

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>RESILIENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Delyth Curtis, Director of People
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Graham Cain
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	10 December 2015

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT REPORT

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the work undertaken by Children's Services on a day to day basis and to update on the progress and implementation of developments within the area to allow effective scrutiny.

### 2.0 Recommendations:

- 2.1
- To note the contents of the report and to ensure that current work continues to meet statutory obligations and that work to prepare for external inspections continues.
  - To continue to meet statutory monitoring, challenge and support obligations
  - To work with schools to support improvement and preparation for external scrutiny and support the work of the Blackpool Challenge Board in order to improve the progress and attainment of Blackpool Children especially at KS3 and KS4

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

- 3.1 For Members of the Scrutiny Committee to be fully informed as to the day to day work of the Children's Services Directorate and have assurance that Blackpool is continuing to meet its statutory obligations for future inspection requirements. The LA remains retains a statutory responsibility to monitor all schools in order to support improvement and raise the attainment and progress for all children in the Local Authority Area.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

### 3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Services are subject to national and statutory frameworks.

## 4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

## 5.0 Reports

### 5.1 School Improvement Processes

The School Improvement Team has carried out a joint desk top/school evaluation exercise with the majority of maintained schools to enable an overall Local Authority category and identification of appropriate support. The meetings involved both the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors of each school. This process has been Quality Assured for robustness.

The School Improvement Team have begun the autumn term visits, which follow on from categorisation and will provide an opportunity for school priorities to be challenged and supported appropriately from a Local Authority perspective.

### 5.2 Progress on the Blackpool Challenge Sub Groups:

#### 5.2.1 Data and Evidence Sub group

The Data and Evidence Sub group is primarily focussed on KS4 progress and tracking. The group have to date reviewed curriculum papers to be completed, to include each course, exam board and number of entrants; looked at case studies on assessment; discussed analytical tools to support and will present their findings to the next Challenge Board.

#### 5.2.2 Teaching and Learning Sub Group

The Teaching and Learning Sub Group has continued to focus on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Systems and Quality Assurance. It will soon be linking CPD with impact on learning.

All CPD is now recorded on the Blackpool Challenge Google website and a CPD

mapping exercise to ensure that appropriate support is provided has taken place. There has been greater emphasis on reading including 'Million Minutes' across a number of schools, which saw St John Vianney win a prize of books for the school.

### 5.2.3 **Inclusion Sub Group**

The Behaviour Advisory Teachers Partnership has been reconstituted and has met to review process for permanent exclusions, managed moves and complex In-Year Fair Access Cases. Requests for managed moves and additional support will be managed by this group. Exceptions will be referred to the Inclusion Board chaired by Councillor Jones. All High schools are represented at the Partnership.

The Inclusion Sub Group will also oversee the Blackpool Challenge Transition Project – Year 5 to Year 7. The purpose of which is to ensure successful transitions particularly into the secondary phase. There are a number of young people whose needs are not being met during this crucial time and as a result, an increasing number are being permanently excluded, are electing for home education or give consideration to moving to another provision which further compounds the transience across the town.

The model will bring together primary and secondary colleagues, provide avenues for cross phase working and sharing of curriculum programmes and professional development opportunities. This will aim to retain some of our most challenged or challenging young people and help them achieve and avoid the need for Pupil Referral Unit intervention.

The background to this comes from the fact that Blackpool has the largest Pupil Referral Unit in the country with 314 learners between the ages of 7 and 16 accessing provision at the end of June 2015, prior to the year 11 leavers.

The majority of young people in Blackpool can and will manage within the mainstream arena with little need for additional support. There are however a number of young people presenting with complex need such as poor social skills, emotional well-being and hidden learning needs such as Speech, Language and communication (SLCN). If the appropriate understanding or support for these is not available, these needs are subsequently manifesting as behavioural challenges within the classroom.

