

Audit Committee

29th January 2024



Report of: Children & Education

Title: Our Families Programme Update

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Vanessa Wilson, Director of Children and Education Transformation

Recommendation

That the Audit Committee note the progress made on the Our Families Programme.

Summary

This report seeks to provide the Audit Committee with an update on key priorities for Our Families Programme and status/progress against these. Our Families Programme forms part of the Council top 5 Transformation Portfolio: Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Programme; Adult Social Care Programme; Property Programme and Temporary Accommodation Programme.

This report does not cover Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit programme as this was previously reported at Audit on 20th November