

Report of the Director of Children and Families

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 27th April 2017

Subject: Cluster sustainability position statement



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 type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" 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. March 31st 2017 marks the end of the current funding arrangements for clusters. Since 2012 there has been arrangement in place whereby Schools Forum has undertaken a 1% top slice of the DSG. This has created an annual £5.2m pot which has then been distributed to clusters via a needs based formula.
2. During this time there have been between 24 and 26 clusters as over time some clusters have merged and the SILC cluster has been established.
3. The current funding arrangements will cease on 31st March 2017 and new arrangements will come into effect on April 1st in most parts of the city. The purpose of this report is to update the children and families scrutiny board on the work that has been undertaken to ensure the sustainability of the cluster model and provide a position statement on the current level of continued buy in to the model (as at 24 March 2017).

Recommendations

4. That the report contents are noted
5. That the situation is further monitored over the next 6 months with a further update report to scrutiny in October 2017.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 March 31st 2017 marks the end of the current funding arrangements for clusters. Since 2012 there has been arrangement in place whereby Schools Forum has undertaken a 1% top slice of the DSG. This has created an annual £5.2m pot which has then been distributed to clusters via a needs based formula.
- 1.2 During this time there have been between 24 and 26 clusters as over time some clusters have merged and the SILC cluster has been established.
- 1.3 The current funding arrangements will cease on 31st March 2017 and new arrangements will come into effect on April 1st in most parts of the city. The purpose of this report is to update the children and families scrutiny board on the work that has been undertaken to ensure the sustainability of the cluster model and provide a position statement on the current level of continued buy in to the model (as at 24 March 2017).

2 Background information

- 2.1 The original agreement to top slice the DSG was for three years – 2013 – 2016. During this time the Education Funding Agency (EFA) introduced new regulations which required 100% of the DSG to be distributed to schools. However, in 2015 LCC applied to the EFA for a disapplication of the regulations to allow us to undertake a further top slice for the financial year 2016 – 17.
- 2.2 This was approved by the EFA on the proviso that by April 2017 there would be a 100% delegation of the DSG and that if schools wanted to continue cluster working they would work towards putting the necessary local arrangements in place.
- 2.3 The implications of this were that as we would no longer be able to undertake the top slice, the governing body of each school would need to take an individual decision to allocate some its own budget to a pooled cluster budget to be managed by one of the schools in the cluster.
- 2.4 Consequently a considerable amount of work has been focused over the last 2 years on sustaining the model by encouraging schools to buy back in at the local level.
- 2.5 Specifically the following activities have been undertaken:
 - A number of well attended city wide cluster events have been organised to raise awareness of the changes that are now imminent at which senior politicians and officers have talked about the way forward. In December 2016 the city wide event had a clear focus on life after the current arrangements end and gave an unequivocal indication of the impact of not being in a cluster which includes, no access to TSL support, no access to support and guidance meetings and no access to any third party funding invested into the cluster e.g. CCG funding for Targeted Mental health in schools (TAMHS)
 - A city wide governance workshop which has been followed up by a number of cluster based governance workshops – more than half the clusters accessed

these. N.B not all clusters required a workshop because they already had adequate and robust governance arrangements in place which have not required significant change.

- Local authority partners (LAPs) attending their clusters to talk about the funding changes and promote continued engagement. This has been an ongoing dialogue for the last two years
- Written communications with school governors about the work of the clusters and the impact of this on the children and families in their schools and importantly, the impact of this on learning. Included within this has been the presentation of key cluster data demonstrating the outcomes that have been achieved at the local level
- Targeted services leaders (TSLs) and Targeted Services Area Leads have attended both family of schools meetings and school governors meetings to talk about cluster sustainability and respond to questions arising
- All clusters have regular dialogue about cluster working at their committee meetings and planning for 1 April 2017 onwards by taking key decisions around funding, budgets etc.
- Regular communications from the Director of Children's Services about the transition to new arrangements as well as key developments in children's services which will be referred to below.

2.6 In addition to the above, during the period of the current funding arrangements the children and families scrutiny board has itself undertaken a major inquiry into clusters and their impact. The board's final report provided a sound endorsement of the model which it acknowledged as being widely regarded as 'a gift'.

2.7 Also, the report of the Ofsted inspection in 2015 highlighted on many occasions the value of this highly innovative model and the way it supports our focus on keeping children and young people in Leeds safe. This is particularly through the provision of targeted work early in the life of the problem and the role this plays in safely reducing the need for children and young people to come into care.

3 Main issues

3.1 Over the last five years the child friendly Leeds ambition to make Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in has been supported through a firm focus on the three obsessions of safely reducing the need for children to be in care, reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training and improving attendance at school. The cluster model has been central to this vision and almost all clusters have shown individual improvement against these three objectives.

3.2 Going forward, clusters remain central to the vision of Child Friendly Leeds 2 with its focus on narrowing the gap between the most vulnerable children and young people and their peers, locally and nationally. In particular, the focus of the learning related obsession of improving attendance will be widened to focus on the 3 As of **attainment, achievement and attendance**.

- 3.3 Against this emerging backdrop clusters continue to provide the geography around which early support services can be offered. However, we know from our data that in some parts of the city change isn't happening quickly enough and that the gaps between the vulnerable and their peers are too wide and that the numbers of children coming into care need to be further reduced, albeit with a firm focus on their safety.
- 3.4 With this in mind, children's services has been developing the restorative early support team (RES team) model which will be funded in part through the recently received £9.6m Innovation Fund grant. Working restoratively with existing cluster teams, services and children, young people and families, RES teams will bring additional professional skill and insight to working with our most challenging children, young people and their families.
- 3.5 In the first instance RES teams will be developed in the 6 – 8 highest need clusters but overtime the principles of RES team working will be rolled out to all clusters across Leeds.