The Primary to Secondary Transition Pilot will involve a transition programme with South Shore Academy, Waterloo Academy, Revoe Academy, Thames Academy and Mereside Primary led by Educational Diversity. The model will:

- Identify a Year 5 cohort of up to 12 learners who may benefit from some early transition work in readiness for secondary age learning

- Develop a cross phase staff team who will work together to develop a curriculum and pastoral model that will bridge the gap between key stage 2 and 3
- Identify professional development needs across the two sectors and provide opportunities to share good practice and develop new learning.
- Introduce rigorous assessment of individual young people to include behaviour, speech, language and communication, learning needs, social and emotional, which will allow for increased access to learning through an increased awareness of needs
- Ensure targeted use of interventions through an alignment of pupil premium monies across the 12 students.
- Develop shared policies and procedures across the settings so that both staff and students have a clear understanding of expectations
- Ensure smooth transition of learning through shared understanding of the level a young person is working at prior to key stage 3 transition process.
- Introduce inter agency working for identified families through information sharing and use of family engagement officers
- Provide opportunities for staff to observe each other across different settings, challenge thinking and create joined up development work
- Develop opportunities for young people to learn and have experience across both settings from the start of year 5
- As the cluster model develops, encourage mirroring the model with other settings and areas of the town.
- Utilise resilience and mindfulness projects from Headstart

Leaders across the five settings will meet to refine the philosophy for the transition programme, establish key staff who will be involved, identify the learning area at South Shore Academy for the delivery model and agree protocols and expected outcomes.

A time map will be developed across the settings with an understanding of key dates such as SAT's, Open evenings, 'moving up days', consultation events and interim review periods. It is imperative that parents and carers are involved from the outset as in order for this to work, we will need their full commitment and engagement in the programme. Opportunities for joint parent and pupil sessions will be a fundamental element if we are to make long term change for the individual pupil and their families. Consideration will also be given to inviting parental representation on the leadership panel for the programme.

The impact on improved outcomes will be agreed at senior leadership across the settings with additional scrutiny provided by members of the Inclusion sub group of the Blackpool Challenge Board. It is anticipated that they will be developed and refined over the pilot.

### 5.3 **Attendance**

In 2014 /15 the Pupil Welfare Service undertook 5,226 visits to family homes, 381 court meetings of concern were provided and 1,953 letters were sent out. The service supported 48 children and schools when the young people were not collected after school and parents couldn't be located, as well as recording 1,482 safeguarding actions and advice. Of the cases 77% worked with improved attendance at school. Legal proceedings are necessary for a small number of cases and when this was necessary last academic year 70% improved attendance in the terms following the legal proceedings.

### 5.4 **Ofsted inspections – Early Years**

Based on published reports, the overall percentage of settings and childminders with Ofsted gradings of good or outstanding is 88.9%, with 91% of childminders and 84.2% of group childcare settings. Group childcare provision for our youngest children is of higher quality, with 88.5% of full day and sessional care for under 5s being judged as good or outstanding. This compares to national figures (as at 31 March 2015, which is the most recent data available) of 85% overall, 84% of childminders, and 87% of group settings (this overall national figure also includes childcare on domestic premises, of which we have none in Blackpool).

There have been no full inspections of schools this term. Unity's monitoring visit will be reported to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting.

### 5.5 **Bid for Early Implementation of the 30 hours free childcare**

Blackpool has registered interest in being an early implementer for the introduction of the 30 hours free childcare policy. If successful it will involve working with a small number of early years childcare nurseries and childminders to pilot the additional 15 free entitlement hours from September 2016, which is a year ahead of the national roll out planned for September 2017. The pilot will involve working with the Department for Education on raising awareness of the initiative, developing the eligibility checking mechanism to establish parents' entitlement to the additional hours and mapping the capacity of the Blackpool childcare sector to meet the potential demand for additional hours of childcare. The result of the bid will be known later this year or early in 2016.

### 5.6 **Children's Commissioning Team**

Consultation and feedback from service users is a key contributing factor in informing and transforming Service Delivery and striving towards continuous improvement. In order to gain this feedback the Children's Commissioning Team, in conjunction with key stakeholders, is holding a consultation event inviting service

users from the following areas named below to provide feedback.

