

Children's Service Committee

Report title:	Children's Services Transformation Programme
Date of meeting:	12 March 2019
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director 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

<p>Children's Services Leadership Team have committed to providing regular updates to Committee regarding the progress of the Transformation programme.</p> <p>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, impact to date and the latest proposals and plans</p> <p>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.</p>
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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.
- 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 Launch of the Norfolk Futures Transformation programme in the summer of 2017 and in particular for Children's Services in September 2017 when the business case for a major investment in transformational change was agreed at Policy and Resources Committee. 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 our most recent Ofsted inspection visit resulted in a judgement that the Authority had improved to an overall rating of 'requires improvement', with an outstanding Adoption Services and several other areas of good practice. At the start of this year the Department for Education wrote to the Local Authority confirming that their period of monitoring and support following the previous inadequate judgement was now ended – and noting the significant progress made and clear improvement and transformation plans in place.
- 1.5 A new and permanent senior leadership team for Children's Services has been in place since May 2018 driving forward these proposals and we are now seeing the initial impact in the first areas of the programme

2 Transformation Approach and Update

- 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

Inclusion

- Investing in Specialist Resource Bases
- Additional direct inclusion work
- Increasing the proportion of children with SEN who are supported to stay in mainstream settings
- Investing in independence – enabled by technology

Prevention and Early Intervention

- Transformed model at the front door enabling more demand to be managed preventatively and the social work teams to focus only on appropriate cases
- Enhancing Early Help – with a focus on building capacity in the partnership system
- Redesign of our support for families with young children

Effective Practice Model

- Creating a wider skill mix in teams
- Reducing the reliance on agency workers
- Investing in support and coordination capacity to free up workers to spend time directly with families
- Driving quality interventions through signs of safety and restorative practice

Edge of Care Support and Alternatives to Care

- New therapeutic service for families with children at the edge of care
- Turnaround short breaks alternatives to care provision
- A focus on family finding and building support networks from extended families

Managing the care market & creating the capacity we need

- A major investment in new special school provision
- Creating high-quality semi-independent provision for young people in care approaching adulthood
- Using behavioural science to redesign our approach to recruiting and supporting foster carers
- Enhanced fostering model – building a network of specialist capacity around foster carers to work with higher needs
- Developing a new model to support the specific needs of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People

- 2.3 Since the previous update to Committee in September 2018, these themes and projects have been taken forward at pace and in several areas such as the re-design of the Advice and Duty Service, Fostering and creation of Semi-independent provision we have completed implementation and are now seeing and monitoring the benefits. In other areas of the programme we have been developing additional business cases, analysis and implementation plans, with several initiatives such as the new Family Networks model and Enhanced Fostering service due to be launch in the coming weeks and months.
- 2.4 We know that the majority of the impact on demand and costs will begin to be seen from the middle of 2019 and into 2020, but the impacts from schemes to date is encouraging and starts to build a positive track record. An update presentation will be given to committee detailing the impact we can see from schemes which have gone live and covering the latest proposals from across the 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, Innovation and Performance Team and is overseen by the Shadow Corporate Board as well as being subject to regular Committee review. In addition we have created a small dedicated project and transformation team within Children's Services to ensure we have the capacity to deliver. This team has been fully in place since December 2018 and is already building a strong track record of project delivery.

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). Significant budget pressures are now apparent across these demand-led budgets.

- 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. We know that this will be a 3-5 year programme and that although there are some areas where we can achieve early impact, we also need to acknowledge that it will take time to address the demand and financial pressures and that this should be viewed as a medium to long term programme by the Authority.
- 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>

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If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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