

<b>MAYOR &amp; CABINET</b>			
<b>Report Title</b>	Response to the referral from the Children and Young People Select Committee relating to the savings proposal for Early Help services.		
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	<b>Item No.</b>	
<b>Ward</b>	All		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Children and Young People		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	<b>Date:</b>	18 September 2019

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Mayor and Cabinet with a response to the referral from Children and Young People Select Committee regarding a possible cut of £800,000 in 2020-21 to the combined Early Help budget. This was considered during the 2018 budget round, but not agreed by Mayor and cabinet, pending advice from the Early Help Review.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Mayor and Cabinet are asked to note the referral and the response from officers and agree that it be submitted to the Children and Young People Select Committee.

## 3. Policy Context

### National Policy Context

- 3.1 The Early Help review and our developing approach takes places in a context of political and financial uncertainty, with the withdrawal of the UK's membership of the European Union still not finalised and changing dynamics in Parliament, a lack of confirmation on the continuation of the Government's Troubled Families programme, and the lasting impact of a decade of austerity, with future funding to local authorities – such as the public health grant - uncertain.

### Local Policy Context

- 3.2 An effective Early Help approach supports the Council's Corporate Strategy 2018-2022, specifically the following priorities:
- Giving children and young people the best start in life
  - Delivering and defending: health, social care and support

- Building Safer Communities

3.3 Lewisham's Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership vision is: "Together with families, we will improve the lives and life chances of the children and young people in Lewisham". This is achieved through a focus upon closing the gaps in outcomes achieved by our children and young people and agreement to ensure that children's and families' needs are prevented from escalating and are instead lowered. The ideal is for all children and young people to require only universal services and where further support is needed this should be identified and provided as early as possible.

#### 4. Referral

- 4.1 As part of the budget setting process for 2019/20 and 2020/21, officers put forward a proposal that a cut of £800,000 could be made to the combined Early Help budget. This reflected the challenges of finding potential budget cuts within statutory children's services – early help services have been severely cut across many councils. The proposal suggested that impact could to some extent be mitigated by redesigning provision and delivery of the services that contribute to our early help offer, namely: children and family centres, youth services and family and parenting support (the Early Help Review). The review also looks at wider whole system change which would better mobilise existing universal services across all agencies to support families.
- 4.2 This proposal was presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018, but the cut was not agreed at that time, pending the outcomes of the Early Help Review.
- 4.3 At its meetings on 12th June 2019 the Children and Young People Select Committee received a report on the findings of the Early Help review to date and options for the future delivery of these services within the current and specific financial context.
- 4.4 On 11th July 2019, the Children and Young People Select Committee received a further report setting out the next steps for services in scope of the review. This set out the budget position in relation to Early Help and referred to the extant cuts proposal.
- 4.5 Children and Young People Select Committee took oral evidence from Council officers and after questioning and discussion, resolved to refer its views to the Mayor and Cabinet in the following terms:

*It was RESOLVED that a referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet to advise that this Committee feels that the objectives of the Early Help Review cannot be met should the decision be made to make the cut of £800,000 that was proposed in the budget report last year under cut proposal: "CYP 7: Early Help Redesign".*

*At the time of considering the budget in September 2018, the Committee felt it was unable to properly assess the impact of the cuts without information on what the redesigned service would look like. As a result, the decision whether to support the cuts was deferred to allow for the completion of the Early Help review.*

*Although the review has yet to be completed, the Committee now has sufficient understanding to lead it to the conclusion that the objectives of the Early Help Review will not be met should the decision be made to make the cut.*

## **5. Response**

- 5.1 The Early Help review has not identified efficiencies or underspends which could be offered as budget cuts. Findings from the Early Help review (although it is not fully finalised) indicate that current provision of targeted family support in particular does not meet the current demand, nor does it offer the flexibility of interventions to address the breadth of presenting needs. Youth services and children's centres are well-used and contributing to the safety of children. Our recent Ofsted inspection additionally highlighted the need for improvements in our early help provision and infrastructure.
- 5.2 The total CYP budget available in 2019/20 for universal and targeted level support, which covers our children and family centres, parenting support, and youth services, is £4.519m. Targeted family support forms part of this support offer but is separately funded by the Troubled Families Grant £1.007m. This grant now appears to be extended to April 2021 but the quantum is not yet clear. An additional £74,000 from other LBL budgets and the CCG supports some service delivery.
- 5.3 In addition to the risk presented by the uncertainty over the Troubled Families grant (£1m) there is a mismatch between budget and contractual spend in relation to youth services (£451,000).
- 5.4 Elsewhere on this agenda, there is a report regarding the future delivery of youth services. This pegs the cost of youth services at the current budget level £1.943m per annum. It does propose, should continued outsourcing be agreed, setting an expectation that the value of the service may (subject to annual budget decisions) be reduced by up to £150,000 per annum over the next four years, with the implementation of any reduction agreed through an annual review and business planning process identifying how this could be achieved with minimum impact e.g. through raising of funding from alternative sources.
- 5.5 The CYP Select Committee is correct in its conclusion that the Early Help Review has not identified budget cuts that can be made without serious reductions in service delivery. The budget cut in question (£800k) is not therefore now part of the budget proposals for 2020/21. Given the minimal statutory basis for the services in question however, it is likely that these services will need to be considered in future as having potential for cuts should the council's budget position not significantly improve.

## **6. Legal Implications**

6.1 Legal implications are as set out in the report.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The total CYP budget available in 19/20 for universal and targeted level support, which covers our children and family centres, parenting support, and youth services, is £4.519m. Provision of targeted family support also needs to be delivered within the funding envelope, which would increase to £5.589m if the Troubled Families Grant continues at the same levels.
- 7.2 An additional £74,000 from other LBL budgets and the CCG supports some service delivery.
- 7.3 In addition to the proposal to deliver savings of £800,000 from 'early help' services provided to our children and young people, further financial pressures are presented by the uncertainty over the Troubled Families grant (£1m) and issues relating to the budget for youth services following mutualisation (£451,000).
- 7.4 The sum of the financial pressures across services funded by the CYP directorate is therefore £1,231,500. There is a further £1m risk should the Troubled Families grant not continue.
- 7.5 A budget of £1.943m for Youth Services brings projected spend in line with the available budget in 20/21.

## **8. Crime and Disorder Implications**

8.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **9. Equalities Implications**

- 9.1 The proposal in this report has been considered for equalities impact and it is considered that there will be no impact in 20/21.
- 9.2 An EAA has been undertaken as part of the Early Help Review.

## **10. Environmental Implications**

10.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.