



CABINET – 24 MARCH 2020

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE INVESTMENT PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval for a new model of residential provision for children's social care – the Children's Social Care Investment Plan – which has been developed by the Council with its partner Barnardo's via the Children's Innovation Partnership.
2. The Cabinet is also asked to approve the necessary funding for the development of the residential properties under the new model including the commissioning of an Assessment and Resource Team to work with children and young people in an outreach capacity and from the planned Hub of three assessment beds.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended -
 - (a) That the comments of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
 - (b) That the Children's Social Care Investment Plan as outlined in this report be approved;
 - (c) That £2.5m capital investment be allocated to the Children's Social Care Investment Plan to purchase:
 - (i) a Hub to house the Assessment and Resource Team and three assessment beds,
 - (ii) three multi-functional properties which can house up to two children/young people alongside staff accommodation.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. This model has been designed with the aim of providing the best outcomes for children and young people based on the findings of a comprehensive period of service design led by Barnardo's. It has been developed not as a savings initiative but as an opportunity to meet the requirements of the service and improve outcomes for children and young people through developing needs based commissioning, flexibility, and better placement matching and stability.
5. The capital investment will enable the Department to ensure effective care and support for children and young people with complex needs. It will enable care to be provided in County, rather than having to place children in expensive out-of-county placements.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on 3 March 2020 and its comments are set out in Part B of this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. The Cabinet approved the formation of the Children's Innovation Partnership on 6 July 2018, which would see the County Council co-design and co-deliver children's care services with a partner organisation, driving forward key elements of the Care Placement Strategy 2018-2021.
8. The Care Placement Strategy 2018-2021 is an overarching document which brings together key departmental strategies within the overall pathway of edge of care through to leaving care.

Resource Implications

9. The proposal requires the purchase and adaptation, or if not possible the design and build, of four properties. Based on market research, it is anticipated that this could cost up to £2.5m.
10. The Director of Children and Family Services has been invited to sit on the Social Care Investment Plan Board which oversees projects to which capital investment has been allocated to purchase social care properties. It is proposed that the capital investment required for this new model of provision would follow this governance process.
11. In addition to the model's capital cost requirement, there is likely to be annual ongoing revenue costs in the region of £1.9m. Financial and demand modelling has indicated that had this provision been available in the financial year 2019/20, usage would have been such that there could have been avoided costs of approximately £359,000 against this investment.
12. This proposed model specifically targets needs associated with placement provision for children requiring either Residential or 16 plus/supported

accommodation. The Department's current total projected revenue spend in 2019/20 across these two provision types totals approximately £15m. Therefore assuming ongoing costs of approximately £359,000 can be avoided and based on 2019/20 demand, potential spend could be reduced by 2.5%.

13. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. A copy of this report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council via the Members Digest.

Officer to Contact

Jane Moore
Director of Children and Family Services
Tel: 0116 30 52649
Email: jane.moore@leics.gov.uk

PART B

Background

15. The number of looked-after children has grown in recent years and this trend is expected to continue. By 2017 the County Council was accommodating 11.7% of these children in external residential placements and was under increasing pressure to source good-quality residential placements, particularly for children and young people with complex needs. It was this that prompted the development of a Care Placement Strategy and recognition of the need for a whole-system change.
16. In 2018, innovative work was undertaken by the County Council to explore the establishment of a partnership that would enable more creative working to design and develop services for children, young people and their families. In December 2018, following a tendering process, the County Council entered into a Children's Innovation Partnership with Barnardo's. This is enabling a level of flexibility and change not usually associated with public contracts.
17. The Partnership was tasked with carrying out a number of Design Briefs to bring about improvements in the areas covered by the Care Placement Strategy. The first of these areas was Residential Care, the proposals for which are the subject of this report.
18. The current 2019/20 Children's Social Care Placement budget stands at £30m. The current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sees £4.25m budget growth into this service area for 2020/21, growing to £13.6m budget growth by 2023/24. In turn, the MTFS has a savings requirement centred around reduction in Placements costs totalling £1.5m to be achieved by 2020/21, increasing to £3.6m by 2023/24. It is intended that the work undertaken around the Residential Design Brief is to support the department to both reduce/stabilise placement growth and to be in a better position to achieve its required MTFS savings requirements.

