

# DEVELOPING THE CHILDREN'S AGENDA IN HEREFORDSHIRE - CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

## PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CABINET

13TH JANUARY, 2005

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### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

To receive a report on the Change for Children and Local Performance Improvement Agenda and the next steps locally.

To agree arrangements which will support the change/improvement and the preparation for JAR (Joint Area Review) now provisionally set by the Audit Commission for autumn 2005.

### Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

### Recommendation

**THAT Cabinet agree:-**

- **to work with partners to establish a Children's Partnership Board and to agree this may well form the groundwork for a Herefordshire Children's Trust (as outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5);**
- **to agree in principal to set up a Change/Improvement/Development Team to support the Children's Services Directorate Leadership Team and the short-term investment needed;**
- **to identify, as part of the current budget considerations, the resources needed to meet the costs of the Change Team;**
- **to introduce lead roles for School-Strategy and Change, and Adult Social Care/Strategic Housing as described in paragraphs 13 and 14 (noting that the Cabinet Member for Children has already signed a decision notice to agree the Schools leadership role be undertaken by Mr. Ted. St. George, Head of Inspection Advice and School Performance). This approach was agreed, in principle, by Cabinet on 21st October, 2004.**

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Sue Fiennes, Director of Children's Services on 01432 260039

## Reasons

To keep Cabinet informed on the change programme looking ahead.

## Considerations

1. The Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes framework has now produced a template for a national and local change programme - including performance targets and measures (attached).
2. Herefordshire has now experienced the introductory conversation meeting with the Regional Change Advisor, CSCI Business Relationship Manager and the Children's Service Improvement Advisors (Education).
3. A self-assessment matrix was produced for the meeting (attached), on the readiness of the Council to move on Change for Children. This matrix was broadly agreed by the Regional Change Advisor before being report nationally.
4. There is an expectation that there will be a "Children's Trust" locally by 2006. Children's Trust arrangements will have four essential components:
  - professionals enabled and encouraged to work together in more integrated front-line services, built around the needs of children and young people;
  - common processes which are designed to create and underpin joint working;
  - a planning and commissioning framework which brings together agencies' planning, supported as appropriate by the pooling of resources, and ensures key priorities are identified and addressed; and
  - strong inter-agency governance arrangements, in which shared ownership is coupled with clear accountability.
5. The basis of Children's Trust arrangements can be determined locally. It is anticipated that the components described could and should be promoted and arranged by a new Children's Services Partnership Board. The feasibility of using this route is supported by the good track record of Partnership work in Herefordshire. Given that the Children Act 2004 gives a particular leadership role to Local Authorities in securing co-operation, it is necessary for Cabinet to support the direction of developing a Children's Partnership Board as a Children's Trust Approach, subject to proper discussions with key partners and stakeholders.
6. The priorities for the first year from January 2005 can be outlined as:-
  - Keeping the focus on outcomes for children
  - Creating a strong local partnership focused on wellbeing for children - a Children's Trust "approach".
  - Preparing for a Joint Area Review of Children's Services in Herefordshire.
  - Promoting and sustaining the right professional leadership in each key area.
  - Driving appropriate change to secure the next steps locally.

- Keeping services safe and ensuring further implementation of the Child Concern Model.
  - Promote early intervention and achievement alongside, quality and choice.
  - Clarify accountability and governance to ensure risk management.
7. The ECM - Change for Children document has been published and this may require a revision of the priorities. Further guidance documents are to be published through to September 2005, the majority coming by May 2005.
  8. In order to respond to the change programme and prepare for the provisional JAR date of autumn 2005, a change team needs to be established. The change team will report to the Children's Services Directorate. The CPA/JAR programme will be confirmed later in January 2005.
  9. The team should have a change manager, a "performance support" officer, current performance leads, information sharing project officer, secondment for at least a term of head/deputy head secondary schools and head primary school, and contribution from links to the group formed to co-ordinate the approach to inspections in the Children areas outside Social Care and make connections to CPA expectations.
  10. The performance assessment for Children's Social Care 2003-04 did fall in the November announcement, leading to a loss of a star overall. The focus was on re-registrations on the child protection register as well as life chances. The improvements needed were reported to Cabinet early this year in the CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) annual review letter.
  11. The education yearly stock-take did recognise the need to improve on school attendance and achievement for vulnerable children and children with complex needs (including looked after children).
  12. The performance improvement needs further attention both on direction and delivery, and this adds to the agenda of a change and improvement team. The children's social care direction requires increased local fostering resources and family support. This will be further outlined in a report to Cabinet later in January 2005.
  13. Enhanced interim roles to support the Interim Director of Children's Services and Director of Social Care & Strategic Housing (for the next year) and demonstrate the Council's commitment, need to be established for schools leadership and adult social care/strategic housing leadership. These need to be established immediately. Whilst these need to be evaluated, it is anticipated they would be evaluated within HOS 3, i.e. broadly in line with existing Head of Department roles.
  14. Consideration needs to be given to expanding CXMT to include the lead roles for School Improvement/Development and Adult Social Care/Strategic Housing. Whilst the Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing can hold the latter role, at least initially, because of her professional background, this will not be sustainable in the longer term. It may well have to be resolved pre the JAR. In the former case of schools, however, it is essential reassurance to schools that there should be professional representation of their interests at CXMT and that the school contribution to the Change for Children programme has a significant voice in the Council's arrangements.
  15. In addition, the new Children's Services Directorate will need to have head of profession roles for special needs and social care. It would seem appropriate to

scope these roles and include them in Head of Service reviews of salaries in 2005.

16. In order to enable the leadership role in adult social care/strategic housing to be effective, support is needed to change learning disability services. A contribution to a change manager role will be required.
17. The change programme needs to be understood and guided by both the Lead Member, Cabinet and Members more broadly.
18. The governance arrangements of the NHS and other Children's Programmes, including the voluntary and independent sectors, need to be part of the broader understanding, commitment and developments. The duty to co-operate must be present at strategic and front-line levels. This needs to build on the effective practice already in place in Herefordshire.

## **Alternative Options**

There are no alternative options

## **Risk Management**

The reputation of the Council in relation to CPA and the progress on the Children's Agenda needs to be high priority. The arrangements outlined would give the necessary capacity.

## **Consultees**

Not applicable.

## **Background Papers**

None identified.

## **Financial Assessment**

It is necessary to ensure a dedicated change team is appropriately resourced. Short-term ring-fenced investment is required. Appropriate team support costs and the support for change in learning disabilities would need to be added to the resources needed. The children's change team would be for 2 years (subject to review) the learning disability resources for 1 year (subject to review).