

Report To:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	14 December 2016
Executive Member/Reporting Officer:	Councillor Peter Robinson, Executive Member, Children and Families Stephanie Butterworth, Executive Director (People)
Subject:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES INVEST TO SAVE PROJECTS
Report Summary:	<p>The report provides details of three invest to save initiatives within Children's Services for which approval is requested to commence implementation.</p> <p>The three projects are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Group Conferencing • Edge of Care Service • From Care To Success, transitional support for Care Leavers
Recommendations:	Executive Cabinet is asked to approve the three projects for implementation together with the levels of investment as stated in Appendix A .
Links to Community Strategy:	The projects will each build the resilience of the community, building stronger families who do not rely on the Council services for support and maintenance.
Policy Implications:	There are no immediate policy implications from this paper as the services described are all covered by existing frameworks.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	<p>The report requests consideration of three invest to save proposals.</p> <p>Appendix A provides a summary of the financial implications of each proposal which includes the estimated investment requirement together with the estimated cost avoidance of each initiative and financial saving where applicable (From Care To Success).</p> <p>The investment requirement is £ 0.929 million in 2017/2018 increasing to £ 0.940 million in 2019/2020. It is essential that appropriate monitoring arrangements are introduced alongside these investment proposals to ensure the estimated cost avoidance and financial savings are realised each financial year and on a recurrent basis thereafter.</p> <p>Executive Cabinet Members should also note that a separate decision will be required at a later date to approve the investment requirement to support the Ofsted improvement plan.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	<p>The projects appear to be commendable albeit lacking in hard evidence and therefore without sight of the financial implications authorised by the Section 151 Officer it is not possible to comment on whether they provide value for money.</p> <p>Presumably there is an evidence base for the success of these</p>

types of projects elsewhere which are alluded to but lacking in detail in the report.

There is no quality impact assessment or any detail of work already done to ensure compliance with the Council's equality duty.

There is also missing from the report any sense of timescales for implementation and completion of the projects, and there are no descriptions of processes/procedures which will be put in place to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved. Nor does the report set out how success will be measured.


Whilst in theory Family Group Conferencing should assist with reducing timescales around completion of care proceedings, the test will be in the proper implementation of the same.

Risk Management:

The main risk for the Council is that the projects do not deliver savings and there is an ongoing staffing establishment which is under used. However this is extremely unlikely as the projects all have an evidential base both nationally and internationally.

Access to Information:

Background papers and information can be obtained by contacting Dominic Tumelty, Assistant Executive Director, Children's Services

