



Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21st June 2017

Children's and Families System Transformation

Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said

“We want Staffordshire children to have the best possible start in life, to grow up in safe, loving homes. Through innovation and closer working with other organisations, the county council has helped deliver real results for families and children in Staffordshire in recent years. More children are starting school ready to learn and thrive, the number of children in care is reducing and our Children's Services – rated good by Ofsted – are among the best anywhere in the country.

“But we want to do more, to help more families manage the problems that come their way, to keep children safe, and to reduce the numbers of children in care. Our vision is to transform the way we work with families and children, providing the most effective help when it is needed and increasing support available from and in the community.

“We will always take immediate action if a child is at risk. This new approach aims to create more stable, supportive homes for our children, reducing the need for our help, and allowing us to target specialist support where it really makes a difference.”

Report Summary:

Most children and families in Staffordshire tell us they are happy, safe and enjoy life. The county has high employment and more, better paid jobs are being created all the time that give families more opportunities. Evidence tells us that resilient and stable families will enjoy a better life.

In Staffordshire, more children than elsewhere in the country are ready to start school at age 5, we have fewer children going into care and our children's services are rated by Ofsted as among the best anywhere in the country.

Those who do need help tell us they don't want to be in 'systems' or 'services'. They want to be supported by their friends, families and in their communities to deal with the day-to-day challenges they face. As long as people are safe, we want this too.

Their lives will be better and the demand for public services from families will also reduce at a time when other demands (such as those for adult social care) are rising and we can no longer afford to do everything we used to.

We will continue to step in if a child's safety is at risk. Supporting families and communities to help each other and draw on the strengths and resources around them is not a new approach for us.

However, identifying and building on the strengths in a family is already a key part of children's social work. We are working more closely with our partners with a 'community first: services last' approach to help families and children. In any given place, we aim to work openly with partners and communities to identify what's there, what works and what's missing.

The aim is to provide the right mix of support from professionals, the voluntary sector, communities, families and friends so that people can live their lives to the fullest. This report details the progress we are making towards this innovative way of working.

This report also evidences how we will deliver the current savings detailed in the MTFS 2017/18 – 2021/22.

Recommendations

I recommend that:

- a. Cabinet agree the principles that underpin the Children's and Families' Transformation Programme
- b. Cabinet agree the proposed changes to the operating model and associated working practices
- c. Cabinet agree to the implementation of system change

Local Members Interest	
N/A	N/A

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Children's and Families System Transformation

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

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Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

Background

1. Evidence tells us that Staffordshire is a great place to live. Most families are happy, safe and have loving homes, however there are some families who face challenges that mean they cannot thrive in the way they want to.
2. We are working hard to reduce the number of children who reach a point in their lives where they require the statutory intervention of a social worker or other specialist professional to intervene.
3. By targeting support to the children who need it most and by addressing the problems faced by their whole family (not just the symptoms of the problem being shown by the child), we have reduced the number of children in Staffordshire who are considered to be Children in Need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan.
4. Since 2015, the number of Children in Need in Staffordshire has reduced from 296 to 270 per 10,000 of the population and the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan has reduced from 38 to 34 per 10,000 of the population.
5. The number of children in care has remained relatively stable for the past five years (excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children), against a national increase in numbers.
6. The support that these children currently receive from our children's services is officially rated as 'Good' by Ofsted.

7. However, as Staffordshire's population continues to grow, the number of children needing statutory intervention and intensive specialist support from children's services remains significant.
8. Evidence tells us that the lives of children and young people who need this level of support are not as good as the general population. Intensive specialist support is also expensive and trend analysis demonstrates that if we continue to provide this volume of support our service will become unaffordable.
9. When we asked them (through consultations between 2012 and 2015), children said they wanted to be supported by their families to resolve the day-to-day problems they face. Providing children are safe, we also want them to thrive within their families and communities.
10. We recognise that children's lives are directly impacted by the quality of their family life. The issues that their parents face can have a negative impact on the lives of their children. Our challenge is to find a way of working that will enable Staffordshire's children to thrive within their own families and communities by addressing the root causes of difficulties for the whole family at the earliest point.
11. Through this approach we aim to support families to resolve problems early and wherever possible, prevent a problem escalating to the point where intensive specialist support is required.
12. We cannot do this alone. The most vulnerable and troubled families in Staffordshire receive support from adult services as well as many of our partner organisations.
13. We are committed to exploring opportunities to commission in partnership and in a way that empowers communities and families to help each other and themselves.
14. We have already developed an Early Help Strategy through the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and we are committed to developing and supporting Earliest Help through our communities and local providers.
15. Throughout this work our priority remains to keep children safe.

