

16 July 2012

Agenda Item: **12****REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND  
SUPPORT****REVISED STAFFING STRUCTURE OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICE  
SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to restructure the Business Support Service (BSS) to Children's Social Care services within Children, Families and Cultural Services (CFCS), establishing a number of posts and aligning the new service with agreed corporate design and operating principles.

**Information and Advice**

2. During 2010 a review of business and administrative services was undertaken within CFCS in order to establish a centralised service with the capacity and flexibility to meet business need in a consistent way across the department. At that time the Children's Social Care (CSC) division was experiencing unprecedented pressures and increase in demand. It was agreed to defer structural changes in the administration of that service until the future shape of CSC became clear.
3. A revised structure and new operating model for the delivery of CSC services has now been agreed, and it is therefore an appropriate time to remodel the business and administrative arrangements required by the new service.
4. Work has been carried out with colleagues across the both the CSC service and the Business Support Service to identify and quantify the different administrative support functions currently undertaken and those which will be required in the future.
5. Proposals for a revised structure were drafted and sought to allocate posts in appropriate numbers and at appropriate grades to meet the needs of each service area. The new service will also ensure that generic business support to group managers and service teams is available at each of the key bases. Arrangements will be modelled to take account of the future location of services as determined by the Ways of Working (WOW) programme but also recognise the existing use of a wider range of buildings in the short to medium term.
6. The proposals for a revised business support structure were published on 7 May 2012 and the consultation closed on 1 June 2012.

7. Considerations and principles underpinning the proposals for a new business support structure included the commitment to:
  - provide a dedicated management structure focused on business and administrative support which can develop new ways of working designed to be more flexible, efficient and responsive
  - recognise the impact of corporate programmes such as the Business Management System and Ways of Working
  - conform to the organisational design principles and use generic job descriptions pertaining to the County Council's Business Support Service
  - secure provision in the most effective way possible
  - not seek financial savings through these recommendations at this stage.
8. A dedicated intranet site was created and publicised to colleagues in order that they could access background information, the proposed structure charts and guidance on how to participate in the consultation.
9. 121 people attended eight briefing events that were held across the County. Proposals were also shared directly with the divisional leadership team and operational management team for CSC and a meeting was held with representatives from Unison and GMB. A response was received from Unison on behalf of its members.
10. During the period of consultation a total of 61 submissions were received via email and through questions asked at the various events. Many of the responses related to service continuity issues and the operational management of the service following implementation of a new structure. Whilst broadly the advice received through the consultation agreed with background research, specific feedback has influenced the final proposal and there has been some adjustment to further tailor the capacity and level of support available.
11. The proposed structure matches resources to need, strengthens locality working and reduces 'arms length' supervision of teams. It reflects the needs of the new service and also aligns with the existing business support service for the department which was approved and implemented in 2011.

## **Proposed Staffing Structure**

12. The proposed staffing structure is attached as **Appendix 1**.
13. The structure conforms to the corporate design principles and enshrines a flatter management structure.
14. The structure will be implemented by means of the corporate enabling process.
15. The service matches posts at appropriate grades and in appropriate numbers across each of the new services in the Children's Social Care service i.e. Social Work Services, Access to Resources, Children's Disability Service and Safeguarding and Independent Review. The new structure also however establishes a more consistent generic approach across each of the locality bases to reduce 'silo working' and enable a more responsive, reliable and flexible service.

## **Other Options Considered**

16. It was not considered viable to leave the structure unchanged as this would result in a mismatch between the business and administrative service and the transformed CSC service, and the current strains experienced by the service would be exacerbated. It would also result in the structure of business support for the division being out of line with the rest of the department, which would have a negative impact on the service's ability to make further consistent improvements and efficiencies.
17. The final proposal is modelled to meet the corporate design principles. It recognises the strength of arrangements which provide for a locality 'hub' approach. Equally the structure indicates where support of a specific nature is required by services and so seeks to preserve experience and understanding of the diverse needs of the CSC service.
18. It is not considered feasible to make financial savings at this time without detrimental impact on the service. However, the Business Support Service will continue to review the effectiveness of the new the service and strive for increased efficiency through this more coherent model of service delivery.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

19. Delivery of administrative functions to social care services has been under significant strain for some time and is no longer in a position to respond to the degree of change necessary to keep pace with transformation across the division. Under these proposals, business and administrative support within CFCS will be fully centrally managed, which supports the Council's commitment to deliver more flexibility. There will be less duplication of business support and administrative roles and a consistent approach to supporting frontline services.
20. A key task for business support managers will be to drive the required cultural change and undertake high level specialist practitioner functions. Teams will ensure the required communication takes place between both Business Support and Children's Social Care services during the transitional phase into new operating arrangements.
21. Any further realignment of the Business Support Service will be more readily achieved, creating greater opportunity for future economies of scale and sound management of resources.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Human Resource implications**

23. Population of the new structure will be through the County Council's enabling process. There is no reduction in the overall number of posts proposed in this new structure, however the distribution and number of posts at certain grades has been revised and conforms to the operational design principles adopted across the County Council in 2010. The Council's pay protection policy will be implemented as applicable.

24. Job descriptions were consulted on and approved in 2011 as part of the Council's business support and administration programme. These job descriptions provide for greater flexibility across the service.

### **Financial Implications**

25. Implementation of the proposed new structure will be cost neutral to the department and the new structure will be funded from existing budgets.

### **Equalities Implications**

26. As part of the process of making decisions and changing policy, public authorities are required by law to think about the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics (as defined by equalities legislation) and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
27. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a means by which a public authority can assess the potential impact that proposed decisions / changes to policy could have on the community and those with protected characteristics. They may also identify potential ways to reduce any impact that a decision / policy change could have. If it is not possible to reduce the impact, the EIA can explain why. Decision makers must understand the potential implications of their decisions on people with protected characteristics.
28. An EIA has been undertaken and is available as a background paper. Decision makers must give due regard to the implications for protected groups when considering this.

### **Safeguarding of Children Implications**

29. The new structure will strengthen the service's resilience and organisational capacity to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in respect of safeguarding arrangements. The Business Support Service will continue to operate in partnership with the Children's Social Care service to protect children and young people.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the proposed staffing and delivery structure for the Business Support Service to Children's Social Care, as outlined in the report and attached **Appendix**, be agreed for implementation.

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**Constitutional Comments (KK 20/06/12)**

30. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

**Financial Comments (NDR 25/06/12)**

31. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 25 of the report.

**Background Papers**

Consultation documentation  
Consultation responses received  
Equality Impact Assessment

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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