

WIRRAL COUNCIL CABINET

3RD FEBRUARY 2011

SUBJECT:	EARLY INTERVENTION GRANT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR SHEILA CLARKE
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the range of activities currently commissioned by the Children's Trust through external funding grants to be replaced by the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) from 2011-12. The range of activities in 2010-11 included:

- Parenting, Behaviour and Family Support, Teenage Pregnancy, Substance Misuse, Positive Activities for Young People, Sure Start and Aiming High for Disabled Children and Families.

It should be noted that the Early Intervention Grant will be expected to cover other activities such as payment for Wirral's element of the pan Merseyside Connexions Contract. The report includes proposals for the priorities to underpin the next round of commissioning and offers options for the length of the contracts and suggests a time line for the process. The proposals are:

1. In line with the Council's priorities as listed in the Cabinet Resolution at its meeting on 9th December which recommended that provision should focus on early intervention supporting vulnerable children.
2. Promoting greater involvement by the voluntary and community sector and also in
3. Producing efficiencies in service provision.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve

1. The priorities underpinning the commissioning of the early Intervention Grant to be as follows:
 - Sure Start
 - Parenting, Behaviour and Family Support
 - Services for Disabled Children
2. The commissioning Time line (Appendix One) as attached.
3. Twelve months as the agreed contract period for commissioning in round one.
4. The Cabinet are also asked to agree that the Children's Trust Executive oversee and agree service specification and be accountable for the time line.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 For Cabinet to approve the commissioning process.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The use of commissioning as a tool to identify the most appropriate providers of both targeted and universal services is growing across the public sector. Commissioning not only identifies providers but can also be used to underpin change management in respect of improving performance in Service Providers and also by involving service users in the decision making process. Over the last few years there has been an increase in commissioning as the means of identifying new providers to deliver services.
- 4.2 On 31 March 2011, the specific funding of the programmes outlined in paragraph one of this report will cease. In the 2011-12 budget statement the government announced the launch of the Early Intervention Grant (EIG). Funding for this will run from 2011 until 2015. The guidance from the Department for Education indicates that the EIG will be allocated to cover the following:
 - Sure Start Children's' Centres
 - Free early education places for disadvantaged two-year-olds
 - Short breaks for disabled children
 - Targeted support for vulnerable young people
 - Targeted mental health in schools
 - Targeted support for families with multiple problems.

The government also announced that while the EIG will fund these programmes the grant is not ring fenced and local decision making would determine priorities and commissioning requirements.

A number of providers in both the voluntary and statutory sector are currently commissioned. The Council has signed a Compact with the Voluntary Sector agreeing that commissioning, taking account of cabinet and Committee

deadlines, will not take less than six months. Clearly commissioning would not be completed in time to enable contracts to be awarded by 31 March 2011. To ensure continuity of service provision, the Council has agreed to roll over the grants to voluntary and community organisations for an additional three months until 30 June 2011. With regard to the statutory sector, a number of their programmes, previously covered by the ABG, have been included in the main budget for 2011-12.

- 4.3 The Early Intervention Grant will, subject to agreement by the Council, fund a number of priority areas. The implications of the grant settlement are reported elsewhere on this agenda by the Department of Finance. The allocation for the EIG for 2011-12 is £15.1 million. In addition, the range of interventions required will mean that commissioning will have to be very specific in its requirements and required outcomes. In some instances it will be units of specific interventions that will be commissioned as opposed to whole services. With this as the context for commissioning for 2011-12, commissioners have been meeting with strategic leads, colleagues from Health and the Voluntary and Community Sector with the intention to scoping the issues to be addressed in the commissioning process.

Early Identification of Priorities

- 4.4 It is essential that priorities are identified following analysis of evidence. Within Wirral there is more intelligence and data to support decision making than has previously been available. Returns from the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and ASSET, the Youth Offending Service Evaluation tool kit and returns from internal monitoring are providing detailed information which is informing priority setting. (Please see Appendix two). Commissioning should meet priorities and priorities should underpin themes. Following consideration of the intelligence available, commissioning themes to act as a framework for commissioning priorities are suggested as follows:

- Parenting and Compromised Parenting (Sure Start)
- Children and Young People with Disabilities
- Behaviour in Children, Young People and Families.

- 4.5 In returns from both CAF and ASSET assessments show that the localities most in need run through Birkenhead, Tranmere, Rock Ferry, Liscard and Seacombe. In terms of gender White British Boys make up the biggest number of the CAF cohort. Behaviour, Parenting and Adult Mental Health were the main triggers that led to the use of CAFs. The evidence from ASSET suggests that it is generally more white British Boys involved with the YOS. Both sources of evidence point to behaviour as the main causes of concern with parenting support being offered following both assessments

As part of its approach to identifying its priorities, Wirral Council embarked on a corporate consultation "Wirral's Future be part of it". This has led to the development of priorities for all Council Departments. With regard to the Children and Young People's Department, these have been identified as follows:

- Exploring increased delivery of services by the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector.
- Scrutinising the operation of Children's Centres for Best Value

These priorities can be met within the commissioning process and the themes as outlined in 4.4.

