

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2004 at 10.00 AM

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES PANEL
FRIDAY 15 OCTOBER 2004 AT 2.00 PM

Agenda Item No.

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GROWTH AND CHANGE: PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE IN CSF

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

Author: Alan Sapsford Tel: 01992 555927

Executive Members: Jane Pitman and Robert Gordon

1. Purpose of report

This paper presents to Scrutiny Committee the proposals for structural and organisational change within CSF as a result of the Growth & Change Programme the department has undertaken since November 2003.

The full consultation document to accompany this report will be circulated to all staff, members and partners on 8 October 2004.

2. Summary

Work on the Growth & Change programme has taken place over the last 10 months following the Director's paper "Keeping the Child at the Centre," published in November 2003, which set out the case for change.

This report highlights the key proposals emerging from this work and draws on aspects of the quadrant scrutiny process undertaken by members of the committee in 2003. The document to follow is the full consultation paper on the proposals which staff, members and partner organisations are asked to comment on.

3. Conclusion

The Scrutiny Committee is invited to note the report, respond to the consultation document as appropriate and identify issues for future scrutiny.

1. Background

- 1.1 There have been a number of changes in both national and local contexts since CSF was launched in 2001. The most significant of these are the Green Paper "Every Child Matters" and Children Bill. These set out far reaching proposals for the reform children's services which will have a significant impact on Local Authorities, schools and other agencies working in this area. New funding arrangements, which include more passporting of resources directly to schools, and removal of the "area cost adjustment" present us with additional challenges and heighten the need to ensure that resources are used as effectively as possible. A new and comprehensive inspection regime will be in place from Autumn 2005 to ensure that we are successful in delivering the necessary outcomes.
- 1.2 We are fortunate in Hertfordshire to have anticipated many of the changes in legislation and Government policy. This means that we have been able to build on our direct experience when reviewing current practice and identifying a way forward. The process of review and forward planning began in November 2003 when the then newly appointed Director of CSF produced a discussion document for Members, staff and partners called "Keeping the Child at the Centre – Working Together to Take Forward the CSF Vision". This highlighted the key issues and the direction of travel that the Government appeared to be following. Subsequent events have confirmed the ideas put forward in the paper, and these are now built into the Children Bill which is likely to receive Royal Assent by the end of the year.
- 1.3 The challenges that we face include both existing pressures, such as our need to reduce out-county expenditure and respond effectively to the recent inspection of child protection arrangements, and new ones arising from new legislation. Other examples are our need to :-
- review and update the code of practice for school-local authority relationships to take into account the DfES five year strategy for children and learners
 - tackle areas of under performance in schools and CSF.
 - revise the CSF service-planning model to provide a more manageable number of key objectives that will deliver the outcomes required by the Children Bill.
 - improve our use of data for planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes.
 - review and strengthen local preventative strategies to ensure that they have greater impact.
 - strengthen our partnership arrangements including the development of joint commissioning and even closer collaborative working as a precursor to the possible development of Children's Trusts.
 - maximise the benefits of our partnership with schools to raise standards and improve both preventative and reactive work with vulnerable young people.
 - streamline our current service structure to make the best possible use of the commitment, skills and experience of our staff.
 - address serious recruitment and retention difficulties.
 - match resources more closely to priorities so that we can invest effectively in the areas where we can make the most difference.

- prepare for the new combined inspection framework that will become operative from summer 2005, using key elements of the Ofsted, CSCI, ALI and Audit Commission inspection frameworks to assess our delivery of outcomes identified by the Children Bill.

- 1.4 Consequently a review of pressures, practice issues and future requirements has been underway since January 2004. This has involved staff at all levels within the organisation and has already resulted in a re-structuring of the School Standards and Curriculum Division, the development of a new partnership agreement between schools and the local authority and a revised planning and evaluation framework.
- 1.5 Preliminary details of the development process were reported to the Children, Schools and Families Panel at its meeting of 5 July. This report provides details of proposals for the remainder of the organisation to enable it to respond effectively to current pressures and forthcoming legislation. Further work with partners is also underway to prepare us for a possible move to a Children's Trust in 2006
- 1.6 To date the proposals have been agreed by the CSF Board and considered by the HCC Senior Management Board and the department's Policy Development Forum
- 1.7 Formal consultation begins on the 6th October and staff, partners and all members will receive the full consultation document on the 8th October. All members have been invited to a seminar on the 15th October as part of this process, when the Director of CSF will present the proposals for a new structure and service delivery in detail.
- 1.8 Key milestones in the consultation process are:

6 October	Proposals launched with middle managers at "Quarterly Management Forum"
8 October	Consultation document distributed to staff, partners and stakeholders
13 October	Scrutiny briefing
15 October	Member seminar and briefing for CSF Panel
29 October	Consultation with staff, partners and stakeholders ends
25 November	Final proposals considered by CSF Panel
January 2005	Recommendations approved by Cabinet
April 2005	Changes implemented on a phased basis

2. Summary of main proposals

2.1 The main elements of the detailed proposals are as follows: -

- (a) The present structure of six separate Divisions should be replaced with:
 - (i) a Strategic Core with a clearly defined range of responsibilities, and
 - (ii) a number of self-managing area teams with clear accountability for all aspects of service delivery within a single service framework
- (b) The role of staff within the Strategic Core should be to:
 - provide strategic leadership – locally, regionally and nationally
 - formulate policy and determine service priorities in conjunction with local areas;
 - establish performance standards and a framework to monitor, evaluate and assure their delivery;
 - manage and facilitate political and partnership interfaces;
 - provide or secure infrastructure and support which enables local delivery and outcomes to be achieved as effectively as possible e.g. commissioning; and
 - provide a small number of low incidence specialist services that need to operate across the county as a whole and do not lend themselves to area-based deployment (e.g. Children’s Homes and teaching support for deaf children).
- (c) Within each area, front-line service delivery teams should be organised on the basis of District Council boundaries, apart from those with a specialist function which need to operate across the area as a whole
- (d) Leadership and senior management support should be strengthened within each of the area teams to improve consistency, practice standards and co-ordination. This will include the appointment of Head of Local Children’s Services who will be a member of the CSF Board and be directly accountable for all aspects of local service delivery.
- (e) Revised team structures should be introduced to enable staff to work together more effectively when they need to, and singly where one professional group is best placed to address an issue or problem.
- (f) Service delivery teams should operate from 3 Principal Bases alongside other County Council services. Within each of the 3 areas, CSF services would then be organised into 3 or 4 “locality teams” each covering one district council area. Certain specialist services such as initial assessment, support for Looked After Children, admissions or hospital education would need to operate across a whole area.
- (g) In addition to the 3 Principal Bases, CSF should develop a network of local satellite bases and public access points in collaboration with other partners (e.g. Adult Care Services, Primary Care Trusts, Extended Schools, Child Development Centres and District Councils).

The proposed configuration of these 3 Principal Bases and the way in which we can best align our services with other agencies is a key area for discussion with staff and partners through the consultation process. Accommodation changes would need to be phased in over time whilst other recommendations could be implemented, subject to the outcome of consultation, from April 2005.

- 2.2 In addition to the proposals described above, further work is continuing through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to explore the implications of the Children Bill for future commissioning arrangements and the feasibility of a Children's Trust from 2006 onwards. Further reports will follow from this work.

3. Financial Implications

It is intended to resource the changes described in this report within the approved budget.

4. Access to Service Implications

These proposals will have implications for educational achievement, social inclusion, equal opportunities and point of service delivery.

We believe that, by aligning our services more effectively we will improve the outcomes and the opportunities for all children and their families in Hertfordshire.

We believe that services must be delivered as close to the ground in local communities as possible. Only then will we really be able to develop local partnerships, shared ownership of problems and more preventative ways of working.

Consequently it is proposed that, wherever possible, front line teams should be built around District Council and Primary Care Trust boundaries. In the case of schools, we hope to develop "clusters" within these District Council areas so we can promote local networking and sharing of good practice, expertise and resources. If CSF staff can have a clearly identified "patch" this will enable them to maintain stronger and more productive links with these networks.

Collaborative work and continuing service improvement will be supported by key local partnership structures, particularly the local Children & Young Person's Strategic Partnership and School Effectiveness Boards.

Stakeholder groups within the community will be consulted on the proposals contained in this report.

Background material referred to by the author while compiling this report:

1. "Keeping the Child at the Centre – Working Together to Take Forward the CSF Vision". Discussion paper by the Director. November 2003
2. CSF Growth and Change Programme – CSF Panel 5 July 2004