The areas are Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS); Maternity Services; Speech & Language Therapy Services and services that are Commissioned for Children with a Disability that do not include those already mentioned. Following feedback from service users the consultation event is proposed to be held Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016 at Blackpool Zoo. We are inviting feedback and input around areas of excellence, areas for development and any gaps in provision. We are also looking to recruit service users to participate in future forums to ensure a continuous cycle of improvement.

A mixture of commissioning and service reviews are due to commence in December in light of the budget savings proposals for Children's Services. (Appendix A). Work has also been completed on the Equality Impact Assessment(s) for all reviews. Consultation will start with staff, stakeholders and young people.

## **5.7 Children's Social Care**

### **5.7.1 Young People looked after under voluntary agreement**

The service continues to undertake significant amounts of audit activity. Most recently we have undertaken an audit of those young people that are looked after under a voluntary agreement (Section 20 of the Children Act, 1989). The purpose of this work was to look the care plans for these young people and consider if reunification with family is possible or if we need to take action to share parental responsibility. This work fits with recent national policy changes and guidance as a result of case law which places a much stronger emphasis on the need for Section 20 to be used in a very time limited way and with a much tighter emphasis on consent.

### **5.7.2 Emergency Duty Team**

The Emergency Duty team is now formally under review as part of the budget savings target. This review will consider the nature of referrals and activity that comes to the team and the underlying issues that may have created this. The review will look at options for a more effective service design including the possibility of sharing services with other agencies or Local Authorities.

### **5.7.3 Case Studies (Social Care)**

As requested at the previous meeting of the Committee the following case studies are anonymous but give a flavour of the types of challenge that are currently faced by Children's Services.

**The Smith Family;** Mrs Smith has moved to Blackpool 6 weeks ago. She has

presented at her GP and is pregnant (estimate 7 months). She is fleeing domestic abuse in Manchester. Since being in Blackpool she has embarked on a new relationship and is intending to cohabit with her new partner. He has convictions for sexual offending. She has had four children removed in Manchester due to domestic abuse and risks posed by her previous partners.

Action taken; A pre-birth assessment undertaken with the family to look at risk and resilience factors. In this case the risks were felt to be:-

- Previous history of removal
- History of domestic violence
- Current partner has sexual offences
- Concerns regarding the decision to cohabit in a very new relationship and the ability to put needs of the child before own needs
- Late presentation of pregnancy.
- No significant changes since the removal of previous children.

Therefore the recommendation of the assessment is removal at birth under an interim care order. However, due to recent case law (re A and Re BS) judges are now very reluctant to agree removal and work on a standard of barely adequate care. Therefore in this case the decision of the court was to return the baby to the mother under a placement with parent's agreement and schedule of expectations. There will also be an intensive support package in place with three times per day visits from the Families In Need Team. The contingency plan will be removal and placement for adoption.

Challenges; This sort of case poses a significant challenge – we find ourselves managing care plans with very high levels of risk, which we may not feel are appropriate. In addition the resource level required to support families is very high. This is a growing feature nationally and the North West Assistant Directors group is capturing these issues and raising them with the judiciary.

**The Jones Family;** Jo Jones is 15. He lived with his mum in central Blackpool. Jo has a recent history of increasingly aggressive behaviour and has been cautioned by the police for anti-social behaviour. His mum is saying he is beyond her control and he needs to be in care. She was offered a range of support but after a couple of months this breaks down and she refuses to allow him back into her house. There are no other family members that will take him and therefore he is placed in emergency foster care by the Emergency Duty Team over a weekend. The foster placement breaks down due to persistent missing from home episodes and Jo continues to return to his mum's address. She calls the police and he is removed from her premises on a number of occasions. Following the most recent of these incidents he ran in front of a car stating he wishes to be dead. On two recent occasions he has also cut his wrists and been found with a ligature around his neck. He has been

placed in a number of residential placements but these break down due to his challenging behaviour and self-harming. He has been referred to Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services but the diagnosis is that his actions are behavioural and not due to mental health issues. His current placement provider has now given notice to end the placement due to his behaviour.

