

3 July 2012	ITEM 5
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
EARLY OFFER OF HELP STRATEGY AND COMMISSIONING	
Report of: Councillor O Gerrish, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Social Care	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Accountable Head of Service: Carmel Littleton – Head of Learning and Universal Outcomes & Barbara Foster – Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes	
Accountable Director: Jo Olsson – Director of People Services	
This report is Public	
Purpose of Report: To note the Early Offer of Help Strategy as approved by Cabinet in June 2012 and to give members the opportunity to develop their understanding of the implementation and commissioning programme.	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Early Offer of Help Strategic Framework aims to support, challenge and change parenting for the children and young people most at risk.

The Early Offer of Help and accompanying service redesign brings together a multi agency, integrated offer to ensure that we can respond to the complexity of the families outlined in the Framework.

The locality based offer will focus on the areas with the highest needs with capacity to provide outreach in other areas of the borough.

In order to focus resources on front line delivery, with services fully aligned with partners, we intend to co-locate wherever possible to three of the proposed community hubs with outreach and satellite capacity in other parts of the borough.

The commissioning associated with the delivery of this work is divided into two elements:

- Service provision (to be delivered across localities, including in commissioned children's centres)
- Children's Centre management

Implementation will be from April 2013 onwards but it is anticipated that some elements will commence prior to this.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That members:

1.1 Note the final Early Offer of Help Strategy.

1.2 Note Cabinet approval to proceed to tender for the associated commissioning of:

- **Early Offer of Help Core Services**
- **Management of Children's Centres**

1.3 Note Cabinet approval to delegate authority to the Accountable Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Social Care to award the contracts subject to the completion of a tendering exercise.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

2.1 The Early Offer of Help Strategic Framework aims to support, challenge and change parenting for the children and young people most at risk.

2.2 Thurrock Council and the South West Essex Primary Care Trust on behalf of the Children's Partnership Board have been reviewing the early offer of help to provide a seamless range of integrated services and activities to help families address problems before they become too serious, reducing the need for intensive, high cost interventions at a later date.

2.3 There are opportunities to re-profile public sector spend in Thurrock. The early offer of help and accompanying system redesign will reduce the risk of harm to children by

- reducing overlaps and gaps between professional services and agencies;
- preventing multiple interventions in families and multiple professional exchanges; and
- reducing complicated and extended information exchange chains

2.4 The proposed changes build on recent Government sponsored reviews, in particular the Munro Review of Child Protection.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The framework to develop Thurrock's early offer of help is designed to support, challenge and change parenting for:
- Parents who are struggling, whose children are suffering harm as a result, who know they need to do some things differently and who will accept the support and challenge they need to change
 - Parents who don't appreciate the harmful impact their lifestyle and/or parenting is having on their children and need challenge as well as support if they are to make the changes they need to make and thereby prevent chronic damage and/or significant harm to their children.
- 3.2 We estimate that approximately 15% of the child population in Thurrock may need the early offer of help, with a further 5% needing specialist services. This will equate to approximately 3000 families.
- 3.3 We have identified that whilst there will be a need for support wherever a family lives; the greatest concentration of need is in the following areas:
- Belhus
 - Ockendon
 - Chadwell St Mary
 - Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park
 - Tilbury St Chads
 - West Thurrock and South Stifford
 - Parts of Grays
- 3.4 In developing our locality based offer of services we will focus on these areas with the capacity to provide outreach in other areas of the borough where this is required.
- 3.5 A range of delivery models have been considered to improve alignment with the Thurrock Community Engagement Strategy, in doing this we considered:
- effectiveness of delivery
 - professional supervision
 - management costs
- 3.6 In order to focus resources on front line delivery, with services fully aligned with partners, we intend to co-locate wherever possible in three of the proposed community hubs with outreach and satellite capacity in other parts of the borough.
- 3.7 This change will:
- strengthen professional supervision and specialist support for staff

- strengthen the management structure and focus resources on front line delivery.
- reduce duplication
- provide the opportunity to develop stronger local governance models and improve engagement in communities

3.8 The Strategic Framework sets out a core offer of services for each locality that includes:

- Parental and Infant Mental Health Services
- Family Nurse Partnerships
- Maternal and Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting (MECSH)
- Family Intervention Programme
- Domestic abuse and sexual violence services
- Family Group Conferencing
- Targeted parenting support and challenge programmes

3.9 This will be delivered through universal services, the Local Authority, partner agencies, and commissioned services.

3.10 The commissioning associated with the delivery of this work is divided into two elements:

- Service provision (to be delivered across localities, including in commissioned children's centres)
- Children's Centre management

3.11 The commissioning report outlines these in further detail and is included in the appendices to this report.

3.12 The key priorities for the early offer of help are as follows:

- A single point of entry to targeted services, we are seeking to secure multi agency agreement to develop a local multi agency safeguarding hub
- An integrated multi agency response that targets resources to support and/or challenge parents; reducing the number of cases escalating to statutory intervention.
- Enhanced locality delivery by decentralising and aligning specialist services to targeted locality delivery.
- A core offer of services delivered locally to support, challenge and change parenting where needed
- A 'Troubled Families' offer as an integral part of the Early Offer of Help
- A workforce development programme to support the delivery of the early offer of help.
- A performance management framework that monitors and evaluates the success of the support offered.

