



LEICESTERSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 5TH SEPTEMBER 2001

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

CHILDREN'S FUND

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Commission of the decision of the Cabinet to respond to the invitation from the Children and Young People's Unit of the DfES to bid for Children's Fund monies for 2003-2004.

Background

2. The Children's Fund, launched in November 2000, is part of the Government's agenda for children and families and is aimed at overcoming poverty and helping children and young people at risk of social exclusion. A copy of the report considered by the Cabinet on 28th August is attached.

Decision of the Cabinet

3. The Cabinet agreed the recommendations set out in paragraph 2 of the attached report subject to an additional recommendation that the membership of the Joint Strategic Planning Team be expanded to include two elected members on the Team.

Recommendation

4. The Commission is asked to note the decision of the Cabinet on this matter and indicate whether it wishes submit any comments thereon.

Officers to Contact:

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CABINET – TUESDAY 28 AUGUST 2001

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

CHILDREN'S FUND

PART A

Purpose of Report

2. The purpose of this report is to make recommendations in response to the invitation from the Children and Young People's Unit of the DfES to bid for Children's Fund monies for 2003-2004.

Recommendations

2. Members are recommended to:
 - i) agree that an expression of interest should be submitted to DfES by 1 October 2001
 - ii) note that the Government's continuing emphasis on partnership in respect of service planning, bidding for funds, and overseeing delivery does nothing to enhance the accountability and role of locally elected members but nevertheless
 - iii) agree that the Joint Strategic Planning Team for Children's Services should form the basis of the Children's Fund Partnership
 - iv) agree that the Joint Strategic Planning Team is asked to recruit additional representatives as required by Children's Fund Guidance
 - v) agree that the Joint Strategic Planning Team be responsible, through sub-groups as appropriate, for the initial planning and proposals for the Development Grant and for the post of Programme Manager
 - vi) agree that the Joint Strategic Planning Team should nominate 10 people to attend the Children's Fund regional seminar
 - vii) agree that the Local Authority would be willing to be the lead agency and accountable body

Reasons for recommendations

3. The third wave of Children's Fund offers an opportunity to bid for an additional £1.1 million to provide services in Leicestershire's most deprived communities. DfES guidance requires that an existing Partnership should be used to deliver Children's Fund objectives. The timescales for submitting an expression of interest

and bids for the Development Grant bid and for funding for the Programme Manager are set by DfES.

Timescales

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-------------|
| 4. | Cabinet | 28 August |
| | Scrutiny Commission | 5 September |

Policy Framework

5. If a Leicestershire Children's Fund bid is successful it will contribute to objectives in the:
- Corporate Plan/Community Strategy
 - Children's Services Plan
 - Education Development Plan
 - Behaviour Support Plan
 - Early Years Development and Childcare Plan
 - Youth Justice Plan
 - Health Improvement Programme

This report has cross-departmental implications. The Director of Social Services has therefore been consulted and his comments incorporated in the report.

Resource Implications

6. The maximum grant that may be bid for from Children's Fund for Leicestershire for the year 2003-2004 is £1.1m. This is a 100% grant with no requirement for matched funding from other County Council monies. The grant also allows for some funding for development work (£20,000 or 2% of the first year allocation - whichever is higher) and between £35,000 and £45,000 for the salary of a Programme Manager to be available from April 2002. This means that whilst County Council officers will need to contribute to the bid preparation, there will not be a significant diversion of existing County Council resources in gathering data and making proposals for this programme which is essentially new work, although complementary to existing plans. The Programme Manager post would need to be a one year fixed term contract in the first instance. It should be noted that the person appointed may have employment rights and that the allocation of Children Fund money should take account of this to offset any liability that would fall to the lead agency.
7. The County Treasurer has been consulted on the resource implications of this report.