Challenges; this sort of case poses a number of challenges. Placements to meet needs of this type are very difficult to find and the lack of a diagnosis makes access to therapeutic support very difficult. Typically these young people end up in out of county placements which are very costly and often are not able to appropriately meet needs.

## 5.8 **Corporate Parent Panel**

The Corporate Parent Panel took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015. At the meeting the revised Terms of Reference were agreed; the plan for a Christmas Dinner for Care Leavers was endorsed and it was agreed that Care Leavers who could not or did not want to attend would be provided with a Christmas Hamper. It was agreed that a letter would be drafted in the name of the Corporate Parent Panel and sent to all business leaders, Councillors and staff in order to get as many donations as possible; Councillor Jones and young people representatives agreed to liaise with the Business Leaders Forum to see if business partners could support the initiative to offer our children work experience or apprenticeships and promote the Christmas campaign at the same time. Following consultation with young people the Panel agreed, that children and young people in care would not be referred to as Looked After Children and would be collectively known as 'our children.' It was agreed that the Panel would receive an item on recent complaints to every meeting to ensure that young people were receiving the service they deserved.

## 5.9 **Child Protection Activity – Safeguarding Quality & Review**

### **Performance**

The number of initial child protection conferences per 10,000 population continues to remain high and rose throughout August (185.7) and September (181.2). The number remains significantly higher than the England average (56.8) and our Statistical Neighbours (83.3), but was a slight decrease from the highest reported figure in July 2015 of 188.1 per 10,000 population. The high number of initial conferences and the continuing high number of children on child protection plans continues to place pressure on council services and external partners who work in the safeguarding children arena.

The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans for the month of August 2015 was 369, the highest figure to date. This decreased in September to 342, the



lowest figure this year and illustrates how child protection figures can fluctuate from one month to another.

In August 2015, 91.3% and in September 92.3% of Individual Child Protection Conferences were held within 15 working days of the start of the section 47 enquiry. This means that in July and August three cases were not held within the statutory timescale. However, the percentage has increased overall and as a service we continue to perform significantly higher than the England average (69.3%) and our Statistical Neighbours (74.6%).

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, 100% of review child protection conferences have been held within timescale, which is excellent when considering the high throughput of work. The Safeguarding Chairs have been thanked for their hard work.

A further 'Key Performance Indicator' (KPI) for the Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service is the percentage of children who become subject to a Child Protection Plan for a 'Second or Subsequent Time'. In May 2015, our performance was 17.2%. In June/July 2015 it was noted that there was an increase to 22.4%. In August the percentage dropped to 18.4% and again in September to 17.1%. This remains higher than our Statistical Neighbours (12.6%) and England (15.8%). However, it should be noted that previous performance had remained fairly constant at between 17.2% and 18.4%.

An audit has been undertaken with regard to the percentage of children who became subject to a child protection plan for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent time. It should be noted that children are counted as being subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time regardless of how long ago they became subject to the first plan.

A second or subsequent child protection plan is not necessarily wrong because it may reflect a new risk of significant harm to a child that had not existed previously. What is important is that high and low performance is monitored to ensure that all issues that could be impacting on the safeguarding and protection of children are explored and addressed appropriately.

The audit showed that from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015, there were 475 new child protection plans of which 93 had a previous plan. This equates to 44 families (18 sibling groups and 26 individual children). Out of the 93 cases that had a previous plan, 45 cases had a subsequent plan within a two year timeframe and 24 of those had the identical category of plan on both occasions and would suggest that the previous concerns were still evident. For three of the families in that cohort the audit indicates that they had their original child protection plan ended prematurely. The auditor raised concerns with regards to the progression of the child in need plans following the end of the original child protection planning; in that outstanding

work was not completed; work was not coordinated when stepped across to level 3 services or the case was closed prematurely to children's social care. Some individual cases had the same category of plan on both occasions with an additional category being added of emotional abuse at some point and there will be circumstances where children do encounter a new risk once a child protection plan has ceased but figures within the audit evidence that the new risk is relatively low at 11%. High levels of second and subsequent plans can indicate premature ending of initial plans, or failure to provide continuing family support, once the plan has ceased.