- 4.6 These priorities provide a framework within which services can be commissioned and are complementary to the Council Priorities. In addition, these priorities also allow for a co-ordinated planned response to key issues arising from the programmes listed in 3.1 and which contribute to the issues identified from the CAF and ASSET analysis.
- 4.7 There is a requirement for Wirral Council to keep to its Compact with the Voluntary Sector and informal conversations with representatives from the Voluntary Sector to date, indicate that agreed timescales should be retained. With this in mind, the Timeline (Appendix One) is attached for approval.
- 4.8 This timeline takes account of the need to report to Cabinet and also to allow preparation time for Pre-qualifying Questionnaires and method Statements thereby meeting Compact requirements. In addition to this as the amount available for commissioning £15.1 Officers from CYPD will liaise with colleagues in central procurement to ensure all external commissioning requirements are clarified and met.
- 4.9 As part of the response to the corporate consultation, the Council agreed to scrutinise Children's Centres as part of a Children's Centre Strategy Review which is currently being carried out. This could result in a decision to commission new providers of services. In line with any commissioning of new providers there might also be the opportunity to revise delivery models to produce efficiencies and future savings. To achieve such an outcome it would be necessary to commission on a joined up basis to maximise the opportunity to make improvements.
- 4.10 In looking to commission services from 2011-15, there are two options outlined below.
- 4.11 Option One - Commission for twelve months with the option to extend contracts as necessary if arrangements are not in place to start the second round of commissioning. The second round of commissioning would be for a period of at most 33 months subject to any contract extension. This would ensure that any proposed changes to the operation of children's centres could be worked out and implemented. The risk with this approach is an initial twelve month contract would not be attractive to some providers given the risk that they might not be re-commissioned. This would in effect be working against one of the principles of commissioning which is to stimulate the market. However, the possibility of a second contract for 33 months is more attractive to providers in respect of sustainability.
- 4.12 Option Two - Commission for 21 months and then for twenty four months. This would provide a contract that would be more attractive to providers and

possibly encourage more organisations to bid. The risk with this approach is that any necessary operational changes would be completed ahead of 21 months leaving in place arrangements not in line with policy and not matched to priorities.

- 4.13 A key requirement from this commissioning is for services to be delivered more effectively to produce better outcomes for both service users and the commissioning authority. Therefore the second round of commissioning will be required to ensure that all priorities are addressed; provision is complementary and seamless; and effective in meeting improvement targets. Option One allows for necessary changes to take place and enables commissioning to progress if necessary in house changes have been made.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 The risks in not proceeding to identify the most appropriate service provider could result in the council funding provision that is not in line with new policy initiatives.
- 5.2 Current operating procedures within existing services may be inappropriate and if not challenged by the process of review inherent in commissioning could have a negative impact on desired outcomes for service users.
- 5.3 The Council could be at risk of losing money if existing commissioned services are not challenged with a view to reducing costs or improving outcomes.
- 5.4 Opportunities for the greater involvement of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector in service delivery will be lost if opportunities to commission services are not actioned.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Another option considered is to continue with existing arrangements. This is not to be recommended for, although it would enable providers to plan for service delivery, what is being offered might not be in line with emerging demands. Continuing with the current arrangements would leave the Council open to challenge with respect to permanently rolling over contracts without providing other organisations with the opportunity to apply.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Representatives from the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector, representatives from the Primary Care Trust, Public Health and colleagues from the Children and Young People's Department were consulted in various meetings during November and December. Information from the public consultation has contributed to the development of priorities contained within the report.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 This report outlines options for approaches for commissioning of the Early Intervention Grant and underpinning this is the drive to open the market to other providers and develop new ways of working.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 There is an annual budget of 15.1 million pounds available from the Early Intervention Grant. Staffing requirements to oversee the commissioning will be met from within existing resources.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Given the value of some of the contracts, advice will be sought from the central procurement unit in respect of the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) regulations. Timelines will be Compact compliant.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Early Intervention Grant seeks to address issues of vulnerability and social exclusion. There are no equalities issues.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

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|---------------------------------------|------------|
| (a) Is an EIA required? | Yes |
| (b) If 'yes', has one been completed? | 10-01-2011 |

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None.

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APPENDICES

Appendix Needs Analysis CAF/ YOS (attached)
Timeline for commissioning (attached)

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Early Intervention Grant Guidance – Department of Education
Wirral Have Your Say (consultation returns)
Cabinet Motion (Cabinet 9th December 2010)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date