

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021**

**CHILDREN'S INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP (CIP)**

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

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Children's Innovation Partnership (CIP).

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. Local Authorities are responsible for the most vulnerable children living within its borders. There is a duty of 'sufficiency' that requires Local Authorities and partners to ensure that, through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all children in care are available locally or that there is a plan in place to move towards that position. This duty is carried out in accordance with the Children Act 1989. Leicestershire also aims to provide the right service at the right time (including placement/care), as set out in the Care Placement Strategy 2018-2021.
3. The CIP and related projects do not require a change to a Plan/Strategy within the Policy Framework.

**Background**

4. In 2017 Leicestershire County Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out that the authority needed to save £54m by 2020/21, £3.7m of which needed to be achieved within children's social care. Alongside this, the number of looked after children (LAC) in Leicestershire was set to grow which was projected to result in an estimated cost increase of £14.7m in 2021/22.
5. Poor market sufficiency and an inflexible market approach combined with excess demand for beds led to a seller's market. As a result, nationally it was becoming increasingly difficult for local authorities to influence the market.

6. It was identified that in order to develop whole-system change, the expertise of an external partner was needed to work alongside the Children and Family Services Department. The challenge was to develop a contractual model that complied with procurement regulations whilst providing the flexibility to respond to changing needs and opportunities. A two-tier model was conceived, comprising a collaboration agreement as a framework for governance and the design process, alongside the provision of options for the delivery or co-delivery of services by the partner or other providers.
7. In December 2018, Barnardo's was awarded the Children's Innovation Partnership contract for up to a ten-year term, renewed on an annual basis. A Children's Innovation Partnership Board (CIP) was established, including senior leaders from both organisations and the Lead Member for Children and Family services, to provide governance and challenge.
8. The key objectives of the CIP were to co-design services by sharing expertise and knowledge in the delivery of innovative solutions, contribute to transformational change through new and shared service delivery models, to co-deliver services that are focused on outcomes and value for money, to co-invest in providing additional resources and to review and develop new ways of working, and to develop the system leadership and collaboration between different organisations necessary to drive innovative systems change.
9. The CIP has been in operation since December 2018 and was recently approved to continue into Year 3.
10. Key to the success of the partnership to date has been the direct focus on delivery of outcomes and bringing about improvements to services. The golden thread has been the sharing of expertise between the two organisations and other partners, and throughout the approach has been centred around being flexible, responsive, and there has been a strong emphasis on a learning culture.
11. Relationships have been key in establishing and maintaining the partnership and its momentum. Building these genuine relationships have allowed the partnership to develop as successfully as it has done. Relationships at all levels have also been strengthened through the CIP Board, which has been an effective group with excellent representation and commitment from colleagues across both organisations.
12. Achievements to date include the commitment to working together with a shared vision, shared values, understanding of requirements, and a focus on outcomes. The partnership has enabled Leicestershire to benefit from a number of achievements which would not have occurred without the partnership; almost £2m has been achieved through bids for funding to deliver new services to children and families including:
  - a) The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme in 2019.
  - b) A pilot project delivering Family Group Conferences
  - c) A project delivering the Advanced Life Skills programme in Leicestershire schools

- d) The co-production with Leicestershire County Council of a new model of residential care which includes developing residential provision in Leicestershire for Leicestershire children. This includes the acquisition of a number of properties to be developed to meet the needs of certain groups of children and young people:
- i) Property 1: Acquired in December 2020 to deliver residential care for children up to 16 years of age
  - ii) Property 2: Acquired in December 2020 to deliver residential care for children over 16 years of age
  - iii) Property 3: Commencement of development in January 2021 of a third property to deliver Family (parent-child) residential care
  - iv) Property 4: Authorisation of plans to develop an assessment residential care unit
  - v) Creation of an assessment and therapeutic team (Assessment and Resource Team) which went live in December 2020
13. The Partnership also received external recognition through articles in national publications and achieving highly commended in the Innovation category at the GO Awards. Detailed descriptions of these projects can be found in Appendix 1.
14. Financial implications of the new model for residential care (Projected Savings) are as follows:
- a. Property 1: Residential care for children up to 16 years of age  
 The overall cost of the new scheme is expected to be £431k, comprising up to £365k for the purchase of the property, £11k fees and approximately £55k for estimated redecoration and modifications including the installation of a sprinkler system. The works required will be significantly less if a domestic mist system can be used as an alternative.  
  
 Revenue savings for the property are projected to be £82k per annum for three placements, achieved through a reduction of commissioned placement costs and the associated reduced social worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and Quality Assurance time and expenses of not having to travel out of county. The difference in the Barnardo's providing the care costs compared to the current average costs for these young people is £183 per person per week. Costs have been included in the assessment for property running and maintenance costs. No capital appreciation has been factored in but a retained asset has been assumed available for re-sale at the current market value £365k if no longer required.  
  