 0161 342 3354

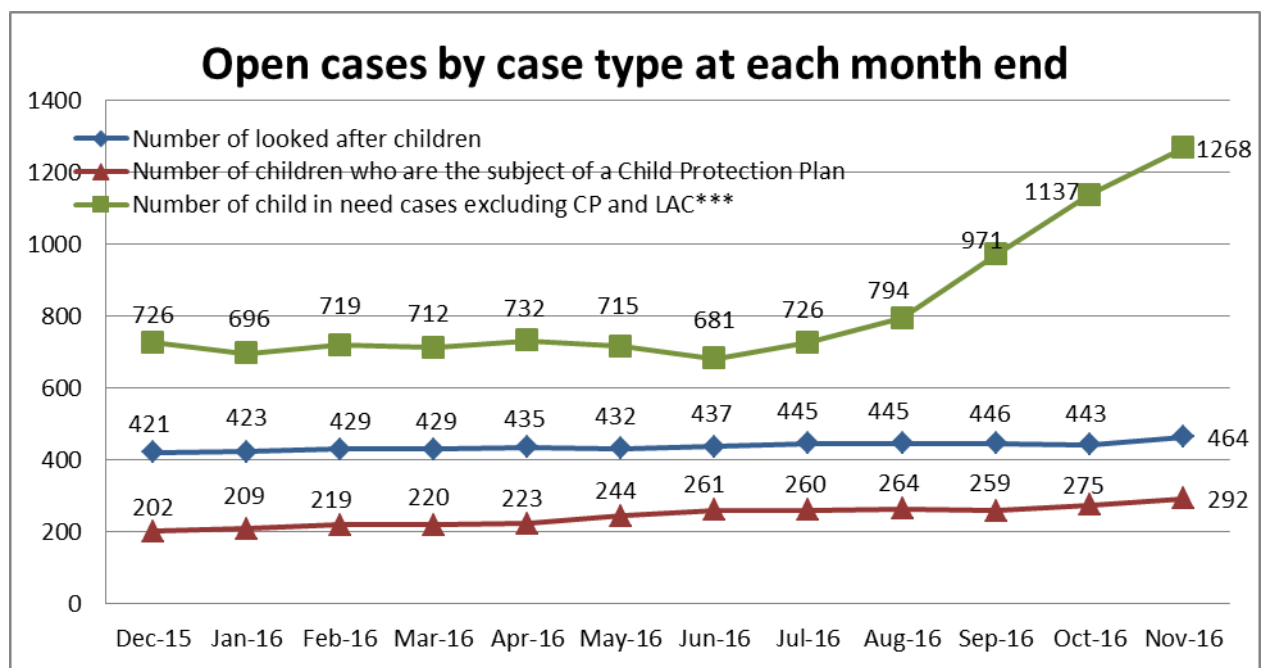
 E-mail: dominic.tumelty@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Within Children's Social Care, there is a clear need to reduce demand on higher threshold services. The reason for this is twofold, namely that early intervention is well proven to lead to better outcomes for children and secondly that high threshold delivery is costly and less effective for families in the long term.

1.2 The graph below shows the pattern of demand broken down by category of need. A rise in 2016 for the numbers of children in care from 421 to 464 brings significant additional cost and places pressure on all involved in placement provision, including partner agencies. Similarly the pressure on service from the number of child protection plans rising from 202 to 292 is massive across the safeguarding partnership.

1.3 It is safe to assume that a proportion of the children in need will progress to child protection and a smaller proportion will need to come into our care. As such, further increases are likely in the coming months.



1.4 In order to address this demand, Tameside will benefit from enhancing the options available for workers to address need earlier in the life of the problem. This report sets out two projects which are evidence based, nationally and internationally, and will lead to better outcomes for our children and their families without the need for statutory intervention.

1.5 The third project aims to improve the long term provision for our care leavers. For some time Tameside has had a higher rate of teenagers in our care and this group of young people are now approaching the time when they will become more independent. As a Corporate Parent, and in law, we have a duty to our care leavers which extends in many cases to their 25th birthday as we see them through tertiary education. Whilst there are private providers in existence who offer semi-independent accommodation, the quality of provision is inconsistent and indeed insufficient to meet the needs of our children in many cases.

1.6 Throughout 2016 Tameside has piloted a "bedsit" transition scheme in partnership with New Charter Housing whereby up to 7 young people at any one time have been supported from care into their own independent living environment. The outcomes for these young people have been extremely positive. The standard of support they have received has

been of high quality and in cost terms has averaged at close to £200 per week compared to £850 per week in the private sector.

- 1.7 The project identified below seeks to expand our project and our partnerships to meet the needs of more of our care leavers, which in turn builds community resilience and reduces long term costs.

2. PROJECT 1 - FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING

- 2.1 Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is a model of intervention with vulnerable families based on the concept that extended family members can identify their own solutions to support children. The model was originally developed in New Zealand and requires intensive preparation and facilitation by an experienced coordinator with support. Facilitators are trained and are awarded a license for practice. The FGC model involves identifying/reaching out to extended family members across the country. This sometimes involves contacting family members who may be unaware of the safeguarding concerns relating to their relatives living in Tameside.
- 2.2 It has become increasingly clear in recent months that there is still a need for this work to be undertaken with vulnerable families in Tameside prior to the initiation of care proceedings and during Child Protection (CP) and Child in Need (CIN) processes. Busy social work teams have struggled to develop the model themselves due to the time-consuming nature of the task as extended family members are identified, visited and prepared for a larger family meeting at a neutral venue hosted and facilitated by an experienced Chairperson/coordinator. FGC work can identify solutions within families which may reduce the need for children to become Looked After by the Local Authority.
- 2.3 Since December 2015, a Child Protection Conference Chair has focused on FGC work one day per week. This has led to a small number of FGC's being undertaken. The demand far outstrips the current resource capability. :
- 2.4 The intention is to increase the current FGC resource by two new posts – 1 Coordinator (Grade I) and 1 Support Worker (Grade F). Table 1 below provides the level of investment required.

