
Cabinet
Council

8th July 2014
15th July 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) – Councillor Ruane
Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) – Councillor Gannon

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director, Resources

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Establishment of a Cabinet Committee – Children's Services

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

During 2013/14 the Council and its partners received a Report into the Safeguarding Service which identified a number of areas where improvements were required in order to prevent a similar situation occurring in the future. In addition, the Council was subject to an Ofsted inspection which highlighted a number of additional areas of concern within Children's Services.

To help address the issues raised in the Safeguarding and Ofsted reports, when setting its budget for 2014/15, the Council identified additional funding for the People Directorate to support improvements within Children's Services.

When considering the budget proposals, the need for the close monitoring of spending against this additional funding by the Leader, Deputy Leader and relevant Cabinet Members was highlighted. In order to provide that monitoring and make any further specific recommendations arising from the monitoring of the position, it is recommended that a Cabinet Committee – Children's Services be established.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:-

1. Endorse the establishment of the 'Children's Services Cabinet Committee', together with its terms of reference and membership.

2. Endorse the delegation of authority to the Children's Services Cabinet Committee to receive and approve reports in relation to Children's Services arising from the additional funding made available and to make further specific recommendations to the appropriate bodies as required.
3. Instruct the Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer to make the consequential changes needed to the Constitution to include the Children's Services Cabinet Committee's terms of reference and membership.
4. Recommend that Council note the establishment of the Children's Services Cabinet Committee, as a requirement of the Constitution and outlined in paragraph 5.2 of the report.

The Council is recommended to:

1. Note the establishment of the Children's Services Cabinet Committee, as required under the Council's Constitution and outlined in paragraph 5.2 of the report.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents:

2014/15 Budget Report - [Report](#)

2013/14 Budgetary Control Period 8 - [Report](#)

2013/14 Outturn - [Report](#)

The Safeguarding Report - [Report](#)

The Ofsted Report - [Report](#)

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 15th July 2014

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 During 2013/14 the Council and its partners received a report into the safeguarding service following the tragic death of Daniel Pelka, which identified a number of areas where improvements were required in order to prevent a similar situation occurring in the future.
- 1.2 In addition, the Council was subject to an Ofsted inspection which highlighted a number of additional areas of concern within Children’s Services.
- 1.3 When considering the budget proposals at the Council meeting on 25th February 2014, the need for the close monitoring of spending against approved additional funding by the Leader, Deputy Leader and appropriate Cabinet Members, specifically the Children’s Services element, was highlighted.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 In order to provide the monitoring identified at the Council meeting, and make any further specific recommendations arising from the monitoring of the position, it is recommended that a Children’s Services Cabinet Committee be established.
- 2.2 The Children’s Services Cabinet Committee will be able to focus specifically on the work being undertaken within the Children’s Service to improve the service provision and how the additional money allocated is being spent.
- 2.3 With this focus, the Children’s Services Cabinet Committee will be decision making. The Committee will be able to approve spending up to £1.5m within the additional funding , and make further specific recommendations to appropriate bodies regarding the work being undertaken with the funding All other aspects of the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)’s portfolio responsibilities will remain unaffected by these proposals.
- 2.4 The alternative option would be to include monitoring of the Children’s Service within the regular financial reporting process. This option is not recommended as this would not provide such a detailed focus on the position of the funding within the Children’s Service. In addition, it would not fulfil the political commitment given at the Council Meeting on 24th February 2014 in relation to the monitoring of spend against this additional funding by the Leader, Deputy Leader and relevant Cabinet Members.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 There has been no specific consultation on the proposals within the report.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Once the proposals have been approved, arrangements will be made for meetings of the Cabinet Committee to take place on a bi-monthly basis.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

Although there are no specific financial implications arising from the proposals within this report, it is essential that careful monitoring of the financial position within Children's Services is undertaken. The proposals within this report will enable members to focus on that specific element of the People Directorate's budget and ensure that any spending is appropriate and achieves the desired aims.

