
Meeting: Executive

Date: 12 January 2010

Subject: The development of a single children's workforce in Central Bedfordshire

Report of: Cllr Mrs Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

Summary: The report presents the Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust's Strategy for Children's Workforce Development and seeks the endorsement of the Strategy by the Executive.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning.

Contact Officer: Patrick Shevlin, Assistant Director Learning and Schools

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Executive

Key Decision Yes

**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)** Not applicable

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Strategy supports the delivery of the Council's Key Priority 'educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people', because the modernisation of the children's workforce will have a profound effect on improving the life chances of children and young people.

Financial:

The Council's budget covers the cost of the Children's Workforce Development service. It is supported in part by some external funding streams, particularly from the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). These streams have been confirmed for the next financial year. Any changes to funding streams that may impact on the Strategy will be reported accordingly.

Annual cost of Service:
Total: £523 000

Income streams:
Central Budgets: £374 000
CWDC grant contribution: £45 000
TDA grant contribution: £31 000
Income target: £73 000
Total: £523 000

As the Children's Workforce becomes integrated and able to share support services, we are likely to be able to deliver cost savings to the Local Authority.

Legal:

The Children's Workforce Development Strategy will enable the council and its partners to exercise, through the Children's Trust, the 'duty to co-operate' under section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

Risk Management:

All current grants are subject to the approval of Action Plans put forward by the Children's Workforce Development Team and to continued provision from outside agencies. Income targets are likely to be met.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Implications for staff are actively considered during the regular strategic meetings and subsequent working parties for the implementation of the strategy. This includes the process for achieving multi-agency local delivery teams. All proposals as developed will be discussed in full with relevant trade unions at council consultation meetings.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The values of the Children's Workforce Development Strategy highlight that :

- The needs, rights and views of the child, young person and family are at the centre of all practice and provision;
- Individuality, difference and diversity are valued and celebrated;
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are actively promoted.

Community Safety:

Improved integrated working with police and crime prevention services will have a positive impact in relation to crime and disorder, including anti-social behaviour and drug, alcohol or other substance abuse.

Sustainability:

The Children's Workforce Development Strategy makes significant contributions to the development of local delivery of multi-agency services. This will lead to services that are better value for money and improve the quality of life of our children and young people and their families.

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the draft Children's Workforce Development Strategy at its meeting on the 3rd November 2009. The Committee's response to the Strategy is attached at Appendix B.

The comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been considered by partners and the strategy has been amended to acknowledge the issues raised.

RECOMMENDATION(S):**That the Executive:**

- (a) endorses the Children's Workforce Strategy;**
- (b) approves the budgetary commitment to support the work of the Children's Workforce Development Service for at least the length of the proposed Strategy.**

<i>Reason for Recommendation(s):</i>	<i>To ensure that Central Bedfordshire Council meets its statutory duty as set out in the Children Act 2004 to co-operate with partners to recruit and retain a skilled workforce that will ensure the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. To meet the duty this strategy is written in partnership with other agencies.</i>
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Background

1. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires that all local authorities with a children's services responsibility should make arrangements to promote cooperation between the authority and relevant partners with a view to improving the well-being of children and young people in the area. The Act establishes the Local Authority as the lead and the accountable partner in such arrangements.
2. The expectation is that these arrangements, commonly known as Children's Trusts, should have been in place in all Local Authorities by the end of 2008. Central Bedfordshire Council has already established a Children's Trust.
3. The Children's Workforce Development Strategy is designed to support the Children's Trust in carrying out its Children and Young People's Plan.

Aspirations for a world class children's workforce in Central Bedfordshire

4. The Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust has founded its vision on the National '2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy' and on the 'One Children's Workforce Framework' developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).
5. The framework is configured as a rainbow of seven different colours, each depicting a particular theme and with a final, eighth section encompassing Every Child Matters outcomes. Each theme is accompanied by a statement from an imaginary child, which encapsulates how that child will feel once a first class, integrated children's workforce is in place. These statements appear in the attached Strategy (Appendix A).

The Central Bedfordshire Children's workforce Strategy

6. The Central Bedfordshire Children's Workforce Development Strategy is incorporated in the Children and Young People's Plan as a 'cross-cutting priority'. The priority is to 'develop an integrated workforce which is ambitious for all children and their families and expert in its practice'. It has four key strands to guide its work and each is underpinned by a work plan:
 - (a) Create a single Children and Young People's Workforce by establishing and promoting a shared identity, vision, language, practice and service.
 - (b) Develop integrated working and a single staff development framework based on a single needs analysis.
 - (c) Establish complementary roles reflecting local needs by Increasing the use of training hubs for learning in each area of Central Bedfordshire.
 - (d) Put safeguarding at the forefront of Workforce Development.
7. Partners from health, police and the private and voluntary sector as well as representatives from schools and the Council are working together to focus on recruitment, retention, development and modernisation issues across the whole local children's workforce.
8. The Strategy (Appendix A) has been put through a rigorous consultation process with stakeholders, including strategic leaders and Professional Associations representing all parts of the Children's Trust. Key themes have been shared with children and young people and their views have informed the consultation process. It has been formally adopted by the Children's Trust Board.

Recommendations for the future coordination of the Children's Workforce Development Strategy

9. The Strategy covers a period of three years up to 2013, and the Government Strategy suggests the need for an even longer time period to elapse before the required changes in practice and organisation are properly bedded down. A long term vision at local level is required for such a radical transformation to take place.
10. In order for the Council to fulfil its function as the 'lead partner' in the Children's Trust, it will need to commit for the next three years to the continued funding of the Children's Workforce Development Service as detailed under the financial implications section of this report.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Strategy for Children's Workforce Development for Central Bedfordshire Council.

Appendix B – Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, November 2009.

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

The DCSF 2020 Children and Young People's Strategy:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/childrenandyoungpeoplesworkforce/workforcestrategy/>

Link to the full 'Laming Review of Child Protection' (March 2009), including a digest of the main recommendations:

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/articles/2009/03/13/111003/laming-report-index-of-recommendations.html>

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands (or available via the web links above).