The audit made the following comments for consideration, which are now being taken forward;

- Full participation of agencies throughout planning including agencies working with adults within the family home is critical.
- Lack of parental participation in plans hindered progression within cases.
- Some areas of risk identified became lost resulting in appropriate agencies not being present at meetings and risk assessments were not completed prior to plans ceasing.
- Changes to a child protection chair and appropriate agencies not being present increases the risk of information being lost.
- The child protection plan needs to be clear, monitored and developed within the core group. Progression is not always evident within minutes and child protection plans ceasing whilst work remains outstanding is a concern.
- A full case history must be taken into account when considering the threshold of significant harm, especially in relation to cases of long standing neglect and parent's ability to maintain changes; decisions to close cases where concerns had been raised within the child in need period were evident and the 'stepping across' process from child protection to child in need is not robust in some cases with meetings not taking place within recommended timescales.
- Poor quality of child in need recordings resulted in no clear plan for the family and did not evidence progression and there needs to be clear expectations of what needs to happen in cases following closure to social care including support at level 1-3.

## 5.10 **Looked After Children Safeguarding, Quality & Review**

### **Performance**

The number of children who are 'looked after' per 10,000 population also continues to be high, and increased slightly in August (154.8) and September (156.2). Again this is significantly higher than the England average (60.0) and our Statistical Neighbours (89.9). This continues to present a significant challenge for the Council, Children's Services and partner agencies, in meeting the needs of this highly vulnerable group

in times of financial austerity.

The 2014/15 aggregate figure of Looked After Children (LAC) Review in timescale for the year was 97.9% and performance so far this year is consistent with this performance, however slightly below the 2015/16 target of 98% at 97.8%. 100% was attained for April and July with 99.1% for August and 97.8% for September which again is a good performance from the Independent Reviewing Officers.

The 2015/16 percentage of LAC Reviews where the young person was consulted prior to the review is currently 93.5%, which has significantly increased since the 2013/14 figure of 75.4%. Instances not meeting this standard have generally stood at between one and three cases a month in 2015 and usually reflect exceptional circumstances pertaining to the child that precludes the IRO contact. This figure is kept under constant scrutiny by the Service Manager for this area.

The percentage of young people with a LAC review who were consulted on Date, Time, Venue, Agenda, Participants of Review Meeting for 2014/15 was 90.7% as compared with 71.22% for 2013/14 and 58.42% for 2012/13 demonstrating significant team progression in the area of children's participation. Consolidating on this improvement remains a priority for 2016/17; however figures are currently around 80%.

The percentage of LAC Reviews where the young person participated for 2014/15 was 95.6% as compared with 86.9% for 2013/14 and 90.9% for 2012/13, with continuous development and improvement demonstrated. At present 94.9% of children have participated in their review.

#### 5.11 Transience

**South Beach** ; The area for the original pilot scheme was the same as the South Beach selective licensing area - running west of Seaside's Way from Chapel Street in the north to the Pleasure Beach in the south. Initial inspections of all properties have been completed, with 1,690 people contacted and 950 provided with some support. The initiative has received a positive response from the community and feedback from individuals who have been supported suggests that the proactive approach to offer help and support before crisis point has made a difference. The police statistics show a downward trend in Anti-Social Behaviour call outs linked to the private rented sector.

Work to engage the local community in shaping their own neighbourhood is still on going, currently focused on a weekly drop in event that is regularly attended by upwards of 40 individuals who can get advice, socialize, and volunteer. The recent new funding resource will enable an increased presence of the Transience team in the area to contact and support more residents, develop further ways of supporting

the local community, and also evaluate in more detail what has been achieved to date.