The additional resource of £5.6M for the People Directorate is to fund existing pressures as set out in the budget setting report in February (appendix 2). There is also additional resource from reserves for the implementation of the OFSTED Action Plan as set out in the 2013/14 outturn report, which is also earmarked. Any decisions to vary usage will need to be looked at in the context of the overall budgetary control position of the directorate.

5.2 Legal implications

Section 9E(2) of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that the senior executive member of a council operating a leader and cabinet system may arrange for the discharge of executive functions in a variety of prescribed ways. In particular, the Leader of the Council may arrange for the discharge of functions by a committee of the executive. Whether or not to establish a Cabinet Committee for Children's Services is therefore a matter for the Leader to determine.

Under the provisions of the Council's Constitution, the Leader must report any alterations to arrangements for the allocation of executive functions to the next available meeting of full Council. The report is for information only.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The proposals within the report will contribute towards the Council's key objectives of ensuring that children and young people within the City remain safe and that value for money is achieved, whilst improving service provision to the most vulnerable in the City.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The financial situation is regularly monitored and any risks identified. The establishment of the Children's Services Cabinet Committee will provide further resilience to enable mitigation to be undertaken in respect of any risks that may be identified.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The impact on the organisation will be primarily in respect of officer time in preparing for and servicing the meetings. This will be managed within existing resources.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There has been no EIA undertaken in respect of the proposal to establish the Children's Services Cabinet Committee.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

There is no environmental impact.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

There is no direct impact on partner organisations arising from the establishment of the Children’s Services Cabinet Committee.

Report author(s):

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Resources

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Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
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Hugh Peacocke	Governance Services Team Manager	Resources	17/6/14	17/6/14
Adrian West	Members and Elections Team Manager	Resources	17/6/14	17/6/14
Other members				

Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Paul Jennings	Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)	Resources	18/6/14	18/6/14
Rachael Sugars	Finance Manager	Resources	18/6/14	18/6/14
Legal: Carol Bradford	Locum Legal Officer	Resources	18/6/14	18/6/14
Director: Chris West	Executive Director	Resources		
Members: Councillor Ruane	Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)		17/6/14	17/6/14
Councillor Gannon	Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)		17/6/14	17/6/14
Councillor Townshend	Cabinet Member (Policing and Equalities)		18/6/14	18/6/14

This report is published on the council's website:
www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Terms of Reference

Background:

The Children's Services Cabinet Committee has been established to provide a political focus and accountability for the improvement within the Children's Services, in particular, service delivery arising from the additional money allocated to the People Directorate for the purpose of improvements within the Children's Services section and identify further resources if required.

Status of the Committee:

The status of the Committee will be as a Cabinet Committee.

Purpose of the Committee :

To ensure that best value is achieved through the spending of additional funding to improve Children's Services.

Scope of the Committee:

- To approve spending up to £1.5m within the additional funding allocated by Council to support improvements within the Children's Service.
- To monitor, review and make any further specific recommendations in respect of the additional funding provided to enable improvements within Children's Services to be undertaken.
- To recommend to Cabinet Member, Cabinet and Council any further specific amendments regarding the funding of Children's Services.
- To ensure the funding of improvements within Children's Services and the actions taken to improve the service are transparent, open and fair.

Membership:

The membership of the committee is proposed to be:-

- Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance & Resources) (Chair)
- Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) (Deputy Chair)
- Leader of the Council
- Deputy Leader of the Council

By invitation as Non-voting members:-

- Shadow Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)
- Shadow Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)
- Leader of the Opposition
- Deputy Leader of the Opposition
- Chair of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Advisors to the Committee:

- Executive Directors, Resources and People
- Assistant Directors, Resources and People
- Judge Hamilton

Quorum:

The Quorum for the Committee will be three. Committee members are able to nominate alternative Cabinet Members to attend if substitutes are required.

Decision Making:

Decisions will be decided by a majority vote with the Chair having the casting vote.

Frequency of Meetings:

The Committee will meet bi-monthly or more frequently as is needed.