



Date of Meeting: 4 September 2019

Lead Member: Cllr Andrew Parry Lead Member for Children, Education and Early Help

Lead Officer: Sarah Parker – Executive Director for People - Children

Executive Summary:

We are in the process of talking to staff and partners about how we best deliver high quality services to children and families, and what changes we need to make to achieve this. These conversations have begun and continue across children's services. A proposed structure will be shared in September followed by a 45-day formal consultation period, with a view to moving to the new way of working in early 2020.

We have recently been successful in 2 bids for support in improving services. The first will ensure that our offer to care experienced young people is of good quality and shaped by them. The second provides support in transforming services using a strong public service ethos alongside an entrepreneurial culture, thereby creating services which are sustainable, ethical and socially focused.

Equalities Impact Assessment: N/A

Budget:

N/A

Risk Assessment:

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk Low

Climate implications:

N/A

Other Implications:

N/A
Recommendation: For information
Reason for Recommendation:
Appendices: None
Background Papers: None
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1. Blueprint for change.

- 1.1 Senior leaders in children's services together with managers and staff are aware that change is needed in terms of how we deliver services to children and families.
- 1.2 We also recognise that our staff are our most valuable asset and that their experience and understanding of children's needs puts them in a good place to be able to provide creative ideas as to how we can structure services to have a positive impact on outcomes.
- 1.3 In July we started a series on large meetings with staff to start the conversation with them about what needs to change. Sarah Parker (Executive Director – People (Children)) set the scene to begin each meeting by reminding us that the Children Act 1989, is now 30 years old and there have been significant changes in our work since then.
- 1.4 We have seen child protection work spread from looking at risks within families, to also considering risks to our young people in the community, with the emergence of County Lines and Child Criminal Exploitation. We have seen an increase in the numbers of children who do not attend school regularly, either due to being excluded, being electively home educated or through the young people themselves feeling that school has nothing to offer them. We have seen the demand for placements increase while sufficiency of local placements has not kept pace, resulting in some children being placed further from their families and communities than we would like.

1.5 When talking to our staff, and more importantly listening to them, we heard some common themes.

Our staff want:

- to work more closely with families where they live
- to provide seamless services from across the Council
- to work more closely with partner agencies
- to spend more time working directly with children and parents/carers
- to reduce the times a child has a change of Social Worker
- to work with families by building trusting relationships with them
- to recognise and build on the strengths which exist within families
- to work alongside families understanding their unique situation and finding solutions together

1.6 Further conversations are going on within teams who will continue to share their thoughts and ideas through a dedicated email box and this will feed into the way we design services for the future.

1.7 A structure will be shared with staff in September, and a 45-day formal consultation will follow. We aim to move to the new way of delivering services in early 2020.

2. New Belongings:

2.1 In June this year we submitted an expression of interest in the New Belongings programme and have subsequently received confirmation that we have been successful.

2.2 The New Belongings programme was initially developed between 2013 and 2016 with funding from the Department for Education and has now found a new home with Coram Voice, who will use the lessons from the previous programme to support local authorities to develop their leaving care services together with their care leavers.

2.3 The New Belongings Programme (NBP) will develop a model for improving support for care leavers based on engagement and involvement of young people as experts in their own experience. The Bright Spots' [Your Life Beyond Care survey](#) will be used alongside a self-assessment tool in the New Belongings to provide a baseline and inform action planning.

2.4 The team will be contacting us in September to start the work to develop services to care experienced young people through working with us and care leavers to ensure that the offer to them meets their needs and is responsive to local issues.

3. Mutual Ventures:

3.1 Mutual Ventures was set up in 2011 to help public services achieve more through combining a strong public service ethos with an entrepreneurial

culture.

- 3.2 Mutual ventures work with Local Authorities, NHS and other public bodies to transform public services. Bringing experience and expertise, they work flexibly to ensure that solutions are found which fit the need of the organisation.
 - 3.3 They seek to deliver tangible benefits for local communities and are committed to building services which are sustainable, ethical and socially focused.
 - 3.4 Earlier this year we submitted a bid to access support from Mutual Ventures and have been selected as one of the Local Authorities that they will work with. An initial meeting has taken place and we are currently in the process of scoping the work they will do with us.
4. Moving forward.
- 4.1 We will continue to look outwards for inspiration from those who are already providing outstanding services. We will seek opportunities to work with other organisations who can provide additional capacity and expertise to support us in getting where we want to be, that is to be recognised as one of the best children's services nationally.