Select Committee

16. The Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee has been regularly updated on changes we are making to the way we work with partners to support Staffordshire's children and families.
17. The Committee has demonstrated its support for our policy direction.
18. Following a presentation in January 2017 on eight community based pilot projects, the committee requested that they work across communities, which may not sit within a single district, rather than being tied to district or borough council boundaries.

19. This recommendation is being used to inform local (place based) workshops involving the council and other organisations looking at where and how to focus their efforts to support families with low level needs and to prevent those needs arising or worsening.
20. The Committee has also requested that data and evidence to support the work is collected from across the partnership. We are currently using data from across the partnership to choose the issues that we will address/are addressing jointly with partners.
21. We remain committed to seeking the views of the Select Committee and providing regular updates on progress.

Legislation

22. As a Local Authority we have to comply with a number of key pieces of legislation. These are designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, including protection from harm and neglect, alongside other outcomes.
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/england/legislation-policy-guidance/>
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/592101/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_20170213.pdf
23. We work with relevant partners and provide a range of services to meet these duties. The Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services are politically and professionally accountable for these key functions.
24. We have a well-established Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB) made up of representatives from the county council and other partners, and a document detailing the levels of need that trigger different levels of support.
<https://www.staffsscb.org.uk/Professionals/Procedures/Section-One/Section-One-Docs/Section-1E-SSCB-Threshold-framework.pdf>
25. We are also subject to independent regulation and inspection from Ofsted across a range of our children and families services and functions.
<https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/inspections>

Transformation Programme

Aims

26. The Children's and Families' Transformation Programme aims:
 - a. To ensure that Staffordshire's families live the best possible lives by using the knowledge, skills and resources we have across partner organisations effectively and efficiently.
 - b. To see safe, healthy, thriving children whose needs are met within their families and communities where it is safe to do so, reducing the need for high cost, statutory services.

- c. To provide a high quality statutory children's service that works with those children and families who require this specialist level of support

Challenges and Approach

27. Systems are complicated. We face a number of challenges with the system of support for Staffordshire's children and families.
28. Our main challenge is that we are not always able to consistently or comprehensively address the root cause of issues in a family, responding instead to the symptoms of the problem displayed by a child or young person.
29. For example, we may work with a child and their school to improve school attendance, but because the overcrowded house, family debt and mother's depression have not been addressed, the problems with school attendance soon return.
30. In such cases, a child's need can escalate and the possibility that more intensive specialist support will be required increases.
31. As Staffordshire's population continues to grow, by 2020/21, if nothing changes, the number of children suffering abuse and neglect will grow and this will result in increasing and significant financial pressures.
32. We are therefore taking a whole system approach to change: changing the way we work at the council and at the same time working with partners to design a shared approach that can respond to differences in the communities we live in and the challenges individual families face.
33. We are committed to a system that supports Staffordshire's families and communities to be strong and stable. A system that:
 - a. Recognises that communities have different strengths and builds on these
 - b. Helps families to resolve their challenges at the earliest possible point
 - c. Targets support to those families who need it most
 - d. Reduces the need for costly statutory intervention
 - e. Can meet the needs of more families as Staffordshire's population continues to grow
 - f. Is affordable

Progress to date

34. The first phase of change has focused on leadership.
35. A Families Strategic Partnership Board (FSPB), which is a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) has been created.
36. This has enabled partners to formally engage with each other, develop a shared understanding and thinking, and agree shared priorities. It has also provided a

way to monitor and evaluate progress and test areas of development as a partnership. This has included:

- a. Beginning the development of a shared intelligence function
- b. Ensuring that our service is responsive and effective
- c. Piloting new ways of working together in districts
- d. Working intensively with families with complex needs to understand if this improves their lives and prevents needs escalating to a level that requires statutory intervention
- e. Reviewing our commissioning policies and practice to enable us to commission effectively using all of our available resources

37. There is still a need to increase engagement with adult services and to build on the local relationship with schools.