Table 1

Total Investment Requirement

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Employees	81,150	82,770	84,420
Resources	5,000	1,500	1,500
	86,150	84,270	85,920

- 2.5 Additional resource is required to redecorate/refurbish Chester Avenue as a suitable venue for FGC and other work. This has been estimated to cost £5,000 with an annual budget thereafter to maintain the service of £1,500 (details are included with table 1). It may be appropriate to source larger premises in due course depending on the success of the project.

Efficiencies to be gained – both cashable and non-cashable

- 2.6 The Family Justice Review stipulated that care proceedings should be completed in 26 weeks. If a FGC is completed before the initiation of care proceedings, the LA is in a stronger position to argue that all family options for securing permanence for a child have been taken into account before court proceedings commence. This reduces delay for the child and ensures the Local Authority is compliant with court timescales.
- 2.7 This approach may also identify suitable alternative extended family options to long term care which will provide the best outcome for children and make savings for the Local Authority. For example, if Tameside identified viable permanency options with family members for 3 children who are in existing foster care placements, an average annual saving of £129,000 would be realised when compared to an independent foster care placement. An average annual saving of £47,000 would be realised when compared to an internal foster care placement. There would also be savings for the Local Authority in terms of staff time completing statutory visits to Looked After Children, IRO's chairing statutory reviews across the North West and other agencies completing PEP's/Health Assessments as part of the child's LAC care plan. As the service develops, there is potential for both cost avoidance as children are diverted from becoming LAC and a reduction in existing costs as children are returned to their family from care.
- 2.8 The FGC process ensures that solution focused support is identified by families themselves. This can be empowering for families and helps keep children out of the care system. It can also reduce the cost of support packages for complex children in.
- 2.9 This project can be moved on very quickly subject to endorsement of financial implications. There is a waiting list of families willing to participate in the FGC process.
- 2.10 Research proves that the FGC model works and is considered a good practice model across the UK. TMBC has a fully trained FGC coordinator within the Conference and Review Team who is very keen to take on more responsibilities in this area. Since the FGC model was re-introduced in recent months, the demand from social work teams has far outstripped current capacity. This indicates there is a need for additional support in this area.
- 2.11 FGC work is underway but is limited in its scope due to current capacity issues. A Student social worker offered some time-limited support to the project during a University placement. Salford University has expressed an interest in evaluating outcomes for families and children who are subject to the FGC approach.
- 2.12 The following are recent examples of FGC work undertaken in Tameside currently:
- **Family Group Conference 1:**
Family of 7 children aged 13 years and under including a newborn baby. Mother left alone to care for all the children following father's imprisonment for assaulting oldest child. Family Group Conference produced plan for family to support mother to look after the children and to identify family members who could care for any of the children if required.
 - **Family Group Conference 2:**
Plan agreed for child to reside with family members when he could not reside with his parents and sibling, following allegations that he had sexually abused other children. Plan agreed at Family Group Conference meant that this child remained within his family and did not need to come into foster care.

- **Family Group Conference 3:**
Plan agreed for family to support plan for 1 year old child to be rehabilitated from foster care to her father's care and for family members to supervise regular contact with her mother.
- **Family Group Conference 4:**
Plan agreed for family to support grandparent to care for their 4 year old grandchild, pending a planned return to parents, with support from family members.

