

**Advisory Board on Norfolk's response to the implications of the Green Paper,
Every Child Matters
13 January 2004**

Project proposal for January to June 2004

1 A reminder

- 1.1 In the report to the County Council's Cabinet on 15 December, the Chief Executive recommended that the Council should rise pro-actively to the challenge set by the Green Paper's proposals, because the evidence gathered by the project work between October and December had demonstrated that it was the right direction of travel for Norfolk.
- 1.2 The consensus view for children's services locally was that the Council should develop an integrated service for children and young people. This service should be led by a Director of Children's Services and delivered locally, in partnership with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, in ways that take account of the range of needs and circumstances of children and young people in the County.
- 1.3 There are choices to make about how best to achieve this, but the report highlighted that whatever choice is made, it is important to recognise that:
 - We need to see all children in Norfolk as 'our' children - a collective responsibility with families and communities
 - We must make changes if we are to improve outcomes for Norfolk's children and young people
 - Over time, cultural and structural changes will be necessary
 - Improvements in the lives of children can only be achieved by a co-ordinated multi-agency response.
- 1.4 The Cabinet endorsed option 3 set out in the paper, i.e. it
 - endorsed the principle for the future shape of children's services in Norfolk as set out in paragraph 9.1
 - made a commitment to the appointment of a Director of Children's Services
 - asked the Project Board to continue to develop proposals, taking into account what is contained in the Bill when it is published and any further guidance.
 - agreed to make a decision on the detail of the appointment of a Director of Children's Services and the stages of implementation of other aspects of the project in six months time.
- 1.5 Within the County Council, the work is to be overseen by a small project board, chaired by the Chief Executive. It is tasked with bringing back to Cabinet in June, precise recommendations for change and the detailed information necessary to advertise and appoint a Director for Children's Services.
- 1.6 However, a multi-agency approach is fundamental to the success of any change in services for children and the County Council wishes to continue to work in partnership with the wide range of professionals and agencies represented on this Advisory Board and to ensure that a culture of integration

develops across all agencies and that the work being done on the preventive strategy and information sharing (IRT) are an integral part of the County's multi-agency response to the Green Paper. In addition, it will be important to establish appropriate links with the County Strategic Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnerships.

- 1.7 In a multi-agency context, the six month period also needs to be used to begin to address such issues as a 'child focus', improved communication, a common language, different cultures, information sharing, service delivery appropriate to the geography of Norfolk, co-ordination, competing targets and priorities, etc.
- 1.8 The County Council will provide a small dedicated project team, and suggests that the Preventive Strategy Programme Manager should project manage a single project which incorporates developments in response to the Green Paper, the development of a preventive strategy and IRT.
- 1.9 It was also recognised in the Cabinet paper that, underlying each option were a number of issues that needed to be addressed whichever option was selected. These issues were:
 - a simplified and clear children's partnership/planning structure which facilitates a countywide strategic overview and a local planning/delivery focus
 - an assessment of the needs of children in Norfolk - based on existing data held by a wide range of agencies
 - the use of evidence of what works for children and young people
 - continuing engagement of staff across agencies, children and young people, families, communities

2 Taking the project forward

- 2.1 The Advisory Board is asked to discuss and agree the overall framework for taking the project forward.

2.2 Elements of the approach

2.2.1 A corporate approach by the County Council

- Within the County Council, this is a project that is being taken forward corporately but will involve as wide a range of people in education and children's social services as possible with a Project Board chaired by the Chief Executive.
- The approach will be supported by corporate resources such as Communications, HR and Policy

2.2.2 An inter-agency approach

- Although the project is being led by the County Council, the Council recognises that improvements in the lives of children can only be achieved by a co-ordinated multi-agency response.
- Mechanisms will need to be in place at both a county level and a locality level to engage all organisations

2.3 Strands to the programme of work

2.3.1 There are a number of strands to the work that now need to be pursued. These include

- an assessment of the needs of children in Norfolk - based on existing data held by a wide range of agencies
- the use of evidence of what works for children and young people across the county in particular, but evidence also from elsewhere, as a learning process for a wide range of staff not already involved in delivering new ways of working
- attention to the organisational development needs of staff that will result from the establishment of more joined-up working
- work to articulate the role of a Director of Children's Services and the implications for education and children's social services
- the integration of the work on the local preventive strategy (LPS) and information sharing (IRT)
- establishing a simplified and clear children's partnership/planning structure which facilitates a countywide strategic overview and a local planning/delivery focus and giving consideration to the definition of geographical localities for planning and service delivery

2.3.2 The County Council will also run a parallel but linked project to ensure that the council resolves the wider organisational implications of creating more joined up children's services

2.3.3 The work programme will need to incorporate a communication/involvement plan that supports the aims of the project

2.3.4 All these strands of work will need to continue to engage staff across agencies, children and young people, families, and communities.

3 Project Deliverables

3.1 By the Cabinet meeting on 21 June, the project needs to deliver the following, taking into account the details of the Government Bill and any other guidance published in the New Year.

- An increased engagement in the agenda for change and an improved understanding of the gains that can be had from working in a more integrated way and the issues that need to be addressed in the implementation of any change
- The establishment of a Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the strengthening of local planning/partnership arrangements to contribute to the identification of issues and solutions
- Proposals for
 - the type of service for children, young people and their families that all agencies would wish to see for Norfolk
 - the specification of the role of Director of Children's Services
 - a timescale for appointment of the Director and for structural and cultural change
 - the implementation of other aspects of the project, i.e.

- the integration of County Council services for children
- the development of a local preventive strategy
- the integration of the requirements for information sharing and
- in the medium term, the integration of other services for children in a Children's Trust(s)
- measuring the future performance of changed service delivery

4 Resources

4.1 The County Council will make available the following resources to ensure the project is delivered on time

- Project manager to manage a project which incorporate developments associated with the local preventive strategy and IRT
- Professional input from education and children's social services to ensure the project effectively meets the needs of these two County Council services
- External resources such as to Dartington Social Research Unit to support the implementation of the forthcoming guidance from DfES on best practice in terms of refocusing of services on prevention and early intervention. This would include developing definitions and concepts for multi-agency agreement, analysing existing data to provide a picture of current services, an audit of preventive services, an audit of need, developing a local preventive strategy. This work will build on work already begun under the auspices of the Preventive Strategy Board. A separate paper highlighting the initial proposal from the Dartington Social Research is included in the agenda papers for consideration.
- Some support on Communications
- Some organisational development expertise to develop and support changes in behaviours
- Some support from internal research/policy resources to continue to investigate and strengthen the evidence base for change.

5 For discussion

5.1 The board is asked to

- discuss and, subject to comments and amendments, agree
 - the elements of the framework of the project
 - the project deliverables
- consider what issues members of the board wish to highlight that will need particular attention in the next phase of the project

9 January 2004

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