

SUBJECT:	Children's Services
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	27th July 2016
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	Social Care and Health

1. **PURPOSE:** To provide Cabinet with an appraisal of current issues and key challenges within Children's Services and recommend a service improvement programme which addresses these challenges.
2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** Cabinet is asked to approve the Children's Services Improvement Programme set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Cabinet is asked to approve investment of £250,000 from the Priority Investment Reserve to support the practice improvement in children's services which is critical to sustainable improvement in the service.

3. **KEY ISSUES:**

The primary aim of Children's Social Services is to work together with others to ensure that Monmouthshire's children and young people reach their full potential and live free from the harmful effects of abuse and neglect. We aim to provide responsive, family orientated services which ensure that our most vulnerable children are effectively safeguarded.

Over the last year, Monmouthshire Children's Services has continued to deliver services in an increasingly challenging and complex context. The work plan for the service from April 2015 - March 2016 was extensive and required the whole service to pull together in developing systems and processes; improving practice and building partnerships. The service has benefitted from investment from the Council to meet increasing demands and to try and make the shift to doing things differently particularly through the business cases approved by Cabinet in May 2015. The benefits from those business cases will start to be delivered in 2016/17 and reporting against them will form part of the monitoring against this improvement programme. The business cases largely focus on the type of service a child receives when they become looked after – inhouse fostering and therapeutic support to foster carers. What is clear, learning from the successful model of transformation in adult services is that sustainable improvement needs to be led by, and is dependent on, confident and consistent social work practice. This is critical for the service to be in a

position to manage the demands on it, within the means afforded to it, and to move from reactive crisis management to a proactive and preventative model in which children are supported to remain with their families if it is safe to do so.

There remains much to be done and in some areas we are not as far along our path to improvement as others. These areas include:

- Continued increase in our Looked After Children population
- Continued significant budgetary pressure
- Achieving a confident, competent and stable workforce
- Ensuring vulnerable families have access to the right services at the right time, recognising a deficit in family support services
- Implementing intelligent commissioning including families first and core funding
- To articulate our service model and ensure that our model, operating procedures and pathways of care are clear, embedded in practice and widely communicated
- Continued development of our partnership working
- Embedding a consistent quality assurance framework for the service that drives continuous self-assessment, analysis and improvement.

Addressing these challenges will require a programme approach which captures the inter-relatedness of many of the areas for development. This will require the commitment of the whole service together with on-going support from the council. Additional capacity through the commissioning of outside expertise, as well as continued collaboration activity with partners and maximising the use of regional and national support will be of benefit.

The proposed programme approach is set out at appendix 1.

4. REASONS:

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 coming in to force requires changes in the way that we work with our partners and provide services to individuals and families particularly in respect of well-being and early prevention.

Within this overarching context of key legislation change, the need for continuous self-assessment and improvement within Children's Services is informed by data drawn from a range of sources across three main areas.

- Our own self-assessment and service planning processes; our analysis of key performance information including case audit and review. Our recent commissioned review through IPC has strengthened and reinforced our analysis.
- External regulators CSSIW and Estyn inspection reports; CAFCASS reports and case reviews.
- Recent and regular feedback from staff, service users and partners.

These information sources have provided consistent messages to inform us about our current children's service development priorities.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are resource implications for the programme outside of core-funding. Its successful implementation will require investment in capacity to transform social work practice in children's services from the Invest to Investment of £250,000 over a 2 year period will secure the secondment of an experienced service manager, and practice change support, to ensure that the highly successful practice led change methodology which has delivered improved service and financial outcomes in adult services is implemented sustainably within children's services.

The programme approach will be underpinned by a dynamic financial model that can track and report on the budgetary impact of the change to practice, workforce and commissioning as we grow, change and develop. Our quality assurance framework will enable us to report on standards of practice, ensuring there is consistency of threshold, risk management approaches and evidence based family support which is targeted where it has most impact.

Through this approach we will become a service that operates within the resources allocated by the council based on a clear understanding of risk and need at all levels. It is not expected that this will be a quick turnaround. However, confident practice alongside the current invest to save business cases and the implementation of innovations such as 'Where I am Safe' the Children, Young People and their Families commissioning strategy are intended to bring medium to longer term savings over 3 year period.

6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

This is set out at appendix 2

7. CONSULTEES:

Departmental Management Team 8th June 2016
Senior Leadership Team 14th June 2016
Children and Young People's Select Committee 7th July 2016

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

CCSIW Inspection Report (November 2014)
Children Services Business Cases (May 2015)
Children's Services Service and Financial Recovery Plan (January 2016)
Chief Officer's Annual Report (June 2016)
Children's Services Service Improvement Plan (2015 & 2016)
Delivering Excellent Practice in Children's Services (IPC June 2016)

9. AUTHOR:

Jane Rodgers – Head of Children’s Services

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644054

E-mail: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2



Future Generations

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644054 E-mail: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>The proposal is to implement a programme of improvement within Children's Services.</p>
<p>Name of Service</p> <p>Children's Services</p>	<p>Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed</p> <p>24th June 2016</p>




1. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal.



