

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

14 January 2016

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Children and Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor McCoy

MULTI-AGENCY CHILDREN'S HUB

1. Summary

This report sets out a proposal to establish a Multi-Agency Children's Hub with Hartlepool Borough Council. The Hub will be a first point of contact for Children's referrals including safeguarding matters and will replace Stockton's First Contact Children's service. The staff from this service will transfer to Hartlepool Borough Council who will be the lead authority for the new arrangements. Partners in the Hub include the Police, North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust and Tees Esk and Wear Valleys Foundation Trust as key partners.

The new arrangement will cost £121k per annum more than Stockton's First Contact Children's service and full detail is set out in this report. The new service will be established on the basis of an 'invest to save' proposal to be funded from the Transformation fund. The savings will come from a more targeted service and ultimately a reduction in the number of referrals to Children's Social Care.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

1. agree the proposal for a joint Multi-Agency Children's Hub with Hartlepool Borough Council
2. agree that Hartlepool Borough Council be the lead authority with appropriate delegation of function (pursuant to Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, Regulation 6 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 and Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000
3. delegate responsibility for agreeing the Memorandum of Understanding between Hartlepool and Stockton Borough Councils to the Director of Children's Services in conjunction with the Deputy Chief Executive and the Lead Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
4. agree the £181k first 18 months additional costs of the new service and the £31k one-off set up costs be met from the Transformation fund
5. receive regular updates on MACH progress once the service is operational.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

Best practice indicates that a multi-agency approach is the most effective way of making decisions about how best to deal with children and their families to secure the best possible outcomes.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to:

1. agree the proposal for a joint Multi-Agency Children's Hub with Hartlepool Borough Council
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DETAIL

Background

1. The project was developed based on findings in serious case reviews, inspections and research that agencies need to improve information sharing and the way they work together to share risk assessments, make decision and improve children's lives.
2. In early 2014, the directors of Adults and Children across Tees in consultation with police began to explore the potential development of a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in the Cleveland Police force area. The police were keen to develop a Tees wide MASH that would be coterminous with the force boundaries; however at a workshop held in June 2014 involving the local authorities, police and health partners, it was identified that a north/south model would be more achievable. It was further agreed that the development of a MASH would commence in the north involving collaboration between Stockton and Hartlepool Borough Councils and partners.
3. Hartlepool Borough Council bid for and secured funding from Department for Communities and Local Government Transformation Challenge to undertake a wide review and transformation of its children services. Included in the bid was an element of funding for the development of the North Tees MASH in the 2015/16 financial year.
4. Following some initial work it was agreed that the model of working was more than just safeguarding and therefore the proposal is for a multi agency Children's Hub. It is proposed that the North Tees multi agency Children's Hub will be delivered by Hartlepool Borough Council and this will include the arrangements for Stockton Borough Council.

Proposal

5. The proposed model for the North Tees multi agency Children's Hub is, as far as possible, a single point of access to services for children. The Safer Referral Tool (currently in use across Tees) will be used as the mechanism for referring a child into the Multi Agency Hub where there are additional needs that have been identified regarding an individual child or family. Upon receipt of the referral, the Hub will undertake joint screening, proportionate review of partner information and triage the referral through to the most appropriate service that can meet the identified needs. The intention is that every child referred to the Hub will receive a service which is proportionate to the presenting level of need and there will be no referrals where 'no further action' is the outcome.
6. The Hub will be made up of, as a minimum, the local authorities, Cleveland Police, Tees Esk and Wear Valley Trust and North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust. Other agencies that may be involved in the Hub include probation, housing providers, domestic abuse services and substance misuse services. As the model develops, further discussions will be undertaken with these services to consider what contribution they can make to Hub and whether this will be by having staff based within the Hub or through more virtual links.
7. The multi agency nature of the Hub means that partner agencies who are seeking to refer a child for an early help or social care service will have the opportunity to seek and receive advice and guidance from officers within their own profession. This will provide professionals with a framework to discuss potential referrals regarding children they are working with, access support in relation to an early help assessment and identify what work that can be done to meet any early emerging needs. The partners based within the Hub will also be in a position to feedback to their own organisations on actions necessary as a result of contacts to the Hub.
8. The overall benefits of developing a multi-agency children's hub are as follows:

To Children and families / service users

- Children and families receive the right services at the right time;
- Decision making in context of whole picture of child's world;
- Single place for seeking advice, guidance, support and direct services;
- Opportunities to proactively support families and avoid escalation of need;
- Integrated pathways into services.