38. Since October 2016, the second phase of the change programme has focused upon the future design of the children and families system through all levels of need. This has initially focussed on three areas, shown in the diagram below:

- a. how to build on what we've learned and continue to improve the way we target early support to families with complex needs, who are likely to need statutory services should they not receive this support
- b. understanding how we should commission services to support a system which builds strong and stable families and communities; and
- c. working with partners to develop and pilot a "Place Based Approach" which tests how our new way of working can be flexible to recognise the different strengths and challenges in an individual district or borough



39. We have done a lot of work to better understand, identify and address the root causes of problems in Staffordshire's families, particularly in relation to those children and families who are likely to need statutory services.
40. Our Intensive Prevention Service was established to provide intensive intervention with children and their parents to prevent the children being taken into care, and to support children remaining in and returning to the care of their families. This has kept children from needing higher level specialist services and has avoided the costs associated with this.
41. Our Breathing Space project is targeting support to families who have had a child removed from their care to reduce the likelihood that any subsequent children will need to be taken into care too.
42. The Intensive Family Support Service has been developed to target support to parents who misuse drugs and alcohol, as this is a common cause of wider problems in the family.
43. This targeted support has prevented 86% of the families supported and 85% of children needing to receive more intensive, higher tier services by meeting their needs before they hit a point of crisis. It has also collectively reduced spending by £2.02m as of May 2017. Based upon this evidence, we expect that this way of working will, over the next five years, translate from cost avoidance to cashable savings as it will reduce demand into statutory care services.

Proposed Changes

Principles

44. We have developed and agreed with partners a set of principles for the Place Based Approach which underpins the changes we want to make to the way we work together. We have also developed a set of principles which underpin the redesign of our whole internal system.

Place Based Approach:

- a. We will build on what is already working and remove duplication
- b. Make better, collective use of our assets, resources and knowledge
- c. We will use intelligence to effectively target resources to meet the local needs
- d. We will address the issue presented by the child and the wider root causes of this issue within the family
- e. We will engage appropriate stakeholders in planning and delivery
- f. Be flexible in our approach and learn from emerging ideas and practice
- g. Address and resolve barriers and issues that arise

Whole System:

- a. A system which safeguards children, young people and families and supports them to achieve their best outcomes

- b. Maintain statutory compliance
- c. Have clear accountability and leadership at all levels within the system
- d. Address root causes issues through intelligence
- e. Work to safely reduce demand
- f. Whole system approach with a resilient and flexible workforce
- g. Have a culture which enables shared ownership of issues and decision making
- h. A system which provides value for money and is sustainable
- i. Create the right environment for families and children to be supported at appropriate levels

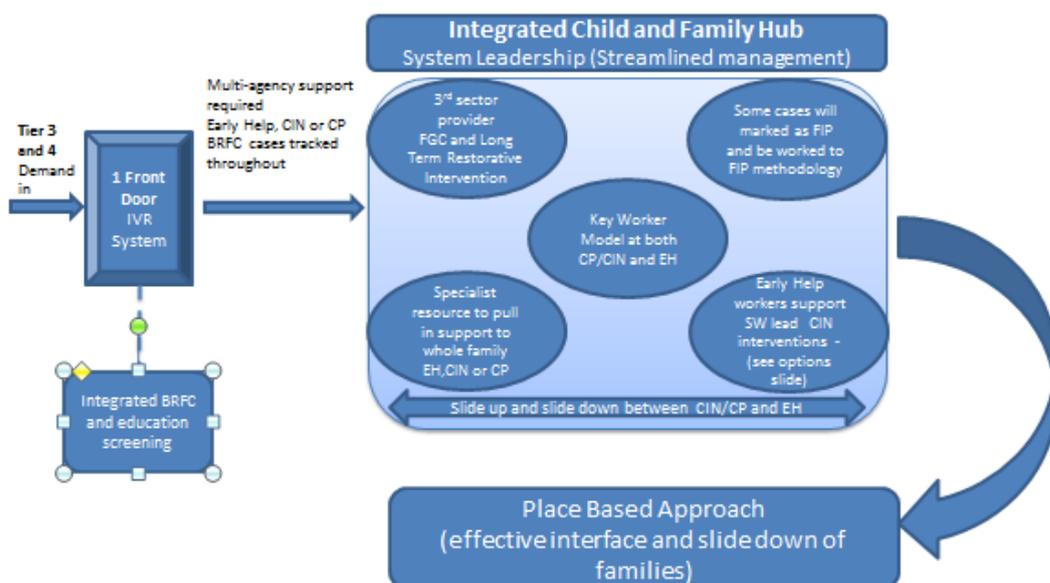
Development of a Place Based Approach in Partnership