Members Advised under Sensitive Issues Procedure

None

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PART B

Background

8. The Children's Fund, launched in November 2000, is part of the Government's agenda for children and families and is aimed at overcoming poverty and helping children and young people at risk of social exclusion. There are two elements to Children's Fund, the Preventative Fund and the smaller Local Network Fund. Local Network funding is for the age group 0-19 and solely for voluntary groups. Leicester Charity Link administers the Local Network finance in Leicester and Leicestershire on behalf of the Government. (The Local Network funding in Leicester and Leicestershire for 2001-2002 is £266,000.) This paper relates to the Preventive Fund only. Three waves of preventive funding have so far been announced for 2001-2002, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. Leicestershire falls within the third wave for 2003-2004.
9. The preventative element of Children's Fund is intended to address the gap in services for young people at risk of social exclusion by providing increased and better co-ordinated services for 5-13 year olds and their families. The key objectives and sub-objectives of the Children's Fund are set out in Appendix 1. The Children's Fund is being developed and implemented by the Children and Young People's Unit and there will be Regional Managers attached to Government Offices to support the partnerships administering the fund at a local authority level.
10. Local authorities are being invited to facilitate the establishment of a local Partnership to develop proposals for a Children's Fund bid and to oversee the delivery of these proposals if the bid is successful. The DfES guidance makes clear that an existing Partnership should be used as the basis for the Children Fund Partnership. Such an approval obscures the role of the County Council which has statutory responsibilities for the welfare and education of young people, and in practice restricts the role of locally elected members in the decision making process.
11. For local authorities in the third wave the deadline for an expression of interest is 1 October 2001. With this expression of interest the authority must also nominate ten people from statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community groups that are involved in the planning and delivery of children's services to attend a regional seminar.
12. There is recognition in the DfES guidance that the success of programmes supported by the Children's Fund will depend on thorough preparation and planning. To support this there is an opportunity to bid for a Development Grant and funding for a Programme Manager in advance of the start of the programme.

Implications for Leicestershire

13. Leicestershire has been invited to bid for a Children's Fund grant of up to £1.1 million for 2003-2004. This is a 100% grant with no requirement for matched funding from other County Council monies. The grant will be agreed for one year in the first instance. The Government has indicated that confirmation of funding beyond this period will be given next year in the light of the next Government spending round. The local partnerships are encouraged, however, to develop proposals for 4-5 year period. The grant allows for some funding for development work (£20,000 or 2% of the first year allocation – whichever is higher) and between £35,000 and £45,000 for the salary of a Programme Manager, to be available from April 2002. The Programme Manager post would need to be a one year fixed term contract in the first instance. It should be noted that the person appointed may have employment rights and that the allocation of Children Fund money should take account of this to offset any liability that would fall to the lead agency.
14. The timescales for Leicestershire bidding as a 'third wave' authority are as follows:
- 1 October 2001**
- Expression of interest and nomination of 10 people to attend regional seminar submitted to DfES.
- August – November 2001 (may extend to March 2002)**
- Children's Fund Partnership formed
 - Initial mapping, consultation and identification of gaps in provision undertaken
 - Plans drawn up for use of the Development Grant
 - Job description and advert prepared for Programme Manager
- 15 November 2001 – 31 March 2002**
- Application submitted for Development Grant and Programme Manager
- January 2002**
- Regional seminar
- February 2002**
- 1st "Health Check" on progress of proposals by Children and Young People's Unit
- April 2002**
- Development Grant and funding for Programme Manager released (if agreed)
- June 2002**
- 2nd "Health Check" on progress of proposals by Children and Young People's Unit
- October 2002**
- 3rd "Health Check" on progress of proposals by Children and Young People's Unit

31 December 2002

- Submission of final plan

January-February 2003

- Assessment of Plan

February-March 2003

- Feedback

April 2003

- Payment of grant (if agreed)

15. If Leicestershire wishes to take advantage of this opportunity to bid for Children's Fund a decision will need to be made about the most appropriate local partnership to take responsibility for developing the proposals. The existing Joint Strategic Planning Team for Children's Services has been reviewing its membership and role in preparation for the changes in Children's Planning and the introduction of the Children's Fund. This would be an ideal group to operate as the partnership for the Children's Fund. The group could develop also into the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (a group that Government has encouraged as a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership). The current membership of this group is attached as Appendix 2. As the changes in the Health structures progress it would be appropriate for the Chief Executive to discuss with the Health Authority, the health representation on this group. Given the range of plans on which the Joint Strategic Planning Team may ultimately be required to advise, it may be necessary for a sub-group or sub-groups to be established to prepare Children's Fund proposals for the approval of the full team/partnership.
16. In order to meet Children's Fund criteria, the group will need some additional members to ensure that faith groups, young people and local communities are fully represented, but it already has a core membership covering the voluntary and statutory sectors. It may be appropriate for members of the County Council to be represented on this restructured group.
17. It is recommended that the Joint Strategy Planning Team:
 - i) be asked to recruit additional members as required by the Children's Fund Guidance
 - ii) be responsible, through sub-groups as appropriate, for the initial planning and for proposals for the Development Grant and for the post of Programme Manager
 - iii) nominate 10 people to attend the regional seminar on the Children's Fund