- 2.13 Commitment to the staffing cohort identified in section 2.4 would enable the Conference and Review Unit to plan for undertaking more FGC work quickly to address current demand.
- 2.14 Table 2 provides a summary of the investment requirement compared to the estimated avoidance cost which would be realised by this initiative.

Table 2

Financial Summary

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Investment Requirement	86,150	84,270	85,920
Initial Estimated Avoidance Cost			
Internal Foster Care Placement - Average Annual Cost For 3 Placements	(47,000)	(48,410)	(49,860)
Independent Foster Care Placement - Average Annual Cost For 3 Placements	(129,000)	(132,870)	(136,860)

3. PROJECT 2 - EDGE OF CARE SERVICE

- 3.1 Tameside has a consistently disproportionate number of older children in care, secondary school age children whose family present for service later in the life of a problem, thereby making it seem intractable and harder to resolve. These children, due to their age and presenting issues are often not accepted by foster carers and therefore are placed in residential care at high cost. Often they remain in care until independence but with poorer outcomes than their peers.
- 3.2 In October 2016 there were 443 children looked after by Tameside. 246 of the total number were cared for by private providers, either Independent Fostering at an average cost of £820 per week or Private Provider residential care at average cost of £3,000 per week.
- 3.3 The Edge of Care project will see the creation of an intensive, whole family response to children at the edge of care which will provide
- out-reach
 - in-reach,
 - family sessions
 - and short breaks residential provision when required.

- 3.4 This service will better support families to remain together where safe, which is known to promote better outcomes for children whilst also enabling savings to be made by the Local Authority.
- 3.5 Staffed by experienced family intervention workers, the resource will be flexible in their approach and time with the family whilst working closely with other initiatives, such as Family Group Conferencing to ensure lasting and sustainable change for families.
- 3.6 In non-urgent cases, access to the service will be determined via the Family Support Panel thereby ensuring a consistent approach to family support work across the Borough.
- 3.7 Working with partners, the unit will provide time limited, maximum 48 hours, emergency bed pending a support plan with the family to return the young person and
- 3.8 The project will necessitate 1 Team Manager (Grade J), 1 Assistant team Manager (Grade I) and 12 Intervention Support Workers (Grade F) who need to be able to work intensively with families and therefore have low caseloads. Table 3 provides details of the investment requirement.

Table 3

Total Investment Requirement

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Employees	496,330	506,250	516,380
Resources	55,030	38,580	38,580
	551,360	544,830	554,960

- 3.9 There is a clear evidence base for this project from other Local Authority experiences. Having had such a scheme in use since 2013/14 Blackburn & Darwen report a saving from their placement budget of more than £800,000 after cost deduction. Rochdale Council have a similar model which has worked with 153 young people between April 2015 and March 2016, all at the edge of care and emergency placements. Of that 153 only 6 became looked after, 2 of which were remanded due to criminality as opposed to family breakdown.
- 3.10 It is envisaged that the model can, where necessary, be extended to provide support for foster carers and maintain placements at risk of breakdown.
- 3.11 Table 4 provides a summary of the investment requirement compared to the estimated avoidance cost which would be realised by this initiative

Table 4**Financial Summary**

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Investment Requirement	551,360	544,830	554,960
Estimated Avoidance Cost			
Total estimated avoidance cost based on an average of 26 weeks provision for 10 children	(780,000)	(803,400)	(827,500)
Estimated Net Avoidance Cost	(228,640)	(258,570)	(272,540)

