

## **Delegated Officer Report**

**Decision Maker:** Elaine Devaney

**Date of Decision:** 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Subject:** Re-structure of After care and the Permanence team, to create one team in for post 18 years olds (After Care) and 3 Looked After Teams (Permanence Through Care)

**Report Author:** Elissa Slater

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**Reason for the decision:**

In September 2019 a report was submitted to leadership in relation to a potential redesign of the After Care and Permanence team within Children's Services and an associated request for investment to be provided to meet the growing demands on Children's Services.

Following further discussions including involvement of the Trade Unions, a further submission was made in January 2020, to propose the new structure.

The Service has been reviewed and it is apparent, that the service, in order to be successful and meet the demands placed upon it, requires these changes.

Following discussion with union officials and HR, consultation with staff and the trade unions was undertaken from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 to the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

**Summary:**

Following a review of Children's Services supported by a structural investment plan, a decision was taken to re-structure the teams. This includes :

1. After Care providing a service for post 18 years olds and having a structure of 1 Team Manager, 2 Snr Practitioners and 9 PAs
2. Permanence/Through Care having 3 Team with 3 Team managers, 3 snr practitioners and 24 Social Workers.

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):***

The Alternative option is to not create any change or recruit to these vacancies, which would reduce the effectiveness of the future service provision and have a potential adverse effect on support to all children related activities.

***Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.***

Initial consultation was undertaken following a joint meeting in November 2019, with the Unions and staff, whilst a further formal consultation has taken place for 45 days from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 to the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

There has been an offer of one to one consultation, alongside any recorded feedback.

At the end of the consultation period the comments received were positive and concerns about changes in roles and teams, have been reassured.

All Social Workers affected by the change have been offered options of which of the three teams they prefer.

***Recommendation(s):***

The preferred option is to continue with the re-structure in line with the time scale outline on the Consultation document.

As there will be no redundancy's or any redeployment, it is recommended that the changes occur and start to be implemented following the approval of the review.

## Implications:

*What are the **financial** implications?*

The restructure will create an extra 6.0 FTE posts as well as uplifting the grades of some of the existing Social Worker posts. Based on the current profile of staff it is estimated that The restructure will cost an additional £0.278m per annum, this may vary slightly depending on the profile of recruitment to the Social Work roles across grades 6, 7 and 8, with a maximum cost of £0.395k, based on the very unlikely assumption that all post were filled at grade 8.

Children's Social Care was awarded additional recurrent funding of £2.282m to deliver a new workforce model. Three-quarters of the funding (£1.611m) was allocated in 2019/20 to account for the lead in time to recruit to the new structure. A further £0.671m was allocated in 2020/21. There was also an expectation that the investment would lead to a range of efficiencies in the sum of £1.660m which would come to fruition during 2020/21.

The additional costs of the proposed Aftercare & Permanence Teams restructure will need to be met from the new workforce model funding referred to above. It is important to note that that the current cost of the proposed new workforce model is more than the budget available. This proposal can only be approved if there is there is a prioritisation of the allocation of resources to these team in line with the service development plan and there is a corresponding reduction in cost elsewhere. The service must prioritise the alignment of staffing and financial resources to ensure the final staffing structure is established within the funding available.

(Andy Cooper)

When the 2020/21 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Strategy for 2020/21 to 2024/25 was agreed, there was some financial certainty and the Council had a reasonable understanding of the financial challenge it was facing. However, the position has changed with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is now a requirement for the 2020/21 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25 to be revised

as many of the principles upon which these strategies were based can no longer be relied upon.

The financial implications of the pandemic are very difficult to assess as much depends on the length of time the emergency continues, the phasing of the lifting of the lockdown, the level of Central Government support and Council priorities. The Council must give itself as much flexibility as possible to adjust service provision as it responds to the demands of a changing public sector environment having regard to the reduced resources that it is likely to have for the foreseeable future.

It is therefore important that services and the Council as a whole, do not unnecessarily commit to arrangements which build extra costs into a service area without having regard to the wider financial and on-going service delivery requirements/implications, nor actively seeking to minimise the impact by adjustments to budgets elsewhere within services.

(Anne Ryans)

*What are the **legal** implications?*

No legal comments (Colin Brittain)

*What are the **procurement** implications?*

There appears no immediate procurement implications. The recruitment of staff will need to go through the appropriate HR channels. In the event support is required from the external market, then the Councils contracted recruitment supplier should be engaged – should both these routes prove unsuccessful then engagement with the procurement team should be initiated.

*What are the **Human Resources** implications?*

The established posts will support the newly proposed structure as part of the Structural Investment Plan within Children's Services working alongside the senior management team in addition to the wider external partner arrangements.

As with any posts, an evaluation of the grades has already been undertaken as these are existing roles.

Recruitment to the roles will be undertaken in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

(Stewart Hindley, People Services Business Partner)

**Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment** attached or not required because (please give reason)

N/A – if approved it will increase E&D outcomes

What are the **property** implications

N/a

**Risks:**

The risks are that the service fails to reconfigure its offer to meet the demands of the new funding model. This will put the sustainability and success of the service at risk.

**Co-operative agenda**

This role will provide additional capacity which will help the service to integrate better, and provide greater levels of service and collaboration across partner agencies.

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

This is only consistent with the Council's budget if there are offsetting reductions in costs within the wider service – this has not yet been demonstrated.

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No

**There are no background papers for this report**

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| <b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>            |  |
| Elissa Slater                             |  |
| <b>Date:</b><br>12 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 |  |

Please list and attach any appendices:-

| <b>Appendix number or letter</b> | <b>Description</b>    |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Appendix 1                       | Consultation Document |

In consultation with the Director of Children's Social Care, Elaine Devaney

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "E Devaney".

Signed:

Date: 27 January 21

In consultation with the Director of Workforce and Organisational Design, Julia Veall

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julia Veall".

Signed:

Date: 28.1.2021