To the organisations

- Coordinated use of intelligence to inform timely and proportionate decision making;
- More efficient use of multi agency resources;
- Development and sharing of expertise;
- Streamlining processes;
- Using intelligence to identify vulnerable children and families;
- Opportunity for a multi agency response.

9. It is proposed that Hartlepool Borough Council is the lead authority in the partnership. For Stockton Borough Council this means delegating authority to Hartlepool Borough Council to act on its behalf and a memorandum of understanding will be developed between the two organisations. The legal implications are set out below.
10. The employing organisation for the local authority employees will be Hartlepool Borough Council and where appropriate Stockton Council employees will TUPE transfer across. The decision for Hartlepool to be the lead authority was based on the fact that Stockton Council is lead authority for the Tees Wide Emergency Duty Team, the Tees Adult business team and because Hartlepool's front of house service had been inspected as GOOD and that this was a good position from which to build a new shared Children's Hub. The service will be based in Hartlepool Civic Centre. Partners will co-locate in the Civic Centre and their employees will be seconded to the Hub.
11. There has been some turn over in staffing in the First Contact Children's and because of the development of the children's Hub temporary staffing arrangements have been put in place. This has reduced the impact of any TUPE transfers. There are five employees affected by the proposal including the Local Authority Designated Officer. Both the Stockton and Hartlepool HR teams are talking to the staff about their options.
12. People who use the service will see as little change as possible. All existing channels will continue and Stockton and Hartlepool will have separate contact details (phone, email, website). With the exception of face to face contact in Stockton and correspondence sent to Stockton, the centralised team in Hartlepool will deal with all contacts.
13. A Strategic Management Board (SMB), which includes representatives from all partners, has been established to oversee the establishment of the Hub. The chair of the SMB is Stockton's Director of Children's Services. The SMB is supported by an implementation team. The intention is to continue with the SMB for at least a year following the establishment of the Hub to ensure any issues for the new service can be resolved quickly and effectively. It is also necessary for the SMB to receive regular performance reports to ensure the Hub is delivering the anticipated outcomes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The cost of the new service is set out below. The new Hub will cost Stockton Council £121k more per annum than the current First Contact service for Children's services. It is proposed that this be funded for 18 months on an 'invest to save' basis. The new service

will be reviewed after 12 months by the SMB, to ensure it is delivering against its performance and outcomes targets whilst it is unlikely this review will deliver any savings in the Hub itself, it is anticipated that there will be savings to Stockton's Children Social Care because the referrals from the Hub will be more targeted and therefore reduce the demand and impact on Children's Social Care. During the first 12 months, information around savings will be collected and evidenced to inform the review.

15. The additional £181k for the 18 months will be met from Transformation Fund budget.

	New Service Costs Per annum £k	Existing Service Costs / Contribution Per Annum £k	Shortfall / Gap Per Annum £k
Cost of new services	1,119		
Existing Hartlepool service costs		584	
Existing Stockton service costs		345	
Partner contributions to new service		69	
Additional cost to Stockton Borough Council			121
TOTALS	1,119	998	121

16. There is a one-off cost of £31k for additional software licences and initial network set up costs, this will be met from the Transformation Fund.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

17. The services described in this report comprise executive functions for the purposes of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and therefore it is necessary for Cabinet as the executive to formally delegate this function to Hartlepool Borough Council under Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012. Hartlepool Borough Council is also required to formally accept the delegation.

RISK ASSESSMENT

18. There is a risk that the service doesn't deliver the performance and the savings set out in the business case. To mitigate against this risk, there will be a review of the service after 12 months.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

19. No implications.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

20. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the implementation of the new service to ensure that no one is affected by the changes.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

21. Corporate Management Team and Lead Cabinet Member.

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Education related? No

Background Papers None.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: not Ward-specific

Property No implications at this stage.