

Integrated Front Door Services for Children

Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

December 2018

Deadline date: N/A

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director for People and Communities.
Is this a Key Decision?	YES If yes has it been included on the Forward Plan: Not for full 28 days (urgency procedures invoked) Unique Key decision Reference from Forward Plan: KEY/24DEC18/03
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	YES
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Member is recommended to authorise that:

1. The Council enter into a Delegation Agreement (DA) with Cambridgeshire County Council for the provision of an Integrated Front Door Service for Children across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire for a period of 5 years from 1 January 2019 with an option to extend for up to a further 5 years, with Cambridgeshire County Council as the lead authority;
2. That a shared Integrated Front Door Service for Children is provided by Cambridgeshire for both Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council;
3. That Cambridgeshire County Council accepts the delegation of functions from Peterborough City Council as agreed and listed in the DA; and
4. That the Director of Governance amends the constitution to reflect the delegated functions to Cambridgeshire County Council.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to consider exercising delegated authority under paragraph 3.4.3. and 3.4.4. of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph (a), (c) and (f).
- 1.2 With the approval of the Chairman of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee Urgency procedures have been invoked to suspend the requirement to advertise the decision for the full 28 days.
- 1.3 This is in order to protect service delivery during the handover period of the contract. This service is critical in ensuring that the vulnerable service users are appropriately evaluated and signposted to the right services for assessment, and it is important to ensure that there is a smooth transfer from PCC to CCC. This also involves a third partner (Serco) and the timing has been influenced by the need to finalise arrangements with them as well.

2. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 This report seeks approval to implement a shared Integrated Front Door for Children's Services with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) from 1 January 2019 until 1 January 2024, with a potential for an extension until 1 January 2029 subject to agreement of the authorities.

This is intended to consolidate a range of formal and informal arrangements in Children's Services across the two Authorities and support the shared services agenda in relation to wider Council activity.

The Integrated Front Door has been delivered by a combination of CCC and PCC staff since April 2017 in relation to the Early Help Hub, signposting and triaging work that may require an Early Help Assessment, and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), which assesses concerns for children, and decides on the appropriate response to these. This service is based in Godmanchester in police accommodation, and is overseen by shared senior managers employed by PCC. This has been an informal arrangement whilst services have been tested out, and with the recent changes in the structure, it is now important to formalise the arrangement.

The Emergency Duty Team, providing an urgent response to safeguarding issues for adults and children, has been subject to a shared arrangement between the two authorities since 1998. This service is managed from within the Integrated Front Door, and it would be helpful to update the memorandum of understanding there to be included within this process.

The Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Hub (MET Hub) is also sited in the Integrated Front Door, and has to date provided services to CCC children only in relation to issues impacting on vulnerable adolescents such as child sexual or criminal exploitation. These issues frequently cross geographical boundaries, and our police and health colleagues work across the whole area to disrupt and prosecute activity where possible. It would improve safeguarding opportunities and add resilience to the PCC service to combine it with the CCC service, and this will become one cross-county service from December 2018. Again, it is important to place this agreement within a formal framework.

Finally, we have made some significant changes to the way our Customer Service colleagues will receive children's enquiries, instituting a new screening function that improves the efficiency of service delivery and is more cost effective in ensuring that children in need of support are signposted to the right expert staff to help them in a more timely and streamlined manner. This service has been delivered by CCC Customer Service Centre to the MASH for CCC children and by Serco Contact Centre staff to the MASH for PCC children to date, and the proposal is to consolidate the two services. CCC will now deliver this function on behalf of both Authorities, and will create resilience, consistency and efficiency in the process.