**Claremont ;** Work covering the whole of the Claremont ward started in August 2014. Most of the first sweep of inspections has been completed to date. The transience team has had contact with 1,264 people and provided support to 602.

Work to support the local community will now be further developed, building on an existing local drop in, and helping to co-ordinate community activities. Great Places Housing Association is also committed to working with the Council in addressing issues within the community.

Areas for further development and the priorities for the next six months are:

- To further develop the strategic partnership
- To agree and implement a comprehensive evaluation plan, and update the cost-benefit analysis
- To develop a wider community group in Claremont, in partnership with Great Places HA, working with interested parties and existing community groups
- To continue to support and develop the community groups in South Beach
- To re-visit and review earlier contacts in South Beach
- To establish a “drop in” base within South Beach
- To plan for further work in the Central area and start to develop links with the existing community groups in those neighbourhoods
- To carry out a partnership consultation workshop to discuss progress, issues and future plans

## 5.12 **Adult Learning**

A mock inspection of Adult, Community and Family Learning Service took place last month. The Adult, Community and Family Learning service provides learning courses for over 3,000 vulnerable adults in Blackpool and is externally funded by the Skills Funding Agency – there is no core Council funding. As the service is a registered learning provider with the Skills Funding Agency, the service is under the jurisdiction of the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework.

The Purpose of the service to help residents to help themselves and others in their local community through informal and formal learning

Priority Curriculum areas include the following, Basic Skills (English, Maths, Digital), Employability Skills – a Pathway To Work, life skills (including emotional well-being, volunteering) and Family Learning.

The priority groups include Adults in the top 30% worst Lower Super Output Areas,

Unemployed – more chaotic vulnerable long term, building up hours of work, Low – moderate mental health needs, Learning disabilities, Homeless, Domestic Abuse victims and Vulnerable Families in Childrens Centres, Schools and other community settings.

The key strengths that came out of the mock inspection focused on leadership and management and the commitment and passion shown by staff to improve outcomes. It was felt that teaching, learning and assessment is very good and tutors on most courses use a broad range of strategies to inspire and challenge learners. Tutors are well-qualified and experienced in their subject areas and in addition have other highly relevant qualifications and although learners have complex personal support as well as significant learning needs, the majority confirm that they enjoy learning and as a result develop a wide range of skills to enable them to move forward in their lives. Feedback to learners was also regarded as helpful and timely.

Areas for improvement include the fact that there is currently no efficient and central means of managing and collating all of the separate strands of quality assurance activity, including that relating to sub-contractors. The Service relies too heavily on hand-written/manual data which serves to undermine effective organisational performance management. Also information from initial assessment and the group profile is not always used to inform planning to ensure that the needs of individual learners are being fully met and that the more able learners are sufficiently stretched and challenged consistently across programmes.

In going forward the findings and actions required have been fed into a revised Performance Management Plan 2015/16 which was signed off by the Adult Learning Management Committee, chaired by Cllr Jones on November 10th 2015.

### 5.13 **Better Start**

In the early years, children's experiences have a major impact on their development and future outcomes. By ensuring they have the best possible start in life, we enable them to maximise their achievements, which in turn builds a stronger Blackpool for us all. That is why the work of Blackpool Better Start, a partnership led by the NSPCC, made up of the Blackpool community including parents, Police, Local Authority, the Hospital Trust, Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health and the Voluntary Sector, is so important to our town.

Better Start is funded by The Big Lottery and partners to deliver lasting change so that Blackpool will be a place in which families raise happy, healthy children who grow up to take pride in belonging to, and giving back to, the community.

Better Start will improve services for 0-3 year olds and their families and every new baby in Blackpool will enjoy the early care and nurture they need for healthy

development and to be ready for school.

Initially the work will be focused in the seven wards where the local community faces the greatest challenges: Bloomfield, Brunswick, Claremont, Clifton, Park, Talbot and Victoria. Linked Children's Centres are Claremont, Grange Park, Mereside, Revoe, St Cuthbert's, Talbot & Brunswick and Thames.