- 3.13 Not everything we do in Thurrock is part of the early offer of help; for example our work to ensure young people are in work or education/or training is not focussed on parenting and therefore is not included, but it will continue.
- 3.14 Implementation will be from April 2013 onwards but it is anticipated that some elements will commence prior to this. For other parts such as the development of a local multi-agency safeguarding hub there is a need to work with other agencies to seek agreement of joint delivery arrangements and this has not yet been secured.
- 3.15 The commissioning timetable is as follows:

KEY EVENT	DATE
Publication of Contract Notice	w/c 25/6/2012
Issue PQQs	w/c 25/6/2012
Evaluation of PQQs	20/7/2012 – 26/7/2012
Issue of Invitation to Tender	27/7/2012
Pre-Submission Clarification Meetings	n/a
Closing date for Tender submissions	6/9/2012
Post-Submission Clarification Meetings	n/a
Interviews	3/10/2012 – 9/10/2012
Notification of result of evaluation	18/10/2012
Standstill period	19/10/2012 – 1/11/2012
Expected date of award of Contract	19/10/2012
Contract Commencement	1/4/2013

- 3.16 The key activities for full implementation fall broadly into four project groups:
- commissioning
 - workforce design and delivery
 - IT / system changes
 - Communication
- 3.17 Project teams for each of these aspects are underway and outline project time lines are in place to ensure changes are managed within the required timescales.

4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 4.1 Consultation built on the work completed with regard to the changes to Children's Centres agreed by Cabinet in 2011. This was further developed by discussions with Schools, the community and voluntary sector, staff workshops and in addition, a report on the draft strategy was presented to Overview and Scrutiny in March 2012.

4.2 Engagement with key partners is an ongoing part of the development of the strategy, this commenced with the needs analysis and has continued through two stakeholder events in December 2011 and February 2012 these events have shaped the recommendations to Cabinet today.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1 The Early Offer of help Strategic Framework supports the following council priorities:

- Improve the education and skills of local people
- Provide and commission high quality and accessible services that meet wherever possible, individual needs

5.2 It also supports delivery of the aims of the Children and Young Peoples Plan:

- Excellent childcare, schools, colleges and services
- Everyone succeeding
- Protection when needed
- Lean and fit for the future

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Steve Abrahall**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652217**
sabrahall@thurrock.gov.uk

These developments are crucial to the refocusing of existing resources to better meet identified need, to reduce duplication and achieve improved value for money. There is no new funding for this work and the resources will come from improved use of existing budgets. Funding from the PCT is not yet guaranteed and a section 75 agreement is being negotiated, contracts should not be awarded for this element of the funding until this has been agreed. Full costs for the commissioned element are included in the commissioning report and the risks associated with this have been highlighted and mitigating action planned.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kar-Yee Chan**
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kchan@thurrock.gov.uk

Health and Social Services are Part B services under Schedule 3 of the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (the Regulations); Early Offer of Help services falls within this category. Part B services are subject only to a few provisions of the

Regulations – namely, obligations relating to technical specifications and post award information.

Rule 8.1 (e) (i) of the council's Contract Procedure Rules permits the delegation of the awarding of contracts to a Director acting in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

It is essential that contract documentation is completed and the necessary post contract award procurement process is followed by officers in the event that the recommendations are accepted so that the council is fully protected.

Legal Services and Procurement Services are available to provide ongoing advice and assistance in relation to the procurement process to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and the Constitution.

6.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
Telephone and email: **01375 652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

An equality impact assessment has been completed and the Strategic Framework supports the refocusing of resources on those most in need of support. The needs analysis completed has highlighted the factors that mean families that are at a greater risk of inequalities have been identified and services are focussed on this group. The decentralisation of services and an outreach offer will ensure services are accessible.

6.4 **Other implications Procurement**

Procurement

Implications verified by: **Debbie Walker, Senior Procurement Manager**
Telephone and email: **01375-652083**
dwalker@thurrock.gov.uk

As a Part B service this contract will not be subject to the full OJEU regulations that said a transparent process must be followed along with a final award through OJEU. Therefore a full compliant tender process will take place ensuring the council is protected and the service achieves a compliant and best value contract in place.

7. **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The Early Offer of Help Strategic Framework aims to support, challenge and change parenting for the children and young people most at risk.

- 7.2 The Early offer of Help and accompanying service redesign brings together a multi agency, integrated offer to ensure that we can respond to the complexity of the families we have outlined in the Framework
- 7.3 Our locality based offer of services we will focus on the areas with the highest needs with capacity to provide outreach in other areas of the borough where needs are identified.
- 7.4 In order to focus resources on front line delivery, with services fully aligned with partners, we intend to co-locate wherever possible in three of the proposed community hubs with outreach and satellite capacity in other parts of the borough.
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BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- See appendices

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Appendix A – Early Offer of Help Strategy

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