4. PROJECT 3 - FROM CARE TO SUCCESS

- 4.1 Nationally outcomes for children and young people in the care system are significantly worse than for those who remain living a stable family/extended family environment. Looked after Children who have stable foster care placements fare better than those who have spent a significant time in residential care.
- 4.2 Young people leaving care are often ill equipped to continue their journey into adulthood. They often have poor educational attainment, few life skills, poor health and poor employability skills. They are more likely to become young parents and are over represented in the justice system. They often become adults who challenge services across the wider public service sector.
- 4.3 These poor outcomes belie the level of financial cost of care provision and demonstrate poor value for money.
- 4.4 The importance of good Transition planning for disabled children has been well researched. There is a clear evidence base for that cohort of young people achieving positive outcomes where effective transition plans are in place. We want to expand this model of working to all young people in our care.
- 4.5 These changes will enable a reduction in spend from high cost placements; it will take a graduated approach across placements that will lead to longer term cost avoidance and reduce dependency.
- 4.6 By equipping young people with the skills they need to enter adulthood and working with partners to offer a person centred approach we will start to break the cycle of generational reliance on services.
- 4.7 In order to improve life chances for our looked after children and care leavers the local authority is looking to introduce a multi-disciplinary transition support team.
- 4.8 The team will work outside of core hours and weekends. By working with a range of agencies, including the voluntary sector, they will coordinate the resources needed to provide a person centred approach to building on their pathway plan. The project will develop the use of technology to support young people in their day to day lives as well as a way of being “in touch”.

- 4.9 Some young people will need intensive support that involves using all services until they reach adulthood and beyond. Others with the appropriate support may be able to bypass certain provisions. Taking a targeted approach will help identify the relevant cohorts at a much earlier stage.
- 4.10 The team will initially have two priority areas. The cohort of young people aged 15 – 17 who are in high cost residential units (average £3,000 per week) who can be “stepped down” into semi-independent units (average £970 per week), a less expensive alternative; and the cohort of young people aged 17 – 18 already in semi-independent units who can be “stepped down” into independent living with support.
- 4.11 Like all proud parents we aim to be relentless in helping our young people achieve the best in life and be happy in the most cost effective way within our budget.
- 4.12 Partner engagement will be pivotal to the success of the service. The Local Authority has the primary statutory duty and responsibility for this cohort of young people. However the Local Authority cannot support them in isolation.
- 4.13 Some of these young people place significant pressures on other public services as well as other arms of the local authority outside of Children’s Services. They also impact on other organisations.
- 4.14 A number of young people leave the care system with mental health difficulties which leads to high levels of vulnerability. This has an impact on Adult Services. By aligning with the work in the Transitions Pathway between disabled Children’s and Adult’s services there will be smoother transfer of cases for those who need it; there will be earlier intervention to divert young people from intense support.
- 4.15 The health and health monitoring of care leavers is generally poor as they are often reluctant to engage. Sexual Health is also a significant issue. The team will work closely with the Looked After Children Nurse, CAMHS, and organisations such as Healthy Minds and You Think services to work creatively to ensure that health needs are prioritised. Technology will be explored as there are many “apps” that monitor health. Flexible health “clinics” will be arranged when the young people are available.
- 4.16 Physical health will be improved by the arrangements with Active Tameside. For those young people interested in more physical activities gym passes will be provided. Funding for the gym passes will be provided by Active Tameside when a young person undertakes voluntary work with them. A local charity has also applied for grants to fund passes, on some occasions if the young person undertakes alternative voluntary work/citizenship activities these will be provided through the Local Authority.
- 4.17 Active Tameside and New Charter Housing are willing to provide life skills programmes, volunteering opportunities & coaching and mentoring opportunities. This will have a positive impact upon the confidence and motivation of the young people. It will improve their chances in respect of employability and achievements.
- 4.18 Other Local Authority departments will also be able to contribute and we have had offers from our HR Department to help with interview techniques, Finance to help with budgeting, Early Help to offer the possibility of apprenticeships. In addition New Charter for works experience and trial employment opportunities & Active Tameside for employment opportunities.
- 4.19 There is an offer from Culture that will allow young people to take part in positive activities. In addition the voluntary sector will be able to search and secure grants to enable young people to take part in positive activities.

- 4.20 Links with the Integrated Neighborhood Service will be essential as the young people moving into independence will be living within local communities. Sharing of information will assist in securing support where needed as well as preventing escalation of anti-social behavior.
- 4.21 New Charter are willing to look at how supported living can be arranged and provided in addition to waiving some of the processes for housing that impact on care leavers.
- 4.22 As the service develops there will be other natural partnerships that will emerge. This cohort of young people has diverse and complex needs and future partnerships will reflect this.
- 4.23 There are currently 55 young people in the target group. These are young people who are living in high cost residential units, semi independence units and bedsit accommodation.
- 4.24 The average placement cost analysis of this cohort of young people is provided in table 5 below.