If we think of the developing brain as a construction project, Better Start's ambition is to give every new baby born in Blackpool a better start at a time when their brains are developing rapidly. Building healthy brains is the key to future success.

One of the things that is known to support positive brain development is the back-and-forth interaction between the baby and their caregiver, known as 'Serve and Return' interactions. This crucial aspect of development helps to build strong foundations for brains, forming a good basis for a child's future and enabling them to cope better with life's challenges. Better Start will ensure that high quality support is available to our communities by delivering appropriate services and evidence based interventions, including those which promote the 'serve and return' that our children so richly deserve and that will enable our families to thrive.

Within 10 years the partnership is determined to change outcomes for our youngest children and their families which will create a generational change for our town and our people. The developmental strategy focuses on two key milestones for families: Healthy Gestation and Birth and School Readiness. These will achieve long lasting positive outcomes for all our babies and children and form strong foundations for when they are parents themselves.

There are "effectiveness factors" that are known to work, for example the Family Nurse Partnership provides home visits from specially trained nurses to all mums under the age of 20, throughout their pregnancy until their child is two. This high quality support helps young mums to bond with their baby, strengthening the foundations in the baby's developing brain and increases the chance of positive outcomes for the child. The project will also enhance Breast Feeding Support to new mums to initiate and maintain breast feeding; giving babies the best possible nutritional start. Breast feeding also provides a great opportunity to build the baby's brain through 'serve and return' – as the baby 'serves' by babbling or gesturing, the mum speaks and engages with the baby to 'return'. Research shows that this 'serve and return' approach builds strong links in a baby's developing brain that has a lasting effect on development and learning.

Delivering these services and others within the town enables families and communities to thrive. Better Start will create programmes that support children's healthy brain development and we can improve outcomes for our youngest children, their families and for our town.

Running through these two outcomes are the overarching goals of focused support in diet and nutrition, language and communication, social and emotional development. To ensure this happens in all levels of the community, Better Start is actively engaged in monitoring how 'things are done' and how they could be done better in Blackpool. The parents' group Community Voice ensures representations at all levels of the decision-making process. Part of the long term goal of Better Start is to transfer power from the statutory services to the community to ensure sustainability and to build capacity within Blackpool communities. A Systems leadership approach is being developed starting with middle managers as well as members of the Executive to ensure a dynamic change programme is supported throughout organisations.

As part of the overall regeneration of the town, Better Start is linked into some of the other key initiatives which will help us to reinstate pride within the town and regenerate the town back to a stable, healthy and vibrant community. All of the initiatives and work undertaken to transform services for 0-3's will be viewed within the wider vision of the transformation of Blackpool.

As part of this vision Better Start will invest in the town ensuring, wherever possible, that local suppliers and services are used. It will invest in workforce, including the wealth of volunteers and apprentices who are ready and able to support the work with families in the town. Better Start is everyone's responsibility within a community and everyone will have an awareness of the best way to raise children.

The strategic programme of action is based around four cornerstones:

- Public Health – change for a population
- Evidence Based Intervention – change for those with additional needs
- Refraining and System Transformation – building shared understanding and shared action
- Centre for Early Child Development – building and sharing learning

**Appendices:**

Appendix 9 (a), Commissioning Service Review Budget Savings Proposals

Appendix 9 (b), Timetable

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? Yes/No

**6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 The statutory obligations are monitored and continue to be met.

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 None

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 There is a duty under the **Children’s and Families Act** to co-produce all policies with parents and children/ young people (CYP). Positive feedback has occurred from parent and charity groups to the DFE about parental engagement and engagement with children/ young people was seen as not being a major concern on a DFE monitoring visit. However, it has been highlighted by internal self-evaluation that engagement with CYP could be better and work is ongoing with the Chief Executives department to put in further structures to enable this to improve. It was also recognised that “hard to reach” parents views have not been obtained and a parent telephone survey is proposed.

There is a requirement under **the 2011 Education Act** to progress a School Led System. This is achieved through the work of the Challenge Board, School Federation and School Forum.

**13.0 Background papers**

None