

# Business Case

## Title: Early Help Proposed Savings

### Project Overview

|                                     |  |                             |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Project Title                       | Early Help: Savings Proposal   |                             |  |
| Project Code                        |  | Business Planning Reference |  |
| Business Planning Brief Description | This business case describes proposals for achieving efficiencies within Early Help services of £750K against the original proposed budget for 2020/21. This is made up by a combination of not re-investing a proportion of the savings achieved through ending the contract for provision of Multi-Systemic Therapy [MST] and as a result of the realignment of management arrangements following an earlier decision to reorganise delivery of some areas of early help services. These proposals will not have a direct impact on front-line delivery. |                             |  |
| Senior Responsible Officer          | Lou Williams: Service Director Children & Safeguarding   |                             |  |

### Project Approach

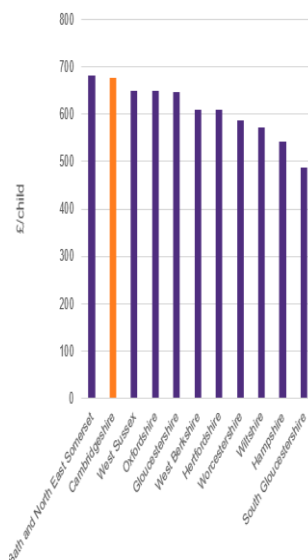
#### Background

##### Why do we need to undertake this project?

There are three main reasons for this project being required:

- **Outcomes for Children:** Cambridgeshire is a relatively high spender on children's services overall and invests significant resources into early help services. Analysis of available data suggests that there is likely to be a culture of over-intervention, particularly in some parts of the County at all levels of support for children, including within children's social care. Over-intervention in the lives of children is not associated with good outcomes. We are proposing to undertake a system-wide review of early help services as provided by not only the Council but importantly, by our key partners. This review will use best practice and evidence to ensure that the combined early help offer from schools, community health and mental health services and our own services is most likely to offer effective early support to vulnerable children and their families. Given the immediacy of this work, it is unwise to invest additional resources into the service area at the current time.
- **Financial:** The unit cost of providing children's services in Cambridgeshire is high relative to our statistical neighbours, as illustrated by the chart below for 2017/18:

Net expenditure per head (2017/18) – Ofsted Nearest Neighbours



- Service Efficiency:** Some services that have been delivered and managed through our early help services have transferred to education services, including a range of school-facing services. It makes sense for these to be managed as part of the broader suite of school facing support services, and there is the potential for other roles to transfer in the near future. This change also means that fewer managers are required within the early help service, enabling savings to be made through increasing efficiency.

### What would happen if we did not complete this project?

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that it uses public funding efficiently. Where opportunities to make savings without affecting front line delivery are not taken, this may have an impact on longer term sustainability.

## Approach

### Aims / Objectives

There is no proposal to reduce the number of front-line practitioners in our early help services. There is an opportunity to review line management arrangements because some services that were previously line managed within early help have already transferred to education, including those associated with school attendance and inclusion, without the transfer of management posts from early help. This change has already resulted in a decision not to recruit to the associated line management roles within early help as these become vacant.

There is the potential for a further group of largely school-facing workers to move to the education service. This is not only likely to be more efficient in terms of management costs, but would also mean that they would be likely to have greater impact, since they would be working more closely with the attendance and inclusion posts that have already transferred to the education service.

This proposal also includes a recommendation not to re-invest a proportion of the savings made by discontinuing the MST approach in Cambridgeshire. Of the total £316K originally planned for re-investment, £100K will continue to be invested in supporting community development initiatives. Subject to agreement by the Council, the remaining £216K would now be considered as contributing to the proposed £750K savings included within this business case.

As noted above, Cambridgeshire is a high spending authority when it comes to delivery of children's services, compared with our statistical neighbours. Making an additional investment at this time in preventative and early help services does not appear prudent, particularly when we are about to embark on a broader review of early help services across the system as a whole.

### Project Overview - What are we doing

The £750K savings that are proposed through this business case will be achieved through two main means:

- Not re-investing all of the savings from ending the contract with Family Psychology Mutual to deliver MST;
- Reviewing the operation of early help services to ensure that they are delivered as efficiently as possible.

### Savings associated with ending the MST contract: £216K

In February 2019, the Council made the decision to end the contract with Family Psychology Mutual to deliver Multi-Systemic Therapy. This decision was taken following national research that identified that outcomes for young people accessing MST were not statistically different from those accessing more traditional early help services. Part of this proposal was for half of the funding for the MST contract to be re-invested in early help services, a figure equivalent to £316K. Of this, £100K has been earmarked to support community development initiatives, with match funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group, leaving £216K.

