

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....8th March 2012

1. Title of Item/Report

EIT Review of Children's Social Care

2. Record of the Decision

Members considered a report coming from the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) review of children's social care. The review had been a Gateway review under the auspices of the Arts, Leisure and Culture (ALC) Select Committee.

The review considered the full range of children's social care services provided by the Council and was undertaken against the backdrop of well documented workload pressures. Like the majority of local authorities nationally and regionally, the Council has experienced an upsurge in the numbers of referrals following the death of Peter Connolly in Haringey. It was also considered likely that the current economic climate was at least partially responsible for this rise, as financial hardship puts families under increased pressure and stress. The increase in the numbers of referrals had translated into unprecedented workload pressures throughout the children's social care system. As a result of these pressures, it was accepted at the outset of this review that cashable savings were unlikely due to the statutory duty to provide children's social care services.

Although the review concluded that fundamental transformational change was not required, a number of areas were identified where service improvements were considered crucial, in order to ensure the service was able to cope with increasing workload pressures, was provided in the most cost effective manner and achieved the best possible outcomes for children.

The proposed recommendations were designed to achieve three key aims:

- To make the service more responsive and flexible to the needs of service users, by aiming to reduce the number of unnecessary changes of social worker and team required for any children and families in receipt of social care services.

- To ensure the service was better able to cope with increasing workload pressures, by sharing the workload more evenly across social work teams and enhancing the professional development of staff.
- To enable the service to be provided in the most efficient and cost effective manner by reducing the reliance on temporary arrangements and costly agency staff.

Taken together, these recommendations were considered crucial in order to ensure the service continued to move forward in a positive direction and was able to achieve the best possible outcomes for children in Stockton-on-Tees, within the available resources.

RESOLVED that:

1. the existing separation between specialist and targeted social work teams be removed and six fieldwork teams be created as outlined in section 6.1.1 of the report.
2. a permanence team (0 - 13) be established, as outlined in section 6.1.4 of the report.
3. the remit of the young people's Looked After Children team be reviewed and this team becomes the permanence team (14 - 18) in order to work coherently alongside the permanence team (0 - 13) as outlined in section 6.1.6 of the report
4. a family support team be established as outlined in sections 6.1.10 - 6.1.13 of the report
5. some family support resources be attached to fieldwork teams as outlined in section 6.1.10 of the report.
6. the existing protocol for the transfer of work between Referral and Assessment Team and the longer term social work teams be reviewed as outlined in section 6.1.14. of the report.
7. family and friend foster carer assessments be undertaken by the child placement team as outlined in section 6.1.15 of the report.
8. level M workers be spread evenly across fieldwork teams and that some less experienced workers be moved into the referral and assessment team in order to achieve a more balanced workforce across

the children's social care service as outlined in section 6.1.16. of the report.

9. a small number of posts be formally reviewed to determine whether these functions could be more efficiently or effectively provided from elsewhere in the council as outlined in section 6.1.17. of the report.

10. a number of the existing temporary arrangements be 'mainstreamed' by establishing substantive posts to perform those functions as outlined in section 6.1.18. of the report

11. the proposed new management structure option B (appendix 3 to the report) be adopted as outlined in sections 6.2.1 - 6.2.4 of the report.

12 the recruitment and retention scheme ceases at 31 March 2012 as outlined in section 6.3.1 of the report.

13. the level M grade be reviewed as outlined in section 6.3.3. of the report.

14. the commencement of a 30 day formal consultation period be authorised, with staff included in the review.

15. authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Social Care in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member to implement the new staffing structures on completion of the consultation referred to at 14 above.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To produce efficiencies and improvements in the delivery of children's social care services as part of Stockton on Tees Borough Council's EIT programme in order to improve outcomes for children and families in receipt of children's social care services.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday 12 March 2012

Proper Officer  
12 March 2012