It is proposed that one single delegation agreement covers all five of these functions as they are fundamentally interrelated and managed from one service area. There will be a governance and operational board established to oversee the delegation on a quarterly basis.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This is a key decision, with Cabinet Member and Director support for the shared service agreement. PCC and CCC staff have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposal. Discussions leading up to the formation of the proposed agreement post January 2019 have taken place between PCC and CCC officers over several months, including the recent formal consultation in CCC. During this period of discussion staff from both councils have been working collaboratively on a number of service delivery work streams. Some activity has been shared informally since April 2017, and this has been built on to inform the current work.
- 4.2 A formal consultation process is also now underway between CCC and Serco in relation to the Customer Service Centre roles, and staff will be able to input individual views into the process.

5. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 5.1 It is anticipated that approval for the implementation of an agreement will be given. This will provide a more resilient Integrated Front Door Service for Children for both PCC and CCC, and one which is better placed to meet the needs of an increasing population. A shared service will be more efficient than existing arrangements, and provide a better platform from which to work more effectively and efficiently with wider partners across the County to improve safeguarding for children.

6. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 PCC and CCC are now joined together by the shared People and Communities Directorate. This has been in operation since June 2017, and whilst Children's Services in the two Authorities are separate operational entities, they have been successfully working together on a number of projects for the last 18 months.

PCC and CCC recognise that this agreement helps provide efficiencies and adds resilience to service provision at a time when service demand is increasing. All our partner agencies work across the local authority boundaries, and a bigger service operating across a wider geographical area would provide a better platform from which to provide services. This is especially true in relation to criminal activity in relation to the criminal exploitation of children.

CCC currently provide the bulk of the service areas under consideration ie the Emergency Duty Team, the MET Hub, the Early Help Hub and the Customer Service Centre. It is the best option to transfer small numbers of PCC and Serco staff to the bigger CCC service to maximise the benefits of consolidation.

The advantages for both councils of a shared service have been identified as:

- More focused, consistent and effective safeguarding services for children across both PCC and CCC
- Mixed skill and qualification based staffing group in key safeguarding services for both PCC and CCC, increasing resilience and flexibility in service provision.
- Increased pool of customer service centre staff with specialist Children's Services knowledge, experience and expertise arising from a larger staffing resource.
- Opportunities for efficiencies through removing the need for separate information systems (this is in preparation for future developments).
- Efficiencies through having a lean management team.
- Opportunities for efficiencies through savings on premises and central corporate costs.
- Economies of scale in the provision of training, through the ability to have a greater percentage of training delivered at council premises and in house, thus enabling more staff to benefit as well as providing better value for money.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 The council could decide not to enter into new shared service arrangements with CCC, though there are no alternative shared service opportunities at this time. There is an option to retain status quo, this doesn't however add the resilience to service provision at a time of growing service demand, nor does it maximise future best practice or value for money opportunities.

8. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 8.1 Detailed financial arrangements will be contained in the agreement documentation. This will be submitted for sign off by the corporate director under his constitutional delegated authority. As part of the detailed budget analysis Peterborough would exercise sufficient due diligence to ensure any identified financial risks are acceptable. The most recent 16/17 Budgetary Control details for CCC Integrated Front Door Children's Services have been reviewed and there are no reported budget issues. The delegated budget will be approximately £469,696.

The delegated budget is set out in detail in Schedule 3 of the Partnership Agreement.

The shared service budget will be subject to normal monthly budget monitoring processes at the council, and a review annually.

Legal Implications

- 8.2 Under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 a local authority may delegate its functions to another local authority. Cambridgeshire County Council will become statutory responsible for the Council's functions in relation to safeguarding under the Children Act 1989.

The delegation of the Council's functions will be set out in the Delegation Agreement, which shall also cover governance, costs, liabilities, data protection and exit provisions.

The Delegation Agreement will fall outside of the scope of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as such administrative arrangements are expressly exempt from the EU procurement regime by virtue of Regulation 12 (7).

Equalities Implications

8.3 Services will continue to be offered at the same level, so there are no equalities implications arising from this decision.

Other Implications

8.4 Improved service for return home interviews for children who go missing from care

9. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

9.1 None.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

10.1 None.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None.