 Based on these prudent assumptions, the proposed financial evaluation can be summarised below for each property with a payback of five years.
  - b. Property 2: Residential care for children over 16 years of age  
 The overall cost of the new scheme is expected to be £437k, comprising up to £385k for the purchase of the property, £12k fees

and approximately £40k for fire regulatory works. The works required will be significantly less if a domestic mist system can be used as an alternative.

Revenue savings for the property are projected to be £188k per annum for three 16+ placements, achieved through a reduction of commissioned placement costs and the associated reduced social worker, IRO and QA time and expenses of not having to travel out of county.

The 16+ cohort of young people often have the most challenging needs and therefore the higher cost placements, averaging £5,117 per week per person for the current cohort and £5,985 per week per person for those children about to turn 16 next year. The equivalent costs of providing this property and Barnardo's providing the care is expected to save £136k per annum (based on weekly savings per person of £1,164 and assuming 75% occupancy) and £52k for the avoided travel time and expenses. Running costs and property maintenance have been included in the costing.

No capital appreciation has been factored in but a retained asset has been assumed available for re-sale at the current market value £385k if no longer required.

Based on these prudent assumptions, the proposed financial evaluation can be summarised below with a payback within 2.5 years.

c. Property 3: Family (parent-child) residential care

The capital budget requirement to develop this property is £549k including major refurbishment costs, contingency and fees. This includes an additional 10% contingency for any additional issues which may need to be resolved, and 4.5% for annual inflation.

The internal asset transfer value of the currently owned County Council property is £320k making the total investment cost £869k. The retained value of the asset will be in the region of £600k which could create a future capital receipt if the service is no longer required, reducing the net investment to £369k.

The annual net revenue savings are £247k pa as calculated below, achieving a payback within two years. The service and running costs are estimated at £296k per annum based on estimated property running costs, maintenance and the service provision expected from Barnardo's (on a block contract basis) who have provided the care estimates. This compares to the £543k costs of continuing to commission this on a do-nothing basis, including the alternative cost of commissioning the equivalent service, which is £480k, with additional savings from reduced social worker and independent reviewing officer time and travel expenses having this provision locally compared to out of county placements, which are in the

majority currently. The estimated savings for staff and expense savings is another £63k per annum.

This creates the annual total revenue saving of £247k pa and with capital asset appreciation, achieves an overall payback within two years (four years based on the gross investment).

d. Property 4: Assessment residential care unit

The cost of providing this service, including the property costs, is expected to be in the region of £1.1m based on the detailed resource costs provided by Barnardo's. Based on key assumptions made, the proposed financial evaluation can be summarised below with a payback within five years. The County Council will also still retain the land and newly created buildings for alternative uses or re-sale at a later date.

15. To support the work, current CIP secondments have been agreed to extend until 30 November 2021. By the end of 2021 two of the residential homes will be fully functional and the Family Residential Centre and Assessment Unit/Hub will be functional by mid-2022. Going forward, the focus will be on implementation/delivery of the residential model, impact (outcomes for children and savings) and future opportunities.

**Background Papers**

16. None

**Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

17. None

**Officer to Contact**

Jane Moore, Director of Children and Family Services

[Jane.Moore@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Moore@leics.gov.uk)

Tel: 0116 305 2649

Sharon Cooke, Assistant Director, Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care

[Sharon.Cooke@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Sharon.Cooke@leics.gov.uk)

Tel: 0116 305 5479

Nicci Collins, Deputy Assistant Director

[Nicci.Collins@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Nicci.Collins@leics.gov.uk)

Tel: 0116 305 4504

**List of Appendices**

18. Appendix 1: Detailed descriptions of projects

**Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

19. CIP and the related projects are considered a positive adjustment and will bring greater benefit to children and their families, specifically enable children with very complex needs to be cared for within their communities or close to their communities, with continuity of services such as remaining in their school, college and continuing with services for example through CAMHS or local health provision.

## Appendix 1 - Detailed Descriptions of the Projects

### Holiday Activities & Food Programme

#### **Background**

In 2018 the government announced a programme of work to explore how best to ensure more children from disadvantaged families benefit from enrichment activities and healthy meals during the school holidays. In December of that year the Department for Education (DfE) invited organisations to bid for grant funding to take on the role of co-ordination of free holiday provision for children eligible for free school meals during the summer holidays.

#### **How did the opportunity begin?**

As part of the CIP, in early 2019 Barnardo's successfully submitted a grant application to the DfE for £798,000 to deliver local co-ordination of free holiday activities and healthy food for disadvantaged children during the 2019 summer holidays. Barnardo's took a partnership approach to this grant opportunity and developed a network of Improvement Partners:

- Leicestershire County Council
- Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL)
- Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport (LRS)

The Improvement Partners then offered, via the Shire Grants portal, an opportunity for local providers to bid for local grants to deliver HAF to local children. The eligibility criteria for the grant was to provide services to those children who were eligible for free school meals.