Drivers for Change

19. This proposal has been developed in response to the Residential Design Brief. It has not been developed as a savings initiative, but to meet the requirements of the service better and improve outcomes for children and young people through developing:
 - Needs-based commissioning, supporting the local market to better accommodate children who are currently being placed out of county at high cost.
 - Flexible beds within the multi-functional properties at a standard cost that add in extra support depending on the child's needs and help keep them in county.

- Better placements through the use of the assessment beds – getting it right for children and young people first time.
 - Better placement stability through ART support.
 - Keeping children in placements which best meet their needs and preventing breakdown with ART support.
20. Although these proposals are not aimed at producing savings it is anticipated that growth can be reduced as a result of having more local provision. Out of county placements are often significantly more expensive than in-county placements, and also result in significant travel costs for social workers. Additionally, placement breakdowns often lead to escalations of need and therefore increased cost of subsequent placements. This model will support the right placements to be made first time, reducing the number of placement breakdowns.

Residential Design Brief

21. A period of comprehensive design work was carried out between January and September 2019, led by Barnardo's. The design work analysed strengths, areas for development and opportunities within the County based on:
- i. Data analysis on the cohort of Leicestershire children in care conducted by data analysis company Machinable, focusing on demand, placement and process characteristics.
 - ii. Primary research conducted by the Barnardo's Service Design Team, with workshops involving subject experts from the County Council and Barnardo's, scheduled one-to-one interviews with professionals, and one-to-one interviews with eight young people who had current/previous experience of Residential Care both in and out of County.
 - iii. Secondary research conducted by Barnardo's national Policy and Research Team, considering national trends in policy and practice.
22. This design work led to the proposal of an asset-based solution for local provision in Leicestershire. The proposed solution contains three elements which will be delivered in two phases:
- Phase 1:
- Assessment and Resource Team (ART)
- Phase 2:
- Hub containing three assessment beds (to also house the ART)
 - Three multi-functional properties.

Phase 1: Implementation by September 2020

Assessment and Resource Team

23. The first element of the proposal is for Barnardo's to recruit to a new Assessment and Resource Team (ART). The team will contain specialist roles such as Educational Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist and Therapeutic Worker, and the staff will work as part of the team around the child, working closely with colleagues in other disciplines such as health, social care, and police.
24. The ART will work with young people in an outreach capacity. These young people could be in residential care, foster placements, adoptive placements, hospital, or living at home. The team will be able to work with up to 12 young people at a time, and will be focused on the most vulnerable young people. The team will ensure strong staff to child ratios, and the skills to provide the following types of support according to the presenting needs of the child:
 - Crisis intervention
 - Comprehensive assessment and care planning
 - Transitional support packages
 - Family work to facilitate a return home.
25. As well as working with up to 12 young people in an outreach capacity, the ART will be working with the young people in the Hub assessment beds (paragraphs 29 to 31 below).
26. The ART will also work closely with County Council services such as the Dedicated Placement Support Team. This will enable the teams to share learning and best practice.
27. The current Multi-Disciplinary Intervention Support Team Leicestershire (MISTLE) contract provided by Action for Children offers similar provision to the ART. This project will therefore be decommissioned and the children and young people currently supported within the MISTLE project will transfer to receiving ART support. The County Council, Barnardo's and Action for Children are working in collaboration to consider TUPE implications for current Action for Children staff and ensure continuity of service for these young people.
28. The current contract value of MISTLE is £450,000, compared with the annual value of ART of £411,840.

