

BUSINESS PLANNING: CHILDREN AND SAFEGUARDING

To: **Children and Young People**

Meeting Date: **10 September 2019**

From: **Executive Director People and Communities.**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **n/a** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **This report provides an update on the current business planning process for Children and Safeguarding.**

Recommendation: **Committee are asked to consider and comment on the contents of the report:**

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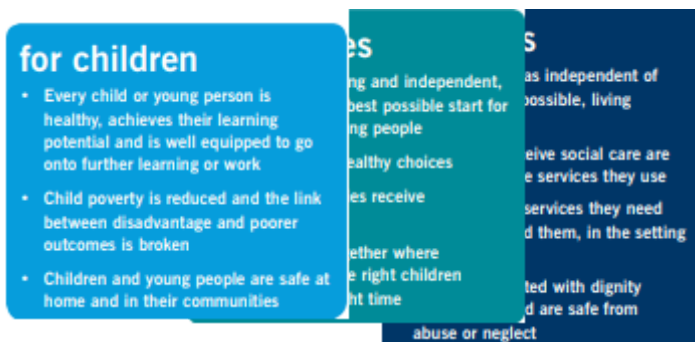
1.	BACKGROUND
1.1.	This paper provides an update on the business planning process for Children and Safeguarding services.
2.	MAIN ISSUES
2.1.	<p>Business Planning is a rolling five year process and the Council is currently working on development of the 2020-2025 plan. The purpose of the Business Plan is to provide a summary of the Council's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term vision • Medium term financial strategy (MTFS) • Budget allocations for services • Capital plan • Funding estimates • Priorities and planned activities across the organisation for the next five years.
2.2.	<p>The Business Plan is refreshed every year and formally approved by Full Council each February. During the period of this plan the Council will continue to face financial challenges as the continuing issues with fairer funding formula, coupled with significant growth, affect both demand for services and the level of resources the Council has available to fund their provision.</p> <p>Financial Challenges</p>
2.3.	<p>The Council is legally required to set a balanced budget each year. In the current year's 2019-24 Business Plan a council wide budget gap for 2020/21 of £14m was identified.</p>
2.4.	<p>The Council continues to see significant challenges arising from continuing high levels of demand within children's social care services and in particular as a result of continuing higher numbers of children in care in comparison with other similar authorities.</p>
2.5.	<p>While overall numbers in care do now appear to have stabilised, they have not yet begun to reduce significantly. At the same time, the national population of children in care has continued to increase over the last two to three years, meaning that the market for children's placements has become much more challenging. Independent fostering agencies are struggling to meet demand, meaning that they are in a position where they can increasingly 'cherry-pick' from children and young people referred to them. This in turn makes it more likely that children who are seen as being more likely to be challenging are at greater risk of having only residential placements available to them.</p>
2.6.	<p>Residential care is significantly higher cost than any other form of care, and tends to be associated with poorer long term outcomes for children and young people.</p>

Priorities and Opportunities

- 2.7. Despite the challenges outlined above, there are also reasons for some optimism in relation to future demand management.
- 2.8. Numbers in care over the last three months have shown a slow reduction, despite more than 16 unaccompanied asylum seeking young people coming into the care system over that period.
- 2.9. The new structure of specialist teams is now fully bedded in and is helping to ensure that we are proactively planning for children in care, meaning that we are starting to see more children and young people moving through the care system more quickly.
- 2.10. Our fostering recruitment strategy is showing good progress, and we expect to see the target for a net increase of 24 fostering households in the current financial year to be achieved, with a similar target for the 2020/21 financial year.
- 2.11. Recruiting our own carers is the best way of tackling the shortage in placements for children in care more generally as it makes us less reliant on the independent sector. Unit costs are also lower, and placements are more likely to be within or close to Cambridgeshire.
- 2.12. The other reason for optimism is the Council's success in attracting £2.4M of government funding in order to implement the Family Safeguarding model within children's social care. This model has demonstrated success in supporting the most vulnerable families to address the substance and alcohol, domestic abuse and emotional and mental health issues that they face. This means that families are supported to be able to provide a good level of care for their children, reducing pressure on the children in care service and resulting in fewer family relationships being disrupted.
- 2.13. This funding means that we are more confident that we will begin to see steadily reducing numbers in care as we move into and through the next financial year. It also provides an opportunity for us to review the approach to supporting vulnerable families more broadly, from universal through early help services, as well as our statutory services to children in need, in need or protection and in care.

