

Children's Service Committee

Item No.....

Report title:	Children's Services Transformation Programme
Date of meeting:	11th September 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough, Executive Director of Children's Services
Strategic impact Children's Services is delivering a significant and ambitious programme of transformation across a range of service areas. The strategic intention is to respond to the changing needs within communities and financial challenges by developing innovative new approaches. The Programme aligns directly to the NCC priorities, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offering our help early to prevent and reduce demand for specialist services• Joining up our work so that similar activities and services are easily accessible, done well and done once• Using evidence and data to target our work where it can make the most difference	

Executive summary

A presentation has been prepared for Committee to be delivered by the Children's Services Business Design and Change Lead – providing an overview and update on progress across the breadth of the programme.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report and the associated presentation and provide comments to steer the direction of the work.

1 Context & Background

- 1.1 Children's Services in Norfolk continue to operate in a challenging context. As is the case for almost all local authorities, we are experiencing high and increasing levels of need across numerous areas of service and in particular in relation to children with special educational needs and children at risk of harm. We are responding to new issues within society and the range responsibilities for the department is widening to tackle issues such child sexual and criminal exploitation and the threat of radicalisation.
- 1.2 We are tackling these challenges in the context of ever diminishing resources. The level of grant funding to local authorities diminishes year on year and there is now a clear national evidence base around a significant strategic funding shortfall in Children's Services, estimated by the Association of Directors of Children's Services to be growing to around 2 billion by 2020 for the nation as a whole. Furthermore the evidence shows that the pressure on and need for children's services is driven to a very large extent by external factors beyond the control of Children's Services. The levels of deprivation, the size of the local 0-25 population, levels of household income, levels of unemployment and levels of

crime have been identified as the key contributing factors nationally and in many of these areas our own analysis of the demographics shows an increasingly challenging picture in Norfolk. We know that relative deprivation is increasing in the County, our population of children and young people is expanding and the national economic outlook is having an impact. Those trends are now beginning to translate into additional demand for services and pressure on budgets and capacity.

- 1.3 Although this is a challenging context, Norfolk County Council and its Children's Services are responding in a bold, positive and ambitious way. That began with the business case for a major investment in transformational change agreed at Policy and Resources Committee in September 2017 and the Launch of the Norfolk Futures Transformation programme as part of the committee plan at the May children service committee 2018. That high-level business case committed an allocation of £12-15million of up-front investment in Children's Services to enable the development of new service models that can respond to the changing needs in communities and allow us to continue to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.
- 1.4 In November 2017 the Authority achieved another important milestone with the Ofsted inspection visit resulting in Norfolk coming out of formal intervention and evidencing a significant improvement in practice quality and a positive trajectory across our teams.
- 1.5 A further key foundation for transformational change has been the appointment of a new and permanent senior leadership team for Children's Services which began when the new DCS came into post in October 2017 and was completed in May 2018 when the final member of the leadership team joined the authority.
- 1.6 This combination of political support, financial backing, improving practice and stable leadership is a great platform for children's services to make a step change in the level of ambition in our plans and proposals. Over recent months we have been working to take advantage of this opportunity and we now have a large number of exciting initiatives underway and more coming into the programme all the time.

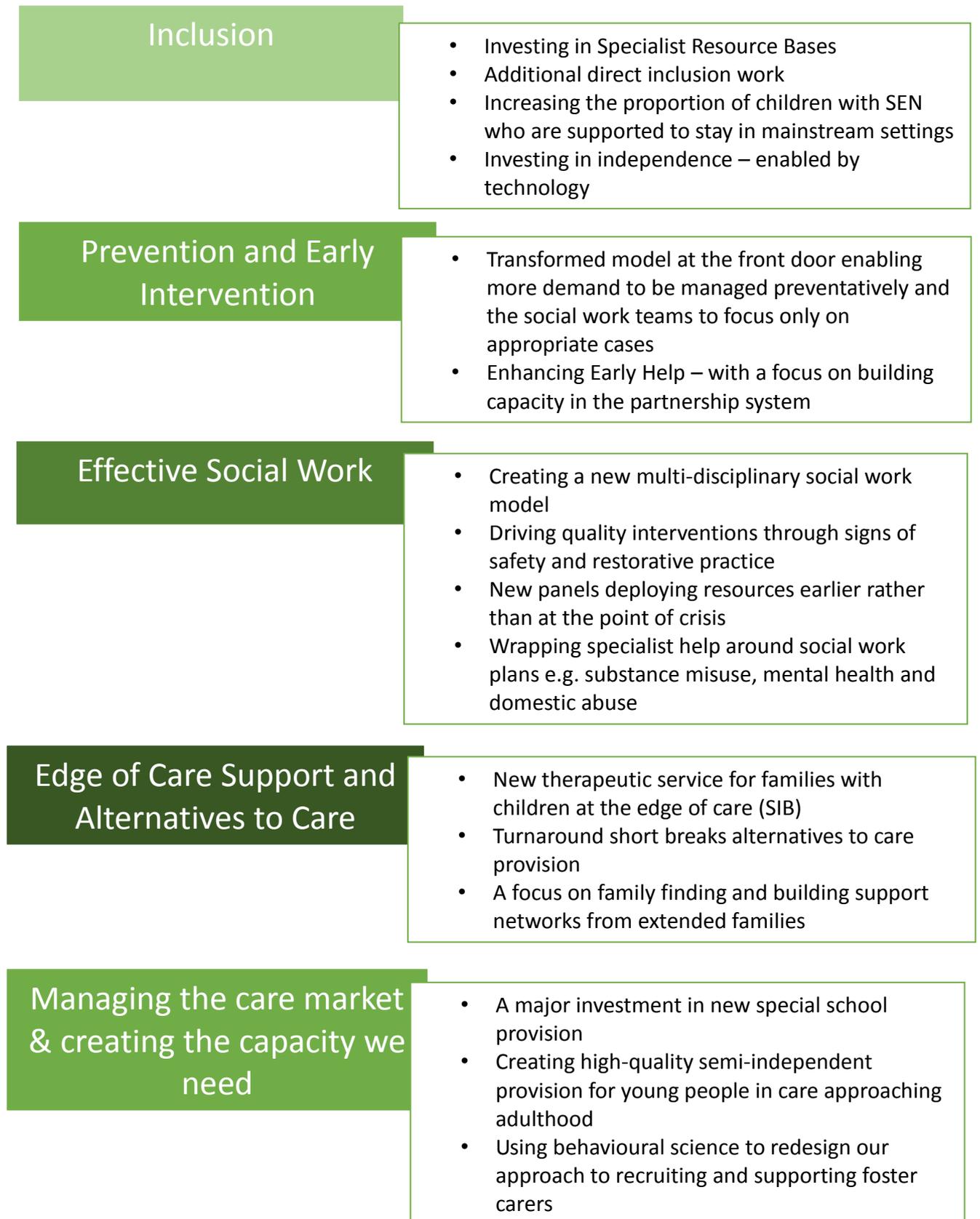
2 Transformation Focus, Approach and Themes

