

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Report of Cllr Trevor Carter, Executive Member for Place and Rob Walker, Executive Director of Place.

To: Cabinet - 5 January 2016

Author: Rob Walker, Executive Director of Place

Subject: Early Help In Breckland

Purpose: This report seeks Cabinet endorsement of the transformational activity being undertaken on early intervention and the development of a Help Hub in Thetford.

Recommendation(s): It is recommended that Cabinet: -

- 1) Endorse and support the transformational work on early intervention that is being developed by this Council in partnership with Norfolk County Council *to enable stronger, more independent communities*;
- 2) Support the development of a Help Hub at Breckland House, Thetford;
- 3) Require that a Performance Framework is developed to quantify the benefits realised through early intervention in Breckland.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Breckland Council has been committed to the co-location and co-design of services with public sector partners for a number of years. For example, in 2010 the Council and Norfolk Constabulary established the first Operational Partnership Team in Norfolk, which brought together the teams in both organisations dealing with anti-social behaviour and community safety. A key premise of this Team was to provide a more joined-up / coordinated approach to case management and to intervene as early as possible, solving issues before they become significant problems. Since its inception, the Operational Partnership Team has overseen a reduction in ASB cases in Breckland of over 50%.
- 1.2 Going forward, this approach – to co-location, co-design of services and early intervention – can be replicated and developed elsewhere in Breckland to deliver similar positive results, most notably in those services provided for children, young people and families.
- 1.3 Breckland Council wants all children and young people living in the district to have the best start in life and receive the on-going support that they and their families need to fulfil their full potential. This objective is reflected within Breckland Council's Corporate Plan for 2014-2019 under the priority to *enable stronger, more independent communities*.

Early Intervention

- 1.4 Core services provided by the Council and a range of partner agencies directly to children, young people and their families have a key role in promoting health and wellbeing. For the vast majority, these services ensure that children and young people achieve their full potential and have good quality outcomes.

- 1.5 However, from time to time, some children and young people will become “vulnerable”. They may have difficulty at home or at school, their development may be delayed, and they may break the law or have health difficulties. The Council needs to work in an integrated manner with its partner agencies to identify vulnerable children and young people as early as possible and work with them to address their personal or contextual challenges and provide services that will make a difference to them.
- 1.7 Early intervention is about acting quickly; spotting vulnerability promptly; it's about stopping problems escalating [with children and young people] and before they become difficult to reverse. Early intervention covers an array of different sectors including education, health, and community safety. Because a child, young person or family can experience an array of problems all at once, early intervention requires a multilevel, holistic approach across the whole sector and all tiers of local government.
- 1.8 Early intervention is about a collaborative, partnership approach to providing effective support. In England and Wales, we spend £17 billion per year on addressing problems that affect children and young people (*Early Intervention Foundation*). To reduce this cost whilst preventing substantial difficulties and wasted potential, early intervention is seen as critical. Early intervention represents an intelligent approach to spending; it requires small investments to deal with root causes, rather than the much greater costs of dealing with the after-effects.

Help Hubs

- 1.9 One way of delivering early intervention successfully across council and public sector services is through the introduction and development of [Early] Help Hubs.
- 1.10 Hubs are sites where agencies from across the public sector are co-located to deliver a single integrated early intervention service. Partners in the hubs help people to access a wide range of support, including; housing, benefits, family support, anti-social behavior, positive activities for children and young people, support in the community, substance misuse and mental health.
- 1.11 The hubs enable partners to consult with one another, share information and work together to ensure children, young people and families receive the most appropriate and effective support in a joined-up manner and at the earliest opportunity. Collaborative working across hubs reduces delay and duplication and focuses work on locally identified need.
- 1.12 Recently, South Norfolk District Council has received considerable support from Norfolk County Council's Children's Service's department in developing a Help Hub at Long Stratton as well as a deliver hub in Diss. This has been recognised by Norfolk County Council as a pathfinder Help Hub in Norfolk. Norfolk County Council now aims to develop similar hubs across the County.
- 1.13 The roll out of Help Hubs across Norfolk coincides with a move by Norfolk County Council to locality based working in Early Years and Children Service's teams and the integration of County and District services is a key element of the early intervention model and Hub development.

The Breckland Context

- 1.14 As of 1 September 2015, the Early Years and Children Services Teams (Breckland locality teams) have been based in Dereham and are currently accommodated in the Breckland Business Centre. Norfolk County Council are looking to locate part of this team to Thetford at the earliest opportunity. A presence will be retained in Dereham.

- 1.15 Work has been undertaken by officers at Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council on establishing a Help Hub in Breckland at the earliest opportunity, on the back of the early success of similar models elsewhere in the county.
- 1.16 It is proposed that two Hubs are created in Breckland; first in Thetford and followed by a second Hub in Dereham. The Hubs will provide service coverage across the entire district.
- 1.17 The Thetford Hub will be established in Q4 2015/16 and will at outset involve Norfolk County Council, Breckland Council, Norfolk Constabulary, Anglia Revenues Partnership, Flagship and the voluntary sector. A Steering Group has been formed and has met three times with representatives and input from Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council, Keystone Development Trust, The Benjamin Foundation, Flagship Housing, ARP and Norfolk Constabulary.
- 1.18 It is expected that the number of partners involved will grow organically once the Hub has been established amongst the most significant partners listed above.
- 1.19 The Hub will be located at Breckland House, Thetford; benefitting from the central location, available space and the existing presence of ARP, Breckland Council, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and the anticipated future co-location of DWP. Level 8 at Breckland House is currently vacant and this space will be utilized as the Hub. The annual service charge for this space is £13,482 plus VAT and will be recovered proportionately from the partners involved [dependent on the desk space they each utilise].
- 1.20 No investment is required at this stage by the Council to enable the development of the Help Hub in Thetford and there will be no increase in the establishment. The early intervention approach and Help Hub is about working differently – through the co-location and co-design of services – within existing resources and capacity.

