point was made in response by the EDCYPS that each locality team was set up to be responsive to the needs of its specific area and that if any Members felt that this was not the case, they should contact him directly.

- 4.6 Issues were raised regarding the work of the Family Intervention Project providing support for a period of time and the danger of when it was stepped down of the same family crisis reactivating and that the step down had to be on a gradual basis. In response it was indicated that the methodology for disengagement was to ensure that support was sustainable, but at a certain point if the intervention was deemed as not having the desired impact / improvement effect, then there would be a need to go down the sanctions route to ensure the safety of a child. It had to be recognised that support could not be on-going for an indefinite period. There was currently no cost benefit analysis to indicate that the project would save money but there were proposals to undertake one in order to assess whether it should be expanded county-wide.
- 4.7 Members also wanted clarity on what would happen to the resource if the money allocated was not spent in the next 12 months. It was explained that CYPS would discuss with LGSS: Director Finance the possibility of the project being rolled forward should the business case merit this.

Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) School

- 4.8 In answer to a question regarding what would be done to ensure that the independent provider did not charge exorbitant prices and therefore negate any proposed savings this would be dealt with by the contract.

Investing in Northstowe

- 4.9 Members sought clarification of what was meant by the term “early community infrastructure”. In response it was indicated that this referred to the provision of early children related infrastructure such as secondary school, locality provision, youth provision and children’s centre. This was in line with the Member review of New Communities and the recommendations on the need for early community/ social related infrastructure. There was a request that the relevant section of the IP relating to this project should be revisited as there seemed to be confusion between what was capital and what was revenue related expenditure.

5. RISKS AND PRESSURES IN DELIVERING SERVICES

- 5.1 Reference was made to the opening statement which read “the scale of the savings required obviously presents significant financial and service risks” which was a concern to Members and would require officers to indicate at an early stage if they were having problems meeting the savings or the risks were becoming unacceptable. **This is a key requirement that Council are asked to accept.**
- 5.2 Surprise was expressed that the new Social Care Teams were not included as

risks in this section as the client numbers risk was much higher than the model. Officers responded that there was a general demand risk but that the number of Looked After Children (LACs) was known and that the number of cases that a social worker was allocated was monitored on a regular basis. There were good systems in place in respect of allocations policy.

- 5.3 Reference was made to the financial risk not yet known in relation to how the Department for Education would recoup funding from local authorities as a result of schools converting to academy status. One Member made reference to the £3.1m lost in the current year as a result of the Academy Programme and that the pro-rata effect on CYPS was equivalent to a loss of funding of over £800k which could have been used to prevent cuts in services such as LACs. Given that 38 schools had now converted to academies and had received huge windfalls from central government he highlighted both the financial risk to the Government who had underestimated the take up demand and that the recoupment costs could be between £3.5m to £6m. This would have a significant impact on the current budget. As every school was being encouraged to do what was right for itself, the Member felt the Council should encourage them to show social responsibility and channel some of their large money windfalls to local projects to help their communities fund services that the County Council were no longer able to provide. For example, Academies giving up 25% of their additional funding could release hundreds of thousands of pounds that could be utilised to help support local projects. Councillor Brown in response indicated that he could take this request forward.

6. CAPITAL

- 6.1 Reference was made to the focus within the capital programme to increasing the number of school places available and how this was now more difficult as schools were allowed to expand / contract their admission numbers. Concern was expressed that as a result there was only a small budget to carry out maintenance works and spending less in this area was a short term expediency with longer term consequences. In response it was indicated that while it would be nice to have a larger pot, at the current time with such resource constraints this was not possible

7. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (CIAs)

- 7.1 Scepticism was expressed that only one CIA appeared to suggest that removing or reducing a service would have a negative impact. Attention was focussed on ceasing dual use funding for leisure facilities as for those schools where funding would cease it was more than a potential negative impact. As in an earlier discussion there was concern regarding whether district councils had been made aware that they were being asked to take on more of the financial burden. Officers made the point that district councils and the schools would need to work more closely to ensure centres were run profitably and discussions are taking place to help facilitate this. "Education Support for Looked After Children" was seen as another example where the impact on equality strands was shown as neutral even with a 50% reduction in the service. In response it was highlighted that in a great

many of the savings proposals the aim was to protect the most vulnerable. It was clarified that the CIA forms assessment was not saying there was no impact but in many cases that the impact of the service reduction was no greater to any particular cohort.

8. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 8.1 Members felt strongly that the Performance indicators were not meaningful. For example the LAC column was considered to have only a tenuous link to keeping children safe. It was agreed that some of the information needed to be revisited. As indicated earlier with the abolition of national performance indicators there had been a reliance on them for past data and some required to be revisited. In some cases targets had not yet been set.
- 8.2 It was considered having another column with current year performance would have been useful and this will be reconsidered.
- 8.3 One member felt that the % of secondary schools with more than 25% surplus places should have a nil target inserted. Another member indicated that this would not be helpful where there was large housing growth and would need the 25% to fill the catchment.

9. SUMMARY: KEY AREAS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

- 9.1 In summary, whilst recognising that a great deal of work has already been undertaken such as the introduction of the Unit Model of Social Work, there are a number of areas where Members of the Committee feel that the full Council should give further attention. These are:
- Consider, and further test, whether the proposals in the IP are genuinely sustainable given the demographic and inflationary pressures
 - Consider whether the emphasis on preventative services is consistent with continuing to target the most vulnerable.
 - Consider the risks to Looked After Children's services in light of the £2m proposed saving
 - Rigorously assess the impact of the savings on performance, ie. Looking at the impact of year one of the IP. This should be a role for the O&S Committee.
 - Ensuring that warning signs are identified early if savings are not being realised or risks are becoming too great.
 - Working in a more co-ordinated way with partners to ensure that funding priorities are consistent and fully understood.

- Further embed the principles of localism:
 - consult with schools /districts who were being asked to take on greater local service provision.
 - Highlight opportunities, such as the funding opportunities for Parish Councils to deliver youth work, for local communities to take a lead.

Source Documents	Location
Agenda and reports of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 7th February 2012 Integrated Plan 2012/13	Room 114, Shire Hall Cambridge