18. Decisions will need to be taken about the lead agency (within which for example the Programme Manager would be employed and managed) and the accountable body (which would manage the finance). It is proposed that the Joint Strategic Planning Team be asked to make recommendations on these issues as part of the initial planning process. Members are asked to consider whether the local authority should offer to be the lead agency and accountable body.

OBJECTIVE OF THE CHILDREN'S FUND

Key Objectives:

1. To ensure that in each area there is an agreed programme of effective interventions that pick up on early signs of difficulty, identify needs and introduce children and young people and their families to appropriate services, ensuring:
 - close and co-operative working between all local relevant agencies
 - clear responsibility for the management of each child's or family's involvement
 - services are sufficiently flexible and accessible to ensure informal and self-referrals

2. To ensure that children and young people who have experienced early signs of difficulties receive appropriate services in order to gain maximum life-chance benefits from educational opportunities, health care, and social care and to ensure good outcomes by:
 - increasing provision of the right kind of preventive services which will increase the children's life chances through combating problems before they escalate
 - ensuring services are accessible to children and young people and their families particularly those most in need
 - actively involving children, young people, families as service users, in planning and delivering services and in creating individual packages of support
 - empowering children, young people, families and communities to take responsibility and control of solutions for themselves

Sub-Objectives:

1. To promote attendance in the schools attended by the majority of the 5-13 year olds living in the area

2. To achieve overall improved educational performance among children and young people aged 5-13

3. To ensure that fewer young people aged between 10 and 13 commit crime and fewer children between 5 and 13 are victims of crime

4. To reduce child health inequalities among those children and young people aged 5-13 who live within the area

5. To ensure that children, young people, their families and local people feel that the preventive services being developed through the partnerships are accessible

6. To develop services which are experienced as effective by individual and clusters of children, young people and families commonly excluded from gaining the benefits of public services that are intended to support children and young people at risk of social exclusion from achieving their potential
7. To involve families in building the community's capacity to sustain the programme and thereby create pathways out of poverty

JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

NAME	TITLE
Mike Alexander	Acting Chief Executive Melton/Rutland/Harborough PCT
Louise Appleby	Joint Planning Officer CVS Community Partnerships
Mr C Blackler	PCG General Manager Heathlane Surgery
Christine Cassell	SEN Policy Officer Education Department
Jan Flaiwith	Community Safety Officer Room 204 Chief Executive's Department
Bob Foster	Strategy Children's Manager – Leics Health Leicestershire Health Authority HQ
Richard Graves	Principal Housing Manager Charnwood Borough Council
Mr J Gulliver	PCG General Manager Alpha House
Phil Hawkins	Youth Offending Services Manager Room 430 Chief Executive's Department
Ms R Langtry	PCG General Manager Ashby & District Hospital
Helen Lincoln	Assistant Director (Children & Families) Social Services Department
Ms S Lock	PCG General Manager Highgate Medical Centre
Helen Millar	Service Manager Quality Protects Social Services Department

NAME	TITLE
Anne Payne	Manager Special Needs Family Support Centre
Anne-Marie Peat	Community Safety Officer Room 204 Chief Executive's Department
Nina Phipps	PCG General Manager The Limes Medical Centre
Duncan Roberts	Learning & Skills Council
Mr N Small	PCG General Manager
Julia Swan	Assistant Director of Education
Steve Town	Manager of Community Services North West Leicestershire District Council
Vacant	Planning Officer
Rob Wade	Service Manager CCOPs Social Services Department
Bronwen Whittaker	General Manager Children's Services Leicestershire & Rutland Healthcare Trust
Kate Wilding	Youth Work Co-ordinator Learning & Achievements

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