Given that the available evidence indicates that Cambridgeshire is already a relatively high spending children's authority, and that

we are proposing to undertake a system wide review of our early help offer to include our key partners, it would not be sensible to undertake additional investment at this stage. In the event that this review identifies a need for additional funding for specific areas within early help services, this funding could be identified through the usual business planning process.

### **Delivering greater efficiency in Early Help Services**

As noted above, changes in the way that a number of school-facing services are managed has resulted in an over-capacity of management within the early help service. Reducing the number of line managers would therefore result in a considerable saving without impact on front line service delivery.

#### **Impact**

These proposals will result in officers being placed at risk of redundancy, although we will do all we can to ensure that suitable alternative roles are identified. There is therefore a clear risk of personal impact on any members of our staff for whom redundancy is unavoidable.

#### **What assumptions have you made?**

Following the transfer of a number of roles from early help to the education service, there is an over capacity at management level within the service. This will increase further in the event that more staff make the transfer. It is therefore possible to reduce the number of management roles within the service while allowing all post-holders to manage a manageable number of direct reports.

Under the proposals, the existing two Head of Service and seven Early Help District Manager posts would remain. The number of Early Help Assistant Manager roles would, however, reduce from the current establishment of 29 FTE to 16 FTE posts, subject to the outcome of appropriate consultation processes.

Because all Early Help Assistant Managers are currently working to a common job description, this would require that all who are in post at the time of the consultation [of which there were 24FTE as of the beginning of December] being placed at risk of redundancy. We will do all we can to avoid actual redundancies and suitable roles will be ring-fenced to those at risk as a result of any consultation, in accordance with our usual processes.

This reduction would enable us to exceed the £750K savings target proposed as part of this business case. This allows for some transfer of funding to education to support any additional line management costs that might be associated with the further transfer of staff to the education service should this be required.

#### **What constraints does the project face?**

There are constraints that relate to ensuring that the necessary HR and associated policies are adopted, including the requirement to undertake a full consultation and assess any adverse community impact. These processes will need to be concluded in advance of the beginning of the 2020/21 financial year if full year savings are to be achieved in that year.

## **Delivery Options**

### **Has an options and feasibility study been undertaken?**

N/A

## **Scope / Interdependencies**

### **Scope**

#### **What is within scope?**

Early Help Services across the County.

#### **What is outside of scope?**

## **Project Dependencies**

### **Volatility children in care numbers and growing child population**

As noted above, the indications are that there is a culture of over intervention at every level of the children's system including children's social care. As the Family safeguarding model becomes established, this may lead to a decrease in the number of children supported by children's social care services. While this is the right thing, we will need to monitor whether this results on the ability of early help services to meet demand, and take action accordingly.

## Cost and Savings

See accompanying financial report

## Non Financial Benefits

### Non Financial Benefits Summary

Over-intervention in the lives of children and their families is not a good thing. It can result in families feeling unfairly stigmatised and/or reluctant to re-engage with support services at a later date when accessing support might be beneficial. Beginning to critically reassess our services as part of business planning processes enables us to assure ourselves that we are intervening with the right children at the right time and at the right level of service. We may find that the pattern is not even across the authority, and that some communities or areas require additional resources, while others need less. This will enable us to be confident that we deliver an evidence-based and equitable service across the County as a whole.

## Risks

### Title

As noted above, there is a risk that as we review the way we engage with vulnerable children and families at all levels in the system, there may be some peaks in demand for services while the system resets. We will need to keep this under review in order to ensure that services do not face temporary peaks in demand which they struggle to meet.

## Project Impact

### Community Impact Assessment

#### Who will be affected by this proposal?

Around 24 FTE members of staff would be placed at risk of redundancy as a result of these proposals; there would be 16 FTE roles available within the new structure.

#### What positive impacts are anticipated from this proposal?

Making savings that are only likely to have a limited impact on front-line delivery is an important factor in enabling the Council to meet challenging financial constraints while continuing to support

#### What negative impacts are anticipated from this proposal?

Limited/minimal as far as users of our services are concerned

#### Are there other impacts which are more neutral?

Limited/minimal as far as users of our services are concerned.

### Disproportionate impacts on specific groups with protected characteristics

#### Details of Disproportionate Impacts on protected characteristics and how these will be addressed

None