- 46. Strategic conversations have taken place with partners from October 2016 to March 2017. The aim has been to agree a definition of a Place Based Approach and the principles which will underpin the way we build strong and stable families and communities in a particular place. The working definition has been agreed as:
- 47. “A collaborative approach using the right resources (multi-skilled teams, universal services, voluntary sector, communities etc.) at the right time to improve outcomes for children, young people, families, vulnerable people and communities in an identified locality”
- 48. We have agreed shared outcomes and what a Place Based Approach may look like.
- 49. The principles have informed a programme of local workshops which are currently taking place with partners, initially in Tamworth and Newcastle.
- 50. The aim is to understand how to build on existing local strengths, fill the gaps in local provision and how we can best work with communities, the voluntary sector and locally commissioned providers to develop strong and stable families and communities
- 51. It is acknowledged that this approach will take time to build.

Changes to the way the county council supports families with complex needs

- 52. We are proposing to change the way we work with families who have complex needs.
- 53. The proposed changes are based on our learning from work in projects including Intensive Prevention, Breathing Space, Intensive Family Support and in Family Intervention Programme Teams.
- 54. This work has shown that targeting intensive support to tackle the root causes of problems experienced by a family with complex needs can improve their lives and reduce the likelihood of them needing specialist statutory services in the future. As a result, the county council can avoid the costs associated with these specialist services.

55. The proposed way of working brings together the learning from these projects and will extend this way of working across the service allowing our adult and children's services specialist to work at the right level to help families at the earliest point, whilst continuing to keep children safe.
56. The development of an Integrated Children and Families Hub for each district or borough in the county will further integrate our current Local Support Team and Specialist Safeguarding Units into a joined up service that can tap into community strengths and respond to local needs.
57. Within each Hub, families with needs at tiers 3 and 4 of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) continuum of need (formal Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection) will benefit from the additional direct support of a dedicated Early Help worker, working alongside their allocated Social Worker where this is appropriate.
58. Early Help key workers, where appropriate will stay with a family throughout their time of support. If a family's situation worsens and they need support from a Social Worker, the Early Help key worker may continue to work with the family. Similarly, when the family's situation improves and they no longer need a social worker to support them, the Early Help key worker will be able to remain involved enabling a seamless transition to lower tier services.
59. Early Help key workers will provide a well-coordinated, evidence based and focused approach, building strong and trusting relationships with the families they support. This approach will also allow our children's workforce to work more efficiently and effectively by reducing the need for reassessment or engagement of new key workers.
60. The Hubs will mean that there is just one point of access to a range of family support services (the 'front door'). This will allow us to manage and respond to demand better.
61. To facilitate this approach, Early Help and Safeguarding functions have now been brought together under one Strategic Lead.
62. The below diagram illustrates how the Integrated Child and Family Hubs will work.



- 63. In the future, we aim to bring specialist drug and alcohol, mental health, finance and housing expertise into the Hubs.
- 64. There will also be work to develop a way of identifying and then supporting those families who, with a limited level of support for an extended period, could maintain themselves within the community and avoid the need for specialist statutory support.
- 65. This will be further supported by the development of the Family Group Conference approach, a well tried, tested and evidence based way of supporting communities to be strong and resilient.

Changes to commissioning

- 66. Our commissioning needs to be focused on supporting families to be strong and stable so that we can reduce the number who need specialist statutory services.
- 67. We believe that some services and support will be most effective if we commission them across the whole county. In other instances, it will be more effective if our commissioning is designed to meet a local need and specific services/support cover a smaller area.
- 68. Work has taken place to identify the functions and capabilities required for this to happen effectively and efficiently.
- 69. We intend to bring commissioning and delivery together so that there can be a joined up conversation which reflects evidence of what’s needed and what works.