Priorities

- 2.14. Business Planning is underpinned by the following vision and strategic priorities for People and Communities:



2.15. The following strategic priorities help us to deliver on this vision:

- A strength, assets based approach to conversations
- Maximisation of community assets to support delivery of place based provision of services
- Emphasise early help to prevent problems escalating to the point of crisis
- Give service users choice and control through self-directed support
- Working with the care market to create sustainable capacity and new models of care, including development of outcomes based commissioning
- Build and use individual and community capacity to create resilience, maintain health and wellbeing, with an increasing focus on delaying the point at which people require additional support and minimising the reliance on public services
- Involve service users in shaping services, and provide individually tailored support for the specific needs of each child, family or adult along with access to quality information and advice
- Ensure services are coordinated (including with partners) and underpinned, wherever possible, by a single assessment and support plan which avoids duplication
- Make sure that all our services and those provided on our behalf meet the quality standards that people have a right to expect
- Follow the commissioning cycle for all services– analysing needs, specifying a service model and continually reviewing outcomes.

Process and timelines

2.16. To inform the Business Planning process, costs and demographic pressure forecasts have been revised. Part of this process has included the identification of further savings and efficiencies to mitigate these. The formal Business Planning process will go through Committees and Council throughout the autumn and winter and the below outlines the next steps and milestones associated with this process:

- Business planning strategies discussed at General Purposes Committee – 10th September 2019 (Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, Corporate Strategy)
- Business Planning proposals and reports (capital and revenue) presented to committees – October and December 2019
- Draft business plan and strategies presented to General Purposes Committee – January 2020
- Business Plan approved at Full Council – February 2020.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Supporting vulnerable children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes has longer term benefits for them as well as to the wider population. Where children are enabled to remain safely with their families or provided with good quality care, they are most likely to develop resilience and be more likely to

	remain in good physical, mental and emotional health, make better quality relationships and contribute more to the community.
3.2	Thriving places to live
	The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the best outcomes for children and young people means that they are most likely to make a positive economic and social contribution into adulthood.
3.3	The best start in life for Cambridgeshire's children
	The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A children's services that is effective overall will ensure that vulnerable children and young people are supported to achieve good outcomes, including by enabling families to provide permanent, safe and loving homes to their children wherever possible; Where children and young people are identified as being at risk of harm, children's services take action in order to ensure that these risks are minimised; As corporate parents, we share responsibility for ensuring that our children and young people in care and young people leaving care are able to access the best possible support in order to achieve good long term outcomes.
4.	SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS
4.1	Resource Implications
	<i>There are no significant implications within this category.</i>
4.2	Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications
	<i>There are no significant implications within this category.</i>
4.3	Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications
	<i>There are no significant implications within this category.</i>
4.4	Equality and Diversity Implications
	<i>There are no significant implications within this category</i>
4.5	Engagement and Communications Implications
	<i>There are no significant implications within this category</i>
4.6	Localism and Local Member Involvement
	<i>There are no significant implications within this category.</i>

4.7	Public Health Implications
	<i>There are no significant implications within this category.</i>

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes or No Name of Financial Officer:
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes or No Name of Financial Officer: N/A
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes or No Name of Legal Officer:
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Lou Williams
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes or No Name of Officer:
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Lou Williams
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes or No Name of Officer:

Source Documents	Location
None	