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Improving Children's Services will have a positive impact on the use of resources by ensuring that early intervention and prevention services are in place for children and families. We will work with partners to promote early identification of risk and ensure that interventions are matched to need. This will maximise the chances of some of our most vulnerable children to learn and reach their full potential.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	Our workforce development programme will ensure that Children's Services staff are skilled and confident.	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	N / A	
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, requires local authorities to review the care and support they provide, while providing a range of services designed to promote wellbeing and prevent the need for care and support. The vision for our Children's Services overall is for children and young people to be healthy, happy, and feel valued and loved. This will enable them to grow into successful adults who can have positive relationships, positive futures and become responsible citizens. We will do this through supporting parenting and early attachment; helping families recognise and reduce risk where this is harming their children; and promoting positive parenting. In cases where children need to leave their families in order to stay safe we will work to provide placements for them which effectively build their resilience and help them to overcome the damaging impact of harmful experiences.	N/A
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	In accordance with the Social Services and Well-Being Act our service will work from a strengths based model to promote well-being	N/A

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	within families and within communities. We will work collaboratively with other organisations and with the citizens of Monmouthshire to build resilient and cohesive communities where children are safe and valued. We will seek to strengthen parenting and reduce social need and dependency in key areas where this has a negative impact on children such as domestic abuse and substance misuse.	
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	There are many wider benefits to providing support for vulnerable families and strengthening communities in Monmouthshire. This will contribute to our children and young people growing up with a strong sense of identity, self-esteem and with the potential to be globally responsible citizens.	N/A
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	We will continue to expand and improve services to meet the language and cultural needs of individual children as part of our outcomes work around well-being goals.	N/A
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Children's Services and our partners work with vulnerable children and young people to reduce disadvantage and maximise their opportunities in life and their personal resilience.	N/A

2. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.	If not, what has been done to better meet this principle?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	<p>We have set out our commitment to use the resources afforded to us by the Council effectively to support children, young people, and their families within the Councils allocation. We are developing our financial modelling to help us monitor invest to save and cost avoidance programmes over a 3 year plan. This will include tasks such as increasing our in-house fostering provision; developing preventative services and maintaining a stable workforce. We will continually look for opportunities to collaborate with others where this is cost effective to do so.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, which came into force on the 6th of April 2016, is the legislative underpinning for changes in the way that local authorities and their partners work together. We will be working closely with our partners in health, police, other local authorities and 3rd sector organisations to ensure that we have effective services which achieve positive outcomes for children and families at all levels of need.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>We will ensure that the workforce is skilled in direct work with children and families based on collaborative and strength based approaches within assessments and interventions. We will work with specific engagement processes included the young carers group and the magic group (for children with disabilities) and with the regional safeguarding children's board to ensure that the views and concerns of young people are listened to.</p>	<p>It is important that Children's Services engages with the corporate engagement and participation officer to take forward consultation with families.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.	If not, what has been done to better meet this principle?
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>We will work with others to implement the principles of Early Intervention and Prevention so that children and young people are protected from the impact of abuse and neglect. We will work to identify need and vulnerability at early stages where there is maximum opportunity for sustained change.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>Within the service we will find safe and appropriate ways to work with families to help them meet their children's needs, including their need to be protected from harm. We will do this around concepts of well-being as set out in the Social Services and Well-being Act.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

- 3. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below. For more detailed information on the protected characteristics, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Standards that apply to Monmouthshire Council please follow this link: <http://hub/corporatedocs/Equalities/Forms/AllItems.aspx> or contact Alan Burkitt on 01633 644010 or alanburkitt@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Children's Services will focus on the well-being of the 0-18 population and 0-25 for care leavers.	N/A	N/A
Disability	The service includes specialist disability services for children.	N/A	N/A
Gender reassignment	Children's Services works to promote the well-being of children and their parents by strengthening their self-esteem and sense of individual identity. We will develop services that give children and young people choice where possible, and enables them to live fulfilling lives free from discrimination and harm. We have mechanisms in place such as the Independent Reviewing process and advocacy to ensure that individual identity needs are addressed.	N/A	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	As above	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity	As above	N/A	N/A
Race	As above	N/A	N/A
Religion or Belief	As above	N/A	N/A

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sex	As Above	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	As Above	N/A	N/A
Welsh Language	As Above	N/A	N/A

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on important responsibilities of Corporate Parenting and safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect either of these responsibilities? For more information please see the guidance <http://hub/corporatedocs/Democratic%20Services/Safeguarding%20Guidance.docx> and for more on Monmouthshire's Corporate Parenting Strategy see <http://hub/corporatedocs/SitePages/Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy.aspx>

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Children's Services works with families to protect children from the harmful effects of abuse and neglect. We act as the lead agency for safeguarding across the council and with our partners.	N/A	N/A
Corporate Parenting	'Where I am Safe' the Children, Young People and their Families Strategy discusses the Councils corporate parenting responsibilities and how the Council currently responds to those duties and how it will respond in the future to those responsibilities to support children, young people and their families.	N/A	N/A

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

The evidence and data that has informed the Children, Young People and their Families Strategy was:

1. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
2. Cordis Bright Report – ‘Why do local authorities with similar levels of needs, have different looked after children populations’ 2013
3. Statswales.gov.uk – Quantitative data on population, services users, comparative data across Wales
4. Local Government Data Unit – Qualitative data on service users
5. Service user data from PLANT
6. Financial data – Agresso
7. Cabinet – Business Cases Paper - May 2015
8. Children’s Services Framework – Windscreen of Need – IPC Draft Report 2016
9. Children Services Management Consultation on perceptions / views of services / performance data (qualitative data)

6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

The main positive impact of the proposed programme of improvement for Children’s Services is that it will enable us to promote better outcomes for children and young people and increased resilience in families and communities. The programme sets out the key tasks and required changes in a clear way to enable scrutiny and challenge during implementation.

7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
Implement the programme approach	Over the next 2 years	Head of Service	Monitored through SLT and Select
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

8. MONITORING: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	June 2017
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9. VERSION CONTROL: The Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Children and Young People Select Committee	07.07.2016	