

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 4 APRIL  
2016**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with the opportunity to comment on the Commissioning Strategy for Children and Family Services, plus the 2016/17 commissioning intentions, prior to their presentation to the Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

**Background**

2. In February 2015, the Cabinet approved a four year strategy that set out a new approach to organisational commissioning. In April 2016, the Cabinet will be asked to approve the Council Plan of Commissioning Intentions. In support of this each Council department has produced a Commissioning Strategy and a 2016/17 set of commissioning intentions.
3. Each set of commissioning intentions is aligned to the four key themes contained within the Council Plan of Commissioning Intentions:
  - (a) Prevent need (for example, by providing information and advice) ;
  - (b) Reduce need (for example, by targeting families with time limited interventions to reduce their future level of need);
  - (c) Delay need (for example, preventing the need for statutory intervention);
  - (d) Meet need (ensuring that children have access to services when needed).
4. The commissioning intentions have been developed to meet the objectives set out in the Council's Strategic Plan:
  - Leadership and Transformation;
  - Enabling Economic Growth – A Thriving Leicester-shire Economy;
  - Better Care – Health and Social Care Integration;
  - Supporting Children and Families;
  - Safer Communities – A Better Environment/Place.

5. The Strategic Plan will be refreshed during 2016 to reflect the needs of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and as such the commissioning intentions are currently for one year only.

### **Children and Family Services Commissioning Strategy**

6. The Commissioning Strategy (Appendix A) sets out the department's vision, mission, and objectives. It reflects the statutory responsibilities that the Council is required to deliver, combined with principles that underpin the way in which services are organised and delivered.
7. The Commissioning Strategy uses performance data to inform planning, identifies evidence-based interventions that will best support children, young people and their families, and reviews performance through a quality assurance and improvement framework.
8. The existing performance monitoring and reporting framework, that is currently presented on a quarterly basis to the Committee, has been retained.

### **Children and Family Services Commissioning Intentions**

9. There are 15 high level priorities and 36 commissioning intentions.
10. With regard to the Council's four key themes, the 36 commissioning intentions are categorised as follows:
  - Prevent: 5
  - Reduce: 9
  - Delay: 10
  - Meet: 12

The balance of services across the themes reflects that:

- (a) the department primarily works with the most vulnerable children and young people, needing to meet their needs, often as their corporate parents;
- (b) previous actions have been taken to move a range of preventative, universal, services into other Council departments such as Public Health, and also to schools;
- (c) the reduction in resource over the past few years has meant that a large number of services previously offered by the department have been removed.

11. Changes in commissioning choices over the past few years have led to highly effective and innovative service delivery, for example:

- (a) Closing the Connexions Service and instead externally procuring services from an independent company, Prospects, on a Payment by Results basis, has led to Leicestershire's performance for young people in employment, education and training being one of the best in the country;
- (b) Closing the Key Stage 3 and 4 Pupil Referral Unit and instead commissioning partnerships of schools to manage behaviour support services has significantly reduced the numbers of secondary school aged pupils that have been excluded between 2013 and 2015;
- (c) Creating a co-located, integrated team with the police to respond to child sexual exploitation has removed the need for complicated information sharing systems, has improved and increased the level of response, and has attracted additional external funding for 2 years;
- (d) Centralising the procurement of children's centres services and reducing contracts from more than 50 to 3 has significantly reduced the cost of administration and reduced bureaucracy

12. The department will continue to look for opportunities to improve services, manage demand, and reduce cost through innovative commissioning arrangements.

### **Resource Implications**

13. Along with other County Council departments, the resources available to support the service delivery are diminishing and the need to ensure that the right services are commissioned from the best providers at the best price, and are available at the right time for the right children, young people and families is ever-more vital. As a result of the need to forward plan the next tranche of budget reductions, the departmental Commissioning Intentions are currently for 2016/17 only.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

None.

### **Officers to Contact**

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## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Children and Family Services Commissioning Strategy 2015/19.

Appendix B – Children and Family Services Commissioning Intentions 2016/17.

## **Equality and Human Rights Implication**

14. The majority of the department's work is around vulnerable children, young people and their families. As such, the department is reliant on other parts of the County Council, and relevant partner organisations, to commission universal prevention services.