4 Current picture of cluster sustainability 1 April 2017 onwards

- 4.6 There are currently 24 clusters. 23 of these are geographically based around the city and 1 cluster, the SILC cluster operates across most of the SILCs in Leeds. The new Springwell academy has also indicated that they intend to follow the cluster model and currently employ a part-time TSL to support them in developing this work.
- 4.7 The information at appendix 1 shows the following:
- Clusters where all schools have indicated that they will be buying back in to the model at a local level from 1 April 2017
 - Clusters where some schools have yet to decide
 - Clusters that intend to cease operating but where other options are currently being considered and evaluated

This information is subject to change but is current at the time of writing this report (24 03 17).

- 4.8 In addition to this, Schools Finance had previously taken a report to School Forum setting out a proposed funding formula for redistributing the DSG top slice back to schools. This was agreed and schools have now been informed both of their budgets for the coming year and separately, the amount of the top slice that they will receive back into their budgets.

5 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1.3 Wide ranging consultation and engagement about the changes has taken place over the last 2 years as indicated above.

5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.2.1 The updated Child Friendly Leeds vision referred to above specifically focusses on the needs of the most vulnerable so as to enhance integration amongst children and young people within all social groups and equality protected characteristics.

5.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 5.3.1 The cluster model is intrinsic to achieving the outcomes expressed in the children and young people's plan which highlights early help located in clusters as a key element of the strategy for delivering better outcomes for children and young people.

5.4 Resources and value for money

- 5.4.1 Cluster sustainability is key to the children's services strategy of safely reducing the need for children and young people to be in care and is therefore intrinsic to the budget strategy going forward.

5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 5.5.1 None

5.6 Risk Management

- 5.6.1 Ensuring the sustainability of the cluster model from 1 April 2017 onwards has been subject to quarterly monitoring through corporate risk register processes. The risk register identifies as far as possible all possible source of risk along with mitigation including all the activities referred to in para 2.5 above.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 That the cluster model is unique within the country and that schools value the targeted early help that the model offers as it allows them to focus on teaching and learning.
- 6.2 That the model has enabled us to 'turn the curve' on all obsessions but that there is a need to accelerate the pace of this in some clusters and that this will be enabled through the introduction of the restorative early support team model.
- 6.3 That due to the work undertaken over the last two years and widely shared agreement about the value of the model, the sustainability of clusters has largely been secured going forward.
- 6.4 That sustainability will continue to be affected by national changes to school funding and also potentially by the shift to academisation.
- 6.5 That the vast majority of clusters have 100% sign up to continue working together.
- 6.6 That there remains some clusters where some schools have still to sign up.
- 6.7 That there are also some clusters where current governance arrangements are coming to end but may well be replaced in due course.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 That the contents of this report are noted.
- 7.2 That the situation is further monitored over the next 6 months and that a further report is presented to scrutiny in October 2017.

8 Background documents¹

¹ 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.

Appendix 1 – Cluster status report as at 24 03 17

Clusters where all schools have bought back into the model from 1 April 2017

- 2gether (Chapeltown & Harehills and Carr Manor and Meanwood areas)
- ACES (Armley extended services)
- Aireborough
- ARM (Alwoodley, Roundhay and Moortown)
- Bramley
- Brigshaw
- EPOS (Wetherby, Boston Spa, Thorp Arch)
- ESNW (Cookridge and Adel)
- Garforth
- Horsforth
- Inner East
- Beeston, Cottingham, Middleton
- Otley, Poole, Bramhope
- Seacroft Manston
- TNLP (Temple Newsam and Halton)

Clusters which will be continuing but where some schools have yet to decide what they will do from 1 April 2017

- **Farnley** – all LA maintained schools have signed up to continue but the academies which are part of the Ruth Gorse MAT have yet to decide
- **JESS** – Beeston and Hunslet
- **Morley** – 10 primary schools have committed to continue working together along with Blackgates from Ardsley and Tingley. 4 academies have yet to decide
- **Pudsey** – 17/18 schools have opted in with agreement from one catholic primary academy still pending
- **Rothwell** – 11/12 schools have opted in with the agreement of one secondary academy still pending

SILC cluster – various locations across the city. Three out of five of the SILCs have indicated a commitment to pool funding for a further year with two SILCs still to finalise their intentions.

Clusters who have decided to terminate their existing arrangements and looking at possible new arrangements

- **Ardsley and Tingley**

The cluster formerly comprised of 8 schools. Blackgates primary has joined the Morley cluster and we have received an indication that 4 of the remaining schools, East Ardsley Primary Westerton Primary, Hill Top Primary and Woodkirk are exploring the options for forming into a new cluster that will be called CATSS

- **Inner North West hub** – Kirkstall, Headingley, Weetwood

The schools in this cluster have decided to terminate their existing cluster arrangements. Abbey Grange and Beecroft have indicated their intention to pull out of cluster working completely. The other schools in the cluster are having discussions about how they might work collaboratively in order to enable cluster functions to continue. This will involve the development of new cluster governance arrangements.

- **Open XS** – Little London area

The schools in this cluster have decided to terminate the existing cluster arrangements. The 5 primary schools already operate within the Lantern Trust and are currently looking at how they might discharge cluster services under new governance arrangements.