



Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 14 October 2015

Report Title: Children's Services Five Year Plan – Progress report

Is the decision a key decision? No

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1. Proposal and Introduction

- 1.1 In October 2014 the Council approved a 5 year cost reduction plan. This plan had built into it an agreed set of work streams which would require funding for the first 2 years from reserves of £4.4m and £1.5m from the PFI reserve but thereafter would deliver savings in the order of £7.1m over the 5 years of the plan
- 1.2 This report is to provide Members with an update on progress made so far and put forward proposals for changes to the current work streams to take into account new and updated intelligence on our child and family population
- 1.3 The current programme of work is seeing positive data returns but is not generating the level of savings originally assumed and therefore a fresh look at the means of implementation is required to ensure that the pace of change is more realistic and reflects the needs of our child and family population more closely using nationally accepted benchmarking data

2. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 2.1 That Members note:
 - a) that year 1 of the 5 year plan started on 1st April 2015
 - b) the contents of this report
 - c) the proposed timeline and priorities paper which will guide the work plan for the next 5 years Appendix 1
 - d) that the data supporting the make up of our relevant population continues to be relevant insofar as Torbay is an "outlier"

3. Reason for Proposal

- 3.1 Children's Services is currently forecast to spend approximately £31m by the end of March 2016. This will result in an overspend of £2.4m against the approved budget of £28.7m, this is after the application of £2.3m from reserves.

- 3.2 There is general agreement that the concept of a plan viewed over a number of years is the right approach, that any new proposals should build on the original five year plan and this should be fully implemented. The financial projections and any adjustments going forward need to reflect the 'legacy' aspect and that we need to look at the management of the process going forward. However it is an outcome that will require work within relatively short timescales.
- 3.3 The data below does demonstrate that activity and service changes have taken place over the last 18 months

Impact of the 5 year plan made so far this year

- **Growth in the proportion of CLA in in-house foster care to a level comparable to other authorities.**

We have grown our in-house fostering provision by 11% over the last 2 years which equates to 18 CLA. 68% of Torbay's foster requirements are met through in house carers

- **Creation of in-house Parent and Child assessment placements.**

We have created 3 in-house parent and child placements. This has enabled us to be less reliant on more expensive independent sector provision

- **Reduce the number of children in residential placements**

Since April 14 there has been a sustained decrease of 11 residential placements

- **Sustained levels of Adoption performance**

35 children have been adopted from care over the last 18 months and we are on track to achieve 45+ children being adopted over 2 years

- **Picture of Children Services activity in the last 12 months**

- a. 6,356 contacts were made
- b. 2,261 referrals were started
- c. 1,581 Early help referrals were started
- d. 1,636 statutory assessments were completed which included 819 section 47 investigations
- e. 330 initial child protection conferences were started
- f. 300 children were put on a protection plan and 262 came off
- g. 137 children entered care and 128 left care

Stemming the Flow

Social Work Innovation Fund Torbay (SWIFT)

- 3.4 New developments to deliver a Early Help services are now up and running in the form of the SWIFT project which received £1.25m over 2 years (April 15 to March 17) from the DfE to transform public sector systems and to develop area-based, multi-agency, whole-family services for those needing help. There are three key elements of the programme, all of which infer a cost reduction, or a significant improvement in value for money for the Local Authority and Partners.
- 1 Establishment of a Torbay Public Services Trust (TPST)
 - 2 Establishment of Early Help Practices (EHPs)
 - 3 Workforce Integration
- 3.5 The TPST is a vehicle by which the LA and Partners can co-commission for cross-cutting issues where poor outcomes are coupled with high direct costs. A single intervention can be commissioned with outcomes designed to benefit the Partnership, and there is considerable scope to attract external investment such as a social impact bond. SWIFT is currently progressing a bid relating to Domestic Abuse which will enable us to scope this issue for Torbay and explore evidence based programmes to reduce their impact. The work will determine where cashable savings can be made through interventions and where they will apply. We have had interest from two social investors to date which will follow our progress with this work
- 3.6 The EHPs will match work with the problems of the area, bringing support closer to neighbourhoods. The focus of the EHPs is on promoting resilience and confidence in communities to deal with their own problems 'with a little help'. All Partners will apply a whole family approach to their working methods. Central to this is the development of our Early Help Offer and the shared responsibility of key Partners and services such as schools, tier 2 mental health services (CAMHS), Torbay Education Safeguarding Service (TESS), health visitors and schools nurses, as well as adult services around mental health and substance misuse who often hold the key to improvements in family functioning. The assumptions through this redesign work is that we will reduce CIN and CP referrals by 10% per year with a potential saving of £1m (Loughborough costs of contacts, referrals, assessments and case conferences) - this is through earlier and more targeted interventions, less repeat referrals and less failed requests for services, all essentially stemming the flow of work into social care.
- 3.7 Workforce integration will see all Children's Services delivery staff transferred to the new Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust. This will ensure there are less hand-offs for children and families, minimal transition costs and a reduction in the duplication of services costs. There is additionally the potential for this to bring about economies in staffing and resources as integration begins to impact positively for children and families.
- 3.8 Maintaining a quality workforce is an ongoing pressure on Children's Services and the Council ran a successful campaign to bring vacancies down at one point to 9%.

However this has risen in recent months and now stands at 23% with further opportunities being taken to increase staffing levels as detailed in Appendix 2.

Timeline for the 5 year plan project

3.8 Appendix 1 lays out the initial officer timeline and priority actions of the 5 year plan, which will include the re-engagement of Social Finance to carry out a review of the original assumptions of the 5 year plan and any revised recommendations. The main areas of focus will be:-

- Reviewing the age profile and type of looked after placement
- Review the forecast of adoptions
- Reviewing the commissioning framework for placements
- Further refinement of the monitoring tool to ensure that there is clear accountability for each work stream
- A clearer focus on keeping families together – early help
- A reunification team whose focus is to bring children in care back to their families in a such a way that is safe and sustainable
- Culture and practice of social worker teams
- Audit of the workforce profile compared to the volume of work referred to in paragraph 3.3 above

Appendices

Appendix 1: Timeline paper

Appendix 2 : Workforce Profile as at Sept 15

Appendix 3 : Placement/Association between Children and poverty/LAC rate

Background Documents

30th October 2014 – Children’s Services 5 year cost reduction plan

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MId=5586&Ver=4>