Phase 2: Implementation January 2021 – January 2022

Hub containing three Assessment Beds

29. The ART will be located in a Hub. This will also contain three assessment beds which will be supported by the ART and will be used to work to contain the anxiety and distress that children exhibit at the point of family or

placement breakdown. They will help the child to feel safe and emotionally contained through clear and consistent boundaries and predictable nurturing routines. This stabilising process will help children to build trust with the adults allowing them to explore their world safely. Within these nurturing routines they will be offered a balance of activities and primary play opportunities to keep them busy, aid their learning and development, and build on their sense of self.

30. The beds will be used for a period of assessment of need, delivered by the ART. This assessment period will allow for a placement to be found for each young person based on a thorough understanding of their needs. These beds could be for young people:
- with emotional and behavioural difficulties
 - with complex health and social care needs
 - who are young parents
 - who have unregulated behaviour
 - with high needs related to a delayed transfer of care
 - who are particularly at risk from going missing.
31. Following the assessment period, the ART will support each young person to transition into a new placement or to return home. Once the placement commences, the ART will continue to support the young person in an outreach capacity to provide consistency of support which research tells us is of great benefit to supporting positive outcomes.

Multi-Functional Properties

32. The third element of the proposal is the procurement of three buildings to be used as multi-functional properties. Each will be fully self-contained, multi-functional and double occupancy – each will be able to house up to two young people as well as staff accommodation. For some young people their needs may require single-occupancy, which would be a decision based on need.
33. One of these properties will be regulated to provide placements for children under 16. The other two properties will be initially unregulated, meaning they are only able to provide placements for young people aged over 16. The unregulated properties will work to a recognised kitemark of quality to give assurances but will not be limited to any specific kind of provision and can therefore be used flexibly according to the needs of the young people.
34. After an interim period of 6-12 months, the demand and usage of the two unregulated properties will be reviewed. If it is clear that there is consistent demand for a particular type of provision, one or both of these properties could be registered for a specific cohort of young people. This will be kept under review.
35. It is important to note that these properties will be used to place looked after children and will be appropriately staffed; they are not proposed as rental accommodation.

Financial and Demand Modelling

36. Financial and demand modelling has indicated that had this provision been available in the financial year 2019/20 approximately £359,000 would have been saved against the initial investment.
37. As provision will be needs-led, usage will be dependent on each cohort of looked after children. A great advantage of the provision being delivered by Barnardo's through the Children's Innovation Partnership is that it will be fully scalable; that is, if demand is greater than the available provision, the model could be expanded through recruiting additional staff to the ART and/or investing in additional properties. If demand falls (considered unlikely) there will be an opportunity to scale down the model, or sell the provision (placements) to other local authorities. Initial conversations have taken place through the Regional Strategic Commissioning Group, and it is already evident that there is significant interest in this.
38. The £2.5m capital investment is to purchase and adapt, or if not possible then design and build, the four properties described in paragraphs 29 – 35.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee Comments

39. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 3 March 2020 and supported the proposals.

Conclusion

40. This service has been designed by the Children's Innovation Partnership to meet the needs of the children and young people in care in Leicestershire. It will enable the Department to ensure effective provision to the most vulnerable children in Leicestershire and at an agreed cost. This will allow for children to be placed in the right placements first time and receive the most appropriate support tailored to their needs and improve placement stability.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

41. An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening was undertaken and concluded that the overall impact of this work would likely be positive.
42. EHRIA screenings, and if required full assessments, will be carried out at the appropriate time for individual properties. These will be driven by intelligence and involve engagement and consultation with local and strategic stakeholders. They will be informed by outcomes achieved and lessons learned from previous property refurbishments.

Environmental Implications

43. Environmental implications will be considered in the procurement of all four properties.
44. Where appropriate, the Environmental Implications Tool developed by the Climate Action Team will be used to support decision-making.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

45. This proposal has been developed through the Children's Innovation Partnership and if approved will also be delivered through the Partnership. A Children's Innovation Partnership Board is established and operational, including key stakeholders from Leicestershire County Council and Barnardo's, including Elected Members.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet: 6 July 2018 – Children's Innovation Partnership

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s138925/Childrens%20Innovation%20Partnership.pdf>

This page is intentionally left blank