- 2.1 The overarching ambition for the programme is described as supporting 'Safe Children, and Resilient Families'. At its heart the programme is about identifying the children and families who need extra help as quickly as possible and working alongside them to build their resilience to challenges – so that ultimately they can achieve positive outcomes without the need for lots of ongoing involvement from the local authority. It's a strengths-based early intervention model which aims reduce the number of children and families whose needs escalate to the point of crisis or the point at which they require high cost interventions or full time local authority care. This kind of successful preventative and early intervention work can achieve better outcomes for children, families and communities whilst simultaneously reducing the costs to the County Council.
- 2.2 Alongside the focus on effective early intervention we are also delivering a number of major change initiatives aimed at transforming the provision we make for the children and young people who do need to come into local authority care or require specialist education support. Rather than relying only on the traditional

placement models that the market provider we are instead taking a much more proactive approach – investing in our own provision, developing new types of care arrangement and putting much more creative packages of support in place for our children and young people.

2.2 We want to create a coherent model, with all of our proposals and innovations aligned to this overarching vision and direction and so we have developed a number of strategic themes under which to drive our work. The figure below provides a high-level overview and the presentation to Committee will provide further detail and examples of each project and concept.

Fig 1 Overview of Themes and Projects in Children's Services Transformation Programme



3. Issues, risks and innovation

- 3.1 The risks of doing nothing are well rehearsed. It is clear that if we do not deliver a major programme of transformation then our existing service models will become unsustainable, with more and more of our limited resources being committed in high cost crisis interventions and our ability to invest in early intervention and prevention being eroded over time.
- 3.2 We know that successful transformation and early intervention is possible. Other local authorities have successfully tackled high LAC numbers and high pressure in their systems and many of the interventions and proposals we are taking forward have a proven track record of delivery in other local authority areas. We are following the evidence wherever possible and there is no reason why we cannot replicate these impacts as well delivering some of our own innovations which are bespoke to needs in Norfolk.
- 3.3 However we should also acknowledge the scale of the programme we are seeking to deliver, the level of complexity and the pace at which we are moving – all of which are stretching. The programme is one of the priorities within the Norfolk Futures Programme and as such receives support from the Strategy and Delivery Unit and is overseen by the Norfolk Futures Steering Group at CLT level as well as being subject to regular member review. In addition we are creating a small dedicated project and transformation team within Children’s Services to ensure we have the capacity to deliver. This team is partially in place already and interviews for 3 additional Business Design and Change Manager posts are taking place shortly with the intention of securing the resource we need to drive this work forward over the coming years.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 More than half of total expenditure across Children’s Services is on direct delivery of care through demand-led budgets to the most vulnerable or highest need children. That includes support and care placements for children looked after (£71m), support and care for children with special educational needs and disabilities (£56.4m) and Home to School Transport for children with Special Educational Needs (£13.1m).
- 4.2 Given this pattern of high spend on the highest needs cohort, it is clear that our programme of transformation needs to focus on these major budget areas and follow the principles set out in the Norfolk Futures Strategy of offering our help early to prevent and reduce demand for specialist services and using evidence and data to target our work where it can make the most difference.
- 4.3 To deliver the programme the County Council has committed to invest between £12-15million in a range of projects across Children’s Services over a 4-year period. This one-off funding is being deployed in priority areas in order achieve

recurrent savings and cost reductions which will be sustained beyond the lifetime of the programme.

- 4.4 The presentation to Committee will include an overview and examples of how the one-off investment is being utilised to deliver sustainable savings. The detailed financial impacts of the transformation workstreams will then be reported to Children's Committee in October as part of the business planning process.

5. Background

- 5.1 The original business case for this Transformation Programme was agreed at Policy and Resources Committee in September 2017. The papers are available at <http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/637/Committee/21/Default.aspx>

Officer Contact

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