Performance Framework

- 1.21 A performance framework needs to be established in the early stages of this work and this is reflected in the report's recommendations. This performance framework will be consistent with the benefits realisation process being followed as part of the Council's Transformation Programme. Impact will be expected in two main categories: 1) improvements in outcomes and indicators for the individuals concerned; and, 2) reductions in demand for service provision. These benefits will be realised - in the main – not directly by the district council [although there are clear benefits to district residents] but those leading on health and social care provision/delivery. This benefit needs to be quantified and captured as part of the performance framework.
- 1.22 Performance Frameworks have been developed elsewhere in the country, often as part of a business case process. A useful summary of this work is attached to this report at **Appendix 1** in a report produced by the Early Intervention Foundation. Working with Norfolk County Council an effective performance framework will be developed using this evidence and resource but reflecting local and intervention specific factors.

2.0 OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet has the following options: -

To endorse and support the transformational work on early intervention that is being developed by this Council in partnership with Norfolk County Council *to enable stronger, more independent communities;*

and

To support the development of a Help Hub at Breckland House, Thetford;

and

To require that a Performance Framework is developed to quantify the benefits realised through early intervention in Breckland.

or

To do nothing or any other action Cabinet determines appropriate.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 Many of the benefits have been described above. An early intervention approach will ensure a better quality of service for children, young people and families in Breckland. Early intervention will prevent problems developing around, for example: school attendance and attainment, crime and ASB, health and mental health, finance and debt.
- 3.2 This approach will shift spending, action and support for children, young people and families from *Late* to *Early* intervention, from being reactive to giving everyone the best possible start in life (proactive).

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4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

- 4.1 A number of the clear service benefits are detailed within the body of the report. As noted above, the Early Intervention Foundation estimates that - in England and Wales - we are spending nearly £17 billion per year on addressing the damaging problems that affect children, young people and families.
- 4.4 *Late* Intervention is expensive and it is difficult to argue it is the best way of committing the public sectors' resources. Whilst not all of this cost can be prevented, effective and timely early intervention should reduce the need for *late* intervention, and in so doing free up capacity in services that are under increasing pressure from rising demand.
- 4.5 Whilst it can be realistically estimated how much is spent on *late* intervention, there is no comprehensive estimate of spending on early intervention for children and young people at either national or local level and, more notably, the consequential financial benefit this intervention brings.
- 4.6 It is difficult to quantify the financial impact of early intervention and where in the public sector the efficiencies of early intervention will be materialized. As highlighted above, it is anticipated that Breckland can complete a benefits realization study that goes some way to assessing and quantifying the financial impact. This is reflected in the recommendations made by this report.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Contracts

- 5.1.1 Contracts will be put in place with the relevant agencies, including Norfolk County Council,

for the lease of space on Level 8, Breckland House, Thetford.

5.2 Corporate Priorities

5.2.1 The Early Intervention Hub will contribute to delivery against the priority to *enable stronger, more independent communities* in Breckland Council's Corporate Plan 2014-19.

5.3 Crime and Disorder

5.3.1 Norfolk Constabulary are a key stakeholder in the early intervention work and will link their existing resource in to the Help Hub at Thetford. The successful Operational Partnership Team that operates out of Elizabeth House, Dereham will remain in place but will link to the Hub.

5.4 Equality and Diversity / Human Rights

5.4.1 The arrangements described in this report are likely to enhance the service provided by the Council to vulnerable people with protected characteristics by providing a holistic service and minimise the need to engage with different agencies.

5.5 Financial

5.5.1 There would be no additional costs to Breckland at this stage. The early intervention approach is about working differently with existing resources and, for example, not increasing the establishment.

5.5.2 The only financial impact would be the loss of any potential [commercial] rent from Level 8 at Breckland House, Thetford. The service charge for Level 8 (£13,482 plus VAT) will be covered proportionately by the partners occupying the space.

5.5.3 Installation and development costs will be covered by the partners as described above.

5.6 Health & Wellbeing

5.6.1 The introduction of an early intervention approach and the Early Intervention Hub will strengthen the Council's approach to health and wellbeing by providing a holistic service and minimise the need to engage with different agencies.

5.7 Risk Management

5.7.1 If the service specific arrangements referred to above are not maintained and developed, there is a risk that issues become more entrenched and difficult to deal with.

5.8 Safeguarding

5.8.1 The introduction of an early intervention approach and the Help Hub will strengthen the Council's approach to safeguarding and prevent future Child Protection referrals as appropriate.

5.9 Staffing

5.9.1 No additional resource is required and the establishment will not be increased. The early intervention approach is about working more effectively with existing resource and making processes more efficient. As service specific reviews are completed as part of the

Council's on-going Transformation Programme the opportunity for linking officer resource to the Help Hub will be explored where appropriate. It is expected, the first instance, that officers from the Communities and Housing teams will work collaboratively with colleagues from partner agencies in the Help Hub.

5.10 Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales

5.10.1 Initially, Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Constabulary will be the key stakeholders involved with the Help Hub. A steering group involving all three partners has been established and is overseeing this work. It is anticipated that the Help Hub will be operational before 31 March 2016.

5.11 Other

5.11.1 Not applicable.

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 All Thetford Wards. All Attleborough Wards. All Wards and communities in Breckland south of the B1108 (matching Children Service's locality team geography).

6.2 If successful, the approach will be delivered district wide and a second hub will introduced in Dereham to cover - the town itself and - the north of the district.

7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 Not applicable

Background papers:- No background papers

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Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices

Appendix 1: Making an Early Intervention Business Case: Evidence and Resources.