This was an amazing opportunity to 'reach' a significant number of Leicestershire's children and families. The aim was for children (and, where appropriate, their parents) who attended this provision to:

- have access to and eat healthy food over the summer holidays
- be more active over the summer holidays
- take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character, wellbeing and other skills
- access safe provision
- access activities aimed at reducing social isolation
- be more engaged with school and other local services and to have greater knowledge and awareness of local free holiday provision

#### **How did the partnership shape the journey?**

As Barnardo's were in partnership with Leicestershire County Council, Barnardo's supported with the development of the funding bid as they have more experience as an organisation of submitting bids. This was of great benefit and is the reason that the funding was achieved, as the timescales for this bid submission and mobilisation were incredibly tight. This was not helped by the fact that Leicestershire schools begin their summer holidays around two weeks prior to the majority of schools in the country, so this meant that the team had an even shorter amount of time to prepare.

Once the money had been secured, Barnardo's made the decision that they did not want to deliver the programme themselves as this was not felt to be in

the spirit of the CIP. Instead, they chose to bring together a number of partners and provide grants to local organisations that ran, or wanted to run, holiday clubs. A partnership was developed between Barnardo's and LRS, and it was agreed that LRS would take on project management of the programme with Barnardo's taking responsibility for the grant management of the programme.

The CIP provided the context for this true partnership to be achieved. The Leicestershire HAF was one of the only areas delivering in the country who had never delivered the project before; delivery could not have been achieved without the support, dedication and commitment of all those involved.

### **How did it feel?**

An Impact Report was developed on the programme, which demonstrates the reach of the programme across Leicestershire. Some of the highlights were:

Suppliers offered 1904 places, equating to providing 30,464 meal opportunities and 121,856 hours of activity opportunities. There is a recognition that not all of these opportunities were taken up, and there has been some learning to share with the DfE.

Engagement with 2023 individuals who are eligible for free school meals, with many of the programmes also opening up to more children and young people who were not eligible for free school meals, as they had secured additional funding or offered paid places.

Improvement workshops were offered to support suppliers including Physical Activity and Nutrition. 95% of attendees rated the content of the workshops as good and very good.

Quality assurance visits were carried out during the programme to ensure that all providers were delivering against the minimum operating standards. All sessions were observed as having a friendly and welcoming environment with approachable and enthusiastic staff. General feedback was that everyone seemed happy and included; it was great to see the children sitting together and chatting at lunch; they were all engaged with multiple activities and had fun. New friendships were developed and the mix of ages improved social skills across different age groups.

It was important to partners that children's voice and opinions were captured, so 403 children were asked during the quality assurance visits if they were enjoying the holiday programme. 82% said that they felt happy, with 11% unsure and 6% unhappy.

## **Family Group Conferencing**

### **Background**

In May 2019, the Department for Education (DfE) announced their Supporting Families: investing in practice programme which was looking to work with up to 40 local authorities to test two projects from the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, one of which was Family Group Conferencing (FGC). The overall programme budget for this was up to £15m. The initiative was



developed to compliment the Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Programme by supporting families to work with practitioners and, where safe to do so, keep children from entering care through the implementation of targeted interventions. The DfE developed this programme, working with the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWC), whose role was to oversee randomised control trials to gather robust and usable evidence on their effectiveness in keeping children and parents together. Daybreak (a voluntary organisation who deliver FGCs) were also involved as a partner to help ensure effective implementation of the model.

### **How did the opportunity begin?**

The opportunity to bid for this funding was only available to local authorities. As Leicestershire was in the CIP with Barnardo's, Barnardo's provided support in the development of the bid which enabled Leicestershire to benefit from Barnardo's expertise in bid writing. The bid was developed and submitted in June 2019, and Leicestershire received confirmation that it had been successful in July, with the successful local authorities formally announced in August 2019.

Leicestershire County Council was awarded £234,600 for 18 months, based on 204 referrals with 50% being offered an FGC on a random control basis. This random control trial is in place for each of the projects nationally and allows for evaluation to take place through tracking outcomes for children and families who both are and are not offered the opportunity for an FGC. This will result in an overall evaluation report, which can be used alongside Leicestershire and Barnardo's internal evaluation to ensure effective demonstration of impact.

Northamptonshire County Council also bid for funding for this project and were successful but were unable to source a delivery partner. They approached Leicestershire County Council and Barnardo's to see whether Barnardo's could deliver in Northamptonshire as well, under the terms and conditions of the CIP. This was agreed. Northamptonshire were awarded £514,212 for 18 months, based on 462 referrals with 50% being offered an FGC on the same random control trial basis.

