

18th January 2021

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

PROGRESS ON THE IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on progress against the Improving the Effectiveness & Efficiency of the Children's Services Plan originally presented to Committee on 16th September 2019.
2. To approve the updated Improving the Effectiveness & Efficiency of the Children's Services Plan and consider whether there are any further actions Committee requires in relation to the information contained in the report
3. To approve the disestablishment of 3 fte Unit Leader (Band B) posts within the Family Service.

Information

4. On 16th September 2019 the Children and Young People's Committee received a report entitled '2019/2020 Children and Families Budget Update'. This report provided a comprehensive assessment of the challenges facing the departmental budget, the factors behind the volatility of spending on children's services and the actions proposed in mitigation. Committee agreed to receive an update every three months.
5. An update on the departmental budget position is presented quarterly to the Committee within the paper entitled 'Children and Young People Core Data Set'. As the information is available to Committee through that source the analysis is not repeated within this report.
6. An updated version of the 'Effectiveness and Efficiency Plan' is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Progress Against the Plan

7. As was previously reported a small number of elements within the plan have been delayed by the pandemic, although even for many of those areas progress has been caught up over recent months and revised timescales have been agreed to ensure that timely progress can be made.

8. All local authorities face challenges in coming years due to the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to the upward pressures on children's department budgets that have existed in recent years. In order to provide a more stable budget position for future years an exercise to identify budget pressures has been undertaken and these will form the budget proposal to Full Council in February 2021. The department has also looked carefully at where efficiencies can be made without detriment to frontline delivery of services and these are written into the latest version of the plan. Whilst there are no major staffing implications identified 3 fte vacant Unit Leader (Band B) posts in the Family Service have been identified as surplus to need having not been filled for some time. It is therefore proposed to disestablish these posts.

Other Options Considered

9. In identifying areas for efficiency a priority has been given to ensuring the continued delivery of high quality services to children and families and of protecting the highly skilled workforce present in the department.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. These recommendations provide the range of measures being taken by the Children and Families department via the Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Children's Services Plan, to address the financial and service challenges currently being faced.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

12. The 'Effectiveness and Efficiency Plan' aims to address the financial challenges that the Children and Families department is facing due to increased demand. The disestablishment of the 3 fte Unit Leader (Band B) posts will save £135,753 per annum of which £15,753 will remain available to the service for direct work with vulnerable families.

Human Resources Implications

13. The proposal to disestablish 3 fte Unit Leader (Band B) posts in the Family Service has no direct Human Resources implications as the posts are vacant.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) agrees the updated Efficiency and Effectiveness Plan, attached as **Appendix 1**, and considers whether there are any further actions required in relation to the information contained in the report
- 2) agrees the disestablishment of 3 fte Unit Leader (Band B) posts within the Family Service.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 14/12/20)

14. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 21/12/20)

15. The disestablishment of the 3 fte Unit Leader (Band B) posts within the Family Service will save £135,753 per annum of which £15,753 will remain available to the service for direct work with vulnerable families. The net budget for the Family Service is £3.6m.

Human Resources (BC 14/12/20)

16. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. There are no redundancies arising as the Unit Leader posts are currently vacant.

Background Papers and Published Documents

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.

[2019/2020 Children and Families budget update – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 16th September 2019](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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