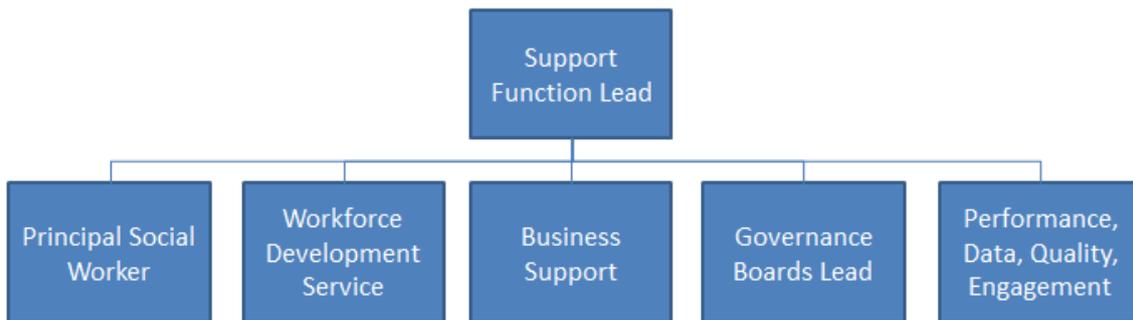


Support Function Development

- 70. To support the commissioning and delivery of work across the Families and Communities Directorate, a support function is required.
- 71. This function will:
 - a. initiate and support programmes of work that ensure appropriate data is collated and intelligence/insight gathered to improve, develop and quality assure our work.

- b. ensure we are meeting our statutory responsibilities and are able to respond appropriately as part of the Ofsted inspection framework
- c. inform future service planning, commissioning and delivery
- d. call upon existing corporate functions where appropriate to ensure best use of resource and avoid duplication of activity.

72. Work has been completed to identify the core functions required. As such, the proposed structure will consist of:



Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

73. In line with Staffordshire’s All Age Disability Strategy- ‘Living My Life, My Way - A Strategy for disabled people in Staffordshire (2013-18)’, the vision for the SEND transformation program is:

‘All children and young people with special educational needs and disability receive the right support at the right time and in the right way so that they are able to realise their aspirations and lead fulfilling lives in their local school, home and community wherever possible’.

74. The question we are seeking to answer is: ‘How do we enable and facilitate a more inclusive and effective education for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability?’

75. We want children with special educational needs and disabilities to:

- a. Be empowered to live as independently as possible and live the life they choose;
- b. Learn, develop and achieve their potential;
- c. Be safe and secure
- d. Live and thrive wherever possible in their local community

76. We have a growing number of children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities in Staffordshire. This places significant demand on our services and special schools, with increased: requests for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), numbers of children subject to an EHCP, numbers of children placed in both our own or independent special schools (more than other local authorities for those children with moderate learning difficulties), tribunals and exclusion.

77. The cost of providing these services (including associated transport costs) is increasing every year. If this continues at the current rate, our current way of working will be unaffordable from 2018.

78. In the future, we would like to see:

- a. Children with special education needs and disabilities included in local schools and communities (supported by a clear Inclusion Strategy embedded across the county)
- b. Children achieving better at school
- c. More children successfully progressing in their local school (narrowing the gap in progress and achievement compared to other children and young people of the same age)
- d. Special schools with the capacity and capability to cater for children and young people with more complex needs, preventing the need for these children to be educated in schools outside of Staffordshire
- e. Locality model of working
- f. Integrated working with social care
- g. Reduction of costs in and across the system and efficient and effective use of High Needs Block funding for SEND
- h. Fixed and permanent exclusions at or below the national level across all sectors
- i. Authorised and unauthorised absences at or below national levels across all sectors
- j. Parents who are confident in meeting the needs of their children

79. To achieve this we are working closely with a range of internal and external partners to support a major change in the way we work together to support children with special educational needs and disabilities. It is anticipated that this work will move to the “test”/“experiment” stage of a “check, experiment, do” programme from summer 2017.

80. The changes we are making to support for children with special educational needs and disabilities are aligned with the wider changes to children’s services with integrated leadership and support functions.

Education

81. Education in Staffordshire continues to change. Around one third of Staffordshire’s schools are now academies or free schools, which has significantly changed the role of the Local Authority in education.

82. Schools remain a vital part of the community, working with us and a range of statutory and voluntary partners to ensure that families get the help they need as early as possible, to be strong and stable, so that they can thrive in their communities without the need for specialist or statutory children’s services.