The FGC project involves working with families at the point of pre-court proceedings. The FGC co-ordinators work with the close and extended family network of the child/sibling group to support the family to develop their own safety plan to keep the child/siblings at home.

The FGC team were ready to go live by the planned start date of 1st April, but due to the impact of Covid-19 the start date was delayed until 1st October 2020.

### **Youth Endowment Fund**

The Youth Endowment Fund was established in 2019 with a £200m endowment from the Home Office and run by Impetus, in partnership with the Early Intervention Foundation and Social Investment Business. The purpose was to allocate funding to projects across England and Wales to help prevent youth offending by intervening early to stop children getting dragged into crime. The intention was to build the evidence base to determine what works

and support improved outcomes for children and young people. There was a commitment for each project to be evaluated to build and share knowledge of the types of interventions which are most effective at preventing young people from being drawn into crime and violence.

Barnardo's supported Leicestershire County Council to develop the bid to the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF), again enabling Leicestershire to benefit from the experience of Barnardo's colleagues in writing bids. The bid was submitted in July 2019 and Leicestershire County Council received notification that it had been successful in September 2019, with the successful areas formally announced in October 2019.

Leicestershire County Council was awarded £486,165 to deliver the Advanced LifeSkills programme in 6 Leicestershire secondary schools, with the aim of reducing youth violence. This amount included £100,000 for an evaluation partner, which was Sheffield Hallam University. The LifeSkills programme works with secondary school young people to grow and develop their attitudes to making healthy choices in life, including about involvement with gangs and violence; resisting peer pressure; and keeping themselves safe.

The programme offers opportunities to learn, discuss and ask questions about difficult issues. Children and young people who take part in the programme benefit from fun, useful activities to help change their attitudes, cope better and to stand up for themselves/others. They are able to try out new ways of dealing with something that is worrying them in a safe space before being confronted with the issue for real. They learn to make decisions and understand more about the consequences to every decision made.

Delivery commenced in January 2020 as planned, but due to the impact of Covid-19 and the closure of schools this delivery had to pause from March 2020. During the remainder of 2020, the LifeSkills team have remained in close contact with schools in a supporting role. The team have created LifeSkills at home resources which school staff shared with pupils whilst the schools were closed. These covered a range of topics from fun activities around communication to exercises on anxiety and managing emotions.

The team have also continued to have positive engagement with all 6 schools and have supported staff with resources for children who were anxious to return to schooling on site. They also provided toolkits on trauma informed whole school wellbeing. The team also worked with the schools to develop plans for delivery to recommence.

For more feedback from children and families, staff and partners, please follow this link to view a video:

<https://animoto.com/play/wJd6lmn0hQohN3rMheiAVA>

## **Residential Design Brief**

### **Background**

When the CIP was first established, the model was for the CIP to work on number of Design Briefs, which would involve specific Design Teams from across both organisations being tasked with a particular area of the

department to investigate and undertake a period of service design work to develop solutions. The first of these was the Residential Design Brief.

### **How did the opportunity begin?**

The Residential Design Team were tasked to undertake:

- Further analysis of current residential data to understand why young people were being placed out of county, why placements were breaking down, and identify what constitutes a successful placement
- Understand themes of need and how this matches to market availability, identifying challenges in sourcing placements
- Understand local sufficiency issues, as it had been identified that there were more than enough residential homes in Leicestershire, but less than 50% of Leicestershire County Council's young people were placed in them
- Identify local gaps in provision
- Identify creative solutions to respond to those gaps

The model includes:

- **Assessment & Resource Team (ART):** to provide therapeutic support to children and young people, either to support their current placement or to support effective transition into an appropriate placement to meet their needs. The ART started delivery on 1st December 2020
- **ART Hub:** A Hub property to house the ART, as well as providing multi-purpose space for use for multi-disciplinary meetings, training, direct work etc. This is estimated to be ready in May 2022
- **Assessment Bed Unit:** a property to provide three placements, which will be short-term to allow for a period of comprehensive assessment in order to find a placement which will effectively meet the needs of the young person. This is estimated to go live in May 2022
- **Family Residential Centre:** a property to provide three parent and child placements (or one parent and child and one family placement), to allow for a period of parenting assessment. This is estimated to go live in October 2021
- **Under 16 Residential Provision:** a property to provide three placements for children and young people under the age of 16. This is estimated to go live at the end of 2021
- **16+ Residential Provision:** a property to provide three placements for children and young people aged 16 and over. This is estimated to go live at the end of 2021.

All elements of this model will be supported by the ART. The properties will be owned by Leicestershire County Council, and the ART and residential teams will be managed by Barnardo's.

As well as the design period, the partnership has been instrumental in the mobilisation of this model. Leicestershire County Council and Barnardo's colleagues have worked closely together to develop staffing structures for each element of the provision, and to recruit the ART and begin taking referrals.