



Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes Assistant Director Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	14 January 2011
Subject:	Children's Services Core Offer

Summary:

This paper outlines a series of proposals which will enable Children's Services to deliver the required budget reductions as part of the Government's spending review. Children's Services have radically reviewed its current service delivery model and in proposing a revised core offer, seeks to maintain services where we have a statutory duty, seeks to protect front line services especially our safeguarding services and maintain a level of preventative services to sustain or prevent an increase in the numbers of children requiring statutory safeguarding services.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

1. Background

The core budget for Children's Services in 2009/10 is £87,497,090 with additional funding made up from grants plus the central top slice of the dedicated school budget. This paper proposes reductions from the core budget and the Area Based Grant (ABG) but further scenario planning work is in progress in relation to the Sure Start grant as this grant will no longer be ring fenced but will be contained within the early intervention grant. In addition, Children's Services have previously received £49,212,260 from standards funds but we expect 100% of this to be devolved to schools in 2011 and beyond.

Over the past 2 years, Children's Services have worked hard to drive out efficiencies and have reduced the budget by £10 million. We have achieved this through reducing management costs (Heads of Service reductions x 3 in the last restructuring, a reduction of 17 managerial posts as a result of social care modernisation) better contract management (family support/out of county placements) decommissioning non priority services as well as service reviews in transport and social care. This next phase of budget cuts requires a different approach.

Establishing our core offer has involved carrying out a complete overhaul of the services currently provided. In the future our focus will be on the services where we have a statutory duty to provide. Preventative services will be reduced, however it is hoped that referrals into child protection and regulated services can be contained through early intervention programmes such as Children's Centres and family support and further work on priorities for funding from the early intervention grant are currently being completed.

Although frontline services will be protected where possible, these proposals seek a combination of reductions/total decommissioning and finding alternative ways of delivering services.

2. Conclusion

Children's Services have been judged as an outstanding service for Safeguarding, good for children looked after with outstanding capacity to improve. Lincolnshire's school performance is strong and the Council's ambitious Transformation Programme plays a leading role in the improvement and efficiency agenda. The development of a commissioning strategy with partner agencies is a key programme of activity that will, in the future, challenge the directorate to shape service delivery towards a new target operating model.

In light of the expected budget cuts we have reviewed our priorities and these are confirmed as:

Early Intervention and Prevention

- a) Strong universal services, focusing early action and intensive support to vulnerable children and young people

Safeguarding

- a) Ensuring children are safe in every environment

Aspiration and Well being

- a) Closing the gap between vulnerable groups and children living in disadvantaged communities
- b) Develop self esteem, self belief of all children, young people and their families

Achievement

- a) All children achieving their potential

Best Use of Resources

- a) Make best use of resources to provide better services locally
- b) Empower communities, creating more opportunities for them to engage

However in the delivery of these priorities, we can no longer provide universal services unless statutorily required. Our core offer post 2010/11 will meet our statutory duties and we propose that we must target resources to our most

vulnerable children as part of our strategy to close the gap and reduce levels of poverty.

Focusing on our new revised priorities, our future core offer is significantly reduced. We expect that there will be visible reductions in the level of service provision across almost all areas. The more significant areas of change in our proposals are:

- The number of managers reduced even further
- Back office functions decreased to protect the frontline
- Traded offer to schools has been made, but if not financially viable, these services could stop
- School based interventions fall as funds are given to schools directly
- Statutory transport to school/college continues - with policy changes
- Teenage Services remodelled to mirror Government Big Society aspirations
- Careers information, guidance and advice to young people provided in future by schools and a national careers service
- Contracts for non-statutory community based services stopped
- Safeguarding services retained - with efficiencies

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

These proposals are currently subject to 6 week's consultation with the revised core offer of the Authority. A short presentation will be delivered at the meeting.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Children's Services and Schools Extract from Executive budget report for 5 January 2011

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Debbie Barnes, who can be contacted on 01522 552304 or debbie.barnes@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