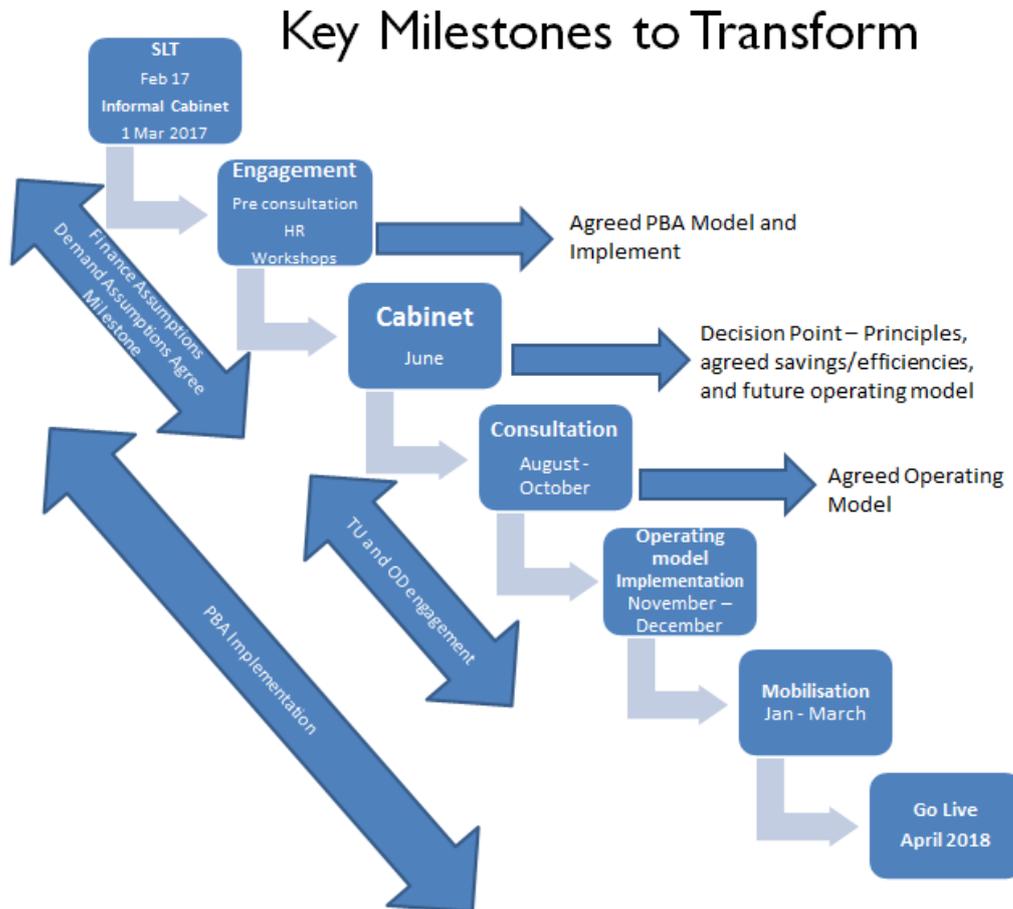
Finance

83. We recognise that the current way of supporting Staffordshire's children and families will become unaffordable by 2020/21.
84. Despite stabilising the number of children requiring specialist support over the past two to three years, our population continues to. We therefore face a significant financial challenge.
85. We expect that the work described within this paper will build strong and stable families and communities, allowing families to thrive whilst safely reducing the number of children needing specialist support.
86. Within the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), we have committed to saving £3.693m in 2017/18 as a result of this new approach and whilst this is challenging due to timescales, work is currently underway to identify how this will be achieved.
87. In 2018/19 we have committed to further savings of £413,000 as a result of reducing the demand for specialist services. In addition, a further £2.340m will be removed from the system as a consequence of the removal of the Direct School Grant (DSG) and the Education Support Grant (ESG).
88. By 2021/22 we have committed to a total of £7.939m savings.
89. We have already evidenced cost avoidance of £2.02m as of May 2017, as a result of targeting intensive support to families who are likely to require statutory services should they not receive this extra help.
90. To design and deliver aspects of these system-wide changes we will be seeking capital funding or alternative funding options for some discrete areas which will support the transformation process (for IT, development of the intelligence function, changes to First Response, introduction of adults services workers to prove the concept of new ways of working at the cusp of statutory services).
91. Our Insight Team will be undertaking a detailed piece of work, based on our plans for change, to analyse current demand and predict our future demand.
92. We aim to return to Cabinet in June 2018 with a further update on our progress and the findings from this work which will define our future projections and savings.

Next Steps

93. If Cabinet accept and endorse the recommendations within this report, we will begin a process of change to reorganise our children's services accordingly.
94. We will actively seek the views of colleagues across the Children's and Families service to help shape and inform the new functions, practice and operating model.

95. Those who are affected by this change will be formally consulted as appropriate in partnership with Trade Unions.
96. The timeline is as follows:



List of Background Documents:

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