

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR of CHILDREN'S, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP SERVICES

TO:	ACE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 February 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	PERMISSION TO BEGIN FAMILY SUPPORT CONSULTATION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr Gavin	PORTFOLIO:	Children's Services
SERVICE:	Early Help	WARDS:	All
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report outlines the purpose and nature of the proposed first stage of consultation on Reading Borough councils future family support offer. Driving this proposed consultation is the need to:

- Intervene early before issues, needs and costs increase; it is vital that our interventions begin to manage demand not just meet demand, as we aim to see services focused on reducing cost to the council.
- Targeting resources effectively, including increasing assertive outreach and follow-up support to the families that need it most;
- Meeting the needs of families with complex and multiple needs;
- To 'think family', driven by our response to the Troubled Families programme. Therefore ensuring an integrated approach at all levels across all Children and Adult partner agencies, including making the best use of the voluntary and community sector.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 For ACE committee to approve a consultation process with staff and families to explore and recommend a future family support offer that would be reported back to ACE committee in the summer 2016.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Reading's Early Help strategy, 2013 - 16 has set out clear strategic direction that is still relevant to drive this consultation forward. See 1.1 bullet points above. The strategy is due to review and renewal and the family support offer consultation will support this process.

3.2 An Early Help offer will continue to be on offer to families in Reading, but this needs to be a partnership led model of delivery. In particular working and challenging partners to increase the, schools, health sector and voluntary sector Early Help provision whilst RBC moves to targeting its resources to meet vulnerable children's needs as a priority.

- 3.3 There are two key areas of strategy that are fundamental to the achievement of the vision;
- Ensuring that the Troubled Families agenda is delivered as it provides a golden thread for partnership working and specific focus on targeting families and reaching particular outcomes.
 - Ensuring that there is specific focus on joint work with colleagues to strengthen the Early Help offer and looking for efficiencies where possible.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The consultation process will be an important process to complete a review of the range of family support and Children's Centre services available to families across Reading. The objectives of the review are:
- To identify the current and potential future needs of children and young people in Reading that enables a clear set of priorities for resource/spend on services going forward.
 - To understand the role of RBC family support and how this ties with other providers (Schools and VCS) as well as Social Worker support.
 - To understand the role of Children's Centres, the offer of support and services for each part of Reading. This needs to confirm the role of universal/ open access services as well as targeted work, and where this is delivered.
 - To recommend a service offer for Families from RBC
 - To complete an equalities assessment that understands the impact of recommendations on protected groups.
- 4.2 Consultation will be with local families that have used family support and Children's centres services as well as attempting to work with families who have not. The consultation will begin in March 2016 and finish by the start of May 2016. Consultation will take the form of interviews and small group discussions using our staff to lead those conversations and gather feedback and views to be collated and shared to shape review recommendations. The type of questions that will be discussed with families are:
- What are the key positive outcomes or successes that your children and you need help with in Reading?
 - What are the key priorities areas of needs or risks for children and your family which may limit their success or achieving positive outcomes?
 - Who are the important target groups of families that the RBC must work with?
 - What are the key services that make the biggest difference to families and children in Reading?

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Our family support offer, including the work in Children's Centres supports these two corporate plan priorities:
1. Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
 2. Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living;

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 This report is seeking permission to ensure that we understand and take account of community and family perspectives when recommendations are concluded in the summer 2016 of a future family support offer in Reading.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 At this moment an equalities impact assessment is not required, but the family support review is planning to complete this assessment to when building its recommendations.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None for this report

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None for this report

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None for this report