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| CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | Agenda Item No. 8 |
| 12 NOVEMBER 2012 | Public Report |

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services

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CHILDREN'S JOINT COMMISSIONING BOARD

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report makes recommendations for changing the current Children's Trust arrangements in order to meet statutory responsibilities and to put in place arrangements that focus on joint commissioning and delivery to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For the Committee to consider the proposals to replace the Peterborough Children's Trust Board and replace it with a Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Children's Trust arrangements were introduced through The Children Act 2004 which placed a statutory duty to cooperate on key agencies and a leadership role for Local Authorities to lead effective partnership arrangements. Through the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009, the previous government introduced additional requirements to make the Children's Trust Board a statutory body responsible for agreeing a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The previous government also introduced highly prescriptive guidance on the development of the CYPP. These additional requirements have since been removed by the current government; however the original statutory duty to cooperate remains, as does the requirement for a Director of Children's Services and a Lead Member with accountability for partnership arrangements.
- 3.2 The government has been very clear that it still expects Local Authorities to develop highly effective partnership arrangements to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. This principle is underlined in Professor Munro's Review of Child Protection 2011 which highlights the importance of effective and co-ordinated multi-agency working through the Children's Trust to secure better outcomes for children and young people. This is further emphasised in the Ofsted Inspection Framework for Children's Services.
- 3.3 Changes to our partnership architecture in Peterborough, the need to take a more robust commissioning approach to services for children, young people and families and issues arising from the Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding services required a review of the Peterborough Children's Trust.
- 3.4 In conducting this review, the views of current Children's Trust members were sought, information on strategic partnership arrangements for oversight of the children, young people and families agenda in other Local Authorities was gathered and an analysis of other Peterborough strategic groups with an interest in priority areas for children, young people and families was undertaken.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 As a result of national changes all of our regional neighbours are reviewing or refreshing their Children's Trust partnerships. Across these Authorities, there is a general move to streamline and ensure a tighter focus on prevention and early intervention for vulnerable children. Where revised partnerships have taken action to reduce their membership, they have at the same time set out their intention to meet with a wider stakeholder group to involve them in joint planning and review. It should be noted, however, that no authority is planning to remove its strategic partnership arrangements for children, young people and families completely.
- 4.2 Partners on the Peterborough Children's Trust Board were invited to share their views. There was recognition from the majority that the current Board was too large to carry out its business effectively and that its role and remit had been too wide – making it difficult to ensure that it focused on the right things at the right time. Board members lacked clarity as to what should be the business of the Board and what should be the business of one agency or two agencies working together. This led to very full agendas and insufficient time to focus and take the necessary decisions. The overall messages were that any revised arrangements need to have:
- Streamlined membership with a clear sense of purpose;
 - Stronger leadership and links to other key partnerships – clear vision and agreed joint outcomes and targets;
 - Clearer accountability, rigorous performance management and scrutiny processes;
 - More openness and transparency;
 - Clearer processes to enable aligning of resources to deliver outcomes;
 - Improved communications and connections between all stakeholders strategically and locally.
- 4.3 The unique contribution of a revised strategic partnership would be to agree and ensure appropriate commissioning and delivery around the priority areas for our vulnerable children and families in Peterborough, where the joint action and focus of three or more agencies is required to tackle the issues and improve outcomes in a sustained way. This approach will be captured in the development of an Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and action plan.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Children's Trust to cease and be replaced by a Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board. It is recommended that the new Board would:
- Set the direction for joint action to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families in Peterborough, ensure implementation and scrutinise progress and outcomes;
 - Focus on joint commissioning and delivery ;
 - Oversee integrated workforce development to support the delivery of the agreed priority areas;
 - Ensure participation of vulnerable children, young people and their families in agreeing and shaping of priorities for joint action and in reviewing the effectiveness of jointly commissioned programmes;
 - Set the planning, delivery and outcomes framework around joint commissioning and delivery;
 - Ensure active involvement of stakeholders, in particular those set out within the "duty to co-operate", in the shaping of priorities, the approach to delivery and evaluation of outcomes.
- 5.2 Working on the premise that the new partnership would be a joint strategic commissioning board, bringing together increasingly limited resources across the system to tackle shared priorities and supporting the DCS and Lead Member in carrying out their statutory roles of securing better outcomes for children and young people in Peterborough, the recommendation is that the revised board should be streamlined and have the ability and authority to carry out the business as set out above, with a membership as follows:

- Local Authority Children’s Services
- Local Authority Adult Services
- Local Authority Neighbourhood Services
- Police
- PSCB
- Public Health
- Primary Care Trust /Clinical Commissioning Group
- Strategic Health Authority
- Schools Forum
- Job Centre Plus
- Voluntary Sector
- Housing Strategy

The Children and Families Commissioning Board will meet a minimum of four times a year in March, June, October and January. There will also be the option to call additional meetings to address specific issues that require agreement, decision or action.

Members of the revised Board will be senior officers. As such, they will have existing mechanisms for reporting back and securing formal approvals when necessary.

Accountability for the Board will be through the Director of Children’s Services (DCS) and Lead Member, reporting through the Health and Well-being Board. The Board will ensure productive relations with other key partnerships e.g. Safer Peterborough Partnership and Greater Peterborough Partnership, to secure improving outcomes for children, young people and families. A key relationship will be with the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board.

It will be crucial to ensure that all key stakeholders are actively engaged and are able to influence decisions around strategic priorities, align their own work, where appropriate, to support key strategic agendas, provide intelligence and feedback from front line work with families, provide support and challenge and contribute to evaluation of outcomes.

5.3

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

The recommendations will not have any direct impact on the capital or revenue budgets of the Authority. The indirect impact should be through improved joint commissioning and value for money services delivering better outcomes for Peterborough’s children, young people and families.

6.2 Legal

All legal requirements, including ensuring the “duty to co-operate” have been referred to within the main body of this report. In order to ensure that all partners set out within the “duty to co-operate” are involved in working with the Authority to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and families including those not represented on the Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board, it is vital that the recommended stakeholder advisory group is set up to support the work of the Board.

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 Equality Impact Assessments

An initial assessment has been undertaken. The intention of the recommended new arrangements is to ensure an improved focus on vulnerable groups and an improvement in the joint commissioning of appropriate services for those groups that are better targeted and delivering improved outcomes.

7.2 Risk and Business Continuity Management

Changing the size of the Board alone will not deliver a more effective partnership. The effectiveness of any new arrangements will rely on the commitment of all members, their ability to prioritise, the robustness of communication and engagement with key stakeholders, the ability to commit resources to joint commissioning.

7.3 Recommendations

Members are requested to agree/endorse the recommendation(s) as printed on page 1 of this report.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

8.1 None

9. APPENDICES

9.1 None