Table 5

Age Range (Years)	Placement Type	Average Placement Cost per week	Number of Young People in Placement @ 30/11/16	Average Weekly Cost	Average Annual Cost
		£		£	£
11-15	Agency Residential	3,000	26	78,000	4,056,000
16+	Agency Residential	2,980	11	32,780	1,704,560
16+	Semi Independence Unit	970	13	12,610	655,720
16-18	Bedsit	200	5	1,000	52,000
Total			55		6,468,280

- 4.25 Children in residential placements tend to have more complex behaviors, whether they are challenging behaviors, self-harming behaviors or emotional difficulties. They are more likely to be missing from home on a regular basis and/or not accessing education.
- 4.26 Tameside has a profile inherited from previous years whereby over the coming 5 years at least
- 4.27 We have more teenagers who will need this service than would be expected. Failure to provide for them will make the cost unaffordable.
- 4.28 The proposal is a request for investment in a Transition Support Team that comprises of 1 Team Manager (Grade J), 6 Intervention Support Workers (Grade F) and 1 Business Support (Grade C). Table 6 provides details of the investment requirement.

Table 6**Total Investment Requirement**

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Employees	274,210	279,700	285,290
Resources	16,920	14,010	14,010
	291,130	293,710	299,300

4.29 Table 7 provides a summary of the investment requirement compared to the estimated saving which would be realised by this initiative as the current cohort of young people move through the continuum.

Table 7**Financial Summary**

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Investment Requirement	291,130	293,710	299,300
Actual Saving			
Estimated Average Annual Saving	(149,760)	(306,800)	(901,680)
Net Annual Investment/(Saving)	141,370	(13,090)	(602,380)
Cumulative Net Investment/(Saving)	141,370	128,280	(474,100)

5. INVESTMENT MONITORING

- 5.1 It is essential that the proposed level of investment requested for each of the initiatives is stringently monitored to ensure that the estimated levels of savings and / or expenditure avoided as stated within **Appendix A** are delivered. It is also essential that the quality of service provided is also monitored accordingly.
- 5.2 It is therefore proposed that the relevant details are stated separately within the Council's quarterly financial revenue monitoring reports presented to the Executive Cabinet from 1 April 2017 and on an ongoing basis thereafter

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 As stated on the report cover.

APPENDIX A

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Family Group Conferencing

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Investment Requirement	86,150	84,270	85,920
Initial Estimated Avoidance Cost			
Internal Foster Care Placement - Average Annual Cost For 3 Placements	(47,000)	(48,410)	(49,860)
Independent Foster Care Placement - Average Annual Cost For 3 Placements	(129,000)	(132,870)	(136,860)

Edge Of Care Service

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Investment Requirement	551,360	544,830	554,960
Estimated Avoidance Cost			
Total estimated avoidance cost based on an average of 26 weeks provision for 10 children	(780,000)	(803,400)	(827,500)
Estimated Net Cost Avoidance	(228,640)	(258,570)	(272,540)

From Care To Success, Transitional support for Care Leavers

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Investment Requirement	291,130	293,710	299,300
Estimated Saving			
Estimated Average Annual Saving	(149,760)	(306,800)	(901,680)
Net Annual Investment/(Saving)	141,370	(13,090)	(602,380)

Cumulative Net Investment/(Saving)	141,370	128,280	(474,100)
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Summary

Financial Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
	£	£	£
Total Investment Requirement	928,640	922,810	940,180

Estimated Avoidance Cost			
N.B. internal foster care assumed for Family Group Conferencing	(827,000)	(851,810)	(877,360)

Estimated Average Annual Saving - Care To Success	(149,760)	(306,800)	(901,680)
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