

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017**

**Subject: Innovation in Children's Services**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. The innovation and success of Leeds Children's Services in recent years has been recognised by both OfSTED and the Department for Education (DfE). As part of our continuing close partnership working with government, the DfE have now agreed to invest £9.6 M over the next three years in Leeds' services for children and families.
2. This additional funding will be used to accelerate the city's reform agenda, helping to trial and develop new approaches and reshape and refocus existing services. There are three main areas of new services:
  - *Restorative Extended Support Teams*: these new teams will provide additional social work leadership and capacity for cluster teams, strengthening local working between social work, schools and other services. The teams will be initially targeted at the seven clusters of highest need and then expanded across the city.
  - *Restorative Adolescent Service*: this service will work to integrate and improve practice and services for young people and their families. Funding will be used to invest in additional capacity and expertise in specialist support for these young people and their families, for example in additional clinical psychologists and speech and language therapists.
  - *Centre for Excellence*: Leeds is already working as a 'Partner in Practice' with the DfE, one of a small number of high performing Local Authorities that work with government to provide support to weaker councils and to lead sector reform. The Centre for

Excellence is designed to build on this work: strengthening our work on sector wide training and development; developing and sharing best practice; promoting research and evidence based practice; and consultancy support.

3. In addition to these three areas of change, the funding will also allow Children's Services to speed up work to reshape our existing services in order to continue the city's strategy whilst reducing costs and increasing efficiency in line with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

### **Recommendations**

4. Executive Board is recommended to:
  - Welcome the success of Children's Services in attracting funding to the city
  - Endorse the acceptance, use and planned investment of Innovation Funding
  - Delegate responsibility for implementation to the Director of Children's Services

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is: to inform Executive Board of Children's Services' success in negotiating a three year investment of £9.6 M in the city's services for children and families; to seek the Board's approval for acceptance and use of the funding; and to give the Director of Children's Services delegated responsibility for implementation.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Children's Services in Leeds have made significant and sustained progress in recent years. Outcomes, practice and local services have all been improved, including marked improvements in the three 'obsessions', attendance, NEET and the number of children needing to become Looked After. Improved outcomes have led to reduced costs – for example savings on external placements add up to £7.5 million per year. These improvements have been recognised by OfSTED, government and in high profile national awards.
- 2.2 The Innovation Fund is a Department for Education initiative which aims to provide funding for trialling new approaches across the children's social care system. The longer term ambition is to use these pilot projects to inform and drive reform across the entire sector. Leeds was successful in the first round of the Innovation Fund, winning over £4.5 M for the 'Family Valued' programme that invested in restorative practice, Family Group Conferencing and domestic violence services.
- 2.3 The current round of the Innovation Fund is supported by £200 M of government funding over three years. Leeds has won the single largest amount, £9.6 M, which will be nearly 5% of all the national funds. This reflects the support of the DfE for the Leeds strategy, faith in our ability to implement change and the strength of the city's partnership in improving outcomes for children.
- 2.4 This success with the Innovation Fund is just one of the city's recent successes in attracting funding for services for children and families. Other successes include additional funding for Families First, over £1.5 M for the Leeds-Wakefield Teaching Partnership and other social work training initiatives. Work is ongoing to attract further investment to support our strategy.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 Whilst the city has made great progress in recent years, and is well placed to continue that success, children's services face considerable challenges in the next few years. Our strategy is working but needs to accelerate and adapt to meet the new and increasing pressures of demographic growth and change, rising deprivation and the national trend of ever-rising demand for social care.
- 3.2 Over the past year Children's Services have been in negotiation with the DfE to secure additional support and investment to secure the next stage of our strategy. In February the Department confirmed that Leeds would be awarded £9.6 M over the next three years.

3.3 This additional funding will be used to accelerate the city's reform agenda, helping to trial and develop new approaches and reshape and refocus existing services. There are three main areas of new services:

- *Restorative Extended Support Teams (REST)*: these new teams will provide additional social work leadership and capacity for cluster teams, strengthening local working between social work, schools and other services. The teams will be initially targeted at the seven clusters of highest need and then expanded across the city.
- *Restorative Adolescent Service*: this service will work to integrate and improve practice and services for young people and their families. Funding will be used to invest in additional capacity and expertise in specialist support for these young people and their families, for example in additional clinical psychologists and speech and language therapists.
- *Centre for Excellence*: Leeds is already working as a 'Partner in Practice' with the DfE, one of a small number of high performing Local Authorities that work with government to provide support to weaker councils and to lead sector reform. The Centre for Excellence is designed to build on this work: strengthening our work on sector wide training and development; developing and sharing best practice; promoting research and evidence based practice; and consultancy support.

3.4 Work on these proposals is not fully finalised at this stage as negotiation has continued with DfE until very recently. Some areas of work, for example the REST, are already being piloted in some areas of the city. The Council is now leading an intensive programme of planning and consultation to ensure full implementation begins in the new financial year.

3.5 In addition to these three areas of change, the funding will also allow Children's Services to speed up work to reshape our existing services in order to continue the city's strategy whilst reducing costs and increasing efficiency in line with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 The initial proposals for the bid were developed through extensive consultation and cooperation with national government and key local partners in the NHS, schools and clusters. Implementation will be informed by further engagement and partnership working with local services, children and families over the next six months.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 The design of these proposals and their implementation will be, in part, shaped by an awareness of the variations in needs and demand across different areas and communities in the city. Implementation will therefore be informed by an analysis

of what works with the highest needs children and families and through consultation and engagement with these communities and families.

### **4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 These proposals are fully in line with Council policies and are an important element of the Best Council Plan and the ambition to make Leeds a Child Friendly City.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 These proposals will bring valuable additional investment to a key priority area for the Council at a time of high budget pressures. These funds will enable quicker progress on Children's Services strategy to invest in better early support in order to reduce the need for higher cost interventions, and to meet the aims of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 Owing to the timing of the formal notification that Children's Services have been successful in obtaining Partner in Practice funding of £9.6 million, the service could not meet the 28 day notice period required to publish this matter on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions. The funding requires immediate approval by the Local Authority to allow implementation of the plans submitted to the Department for Education, therefore, the proposed decisions set out in the recommendations of this report could not be deferred to the April Executive Board meeting. As such, it is proposed that the recommendations detailed within this report are considered at the 22 March 2017 Board meeting, in line with the Council's 'General Exception' procedures, as detailed at Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 2.5.

4.5.2 The notification of the Key decision has since been published on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions.

4.5.3 This report is subject to call-in.

### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 Analysis and mitigation of risk is a key element of the ongoing programme planning and management of Innovation Fund projects. These will be managed by the Director of Children's Services.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 Securing the largest share of the national Innovation Funding is a significant success for Leeds, and reflects the government's confidence in our strategy. The funding provides an invaluable opportunity at a time of serious budget pressures to not just protect the progress we have made but to take the next steps on our improvement journey.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to:

- Welcome the success of Children's Services in attracting funding to the city
- Endorse the acceptance, use and planned investment of Innovation Funding
- Delegate responsibility for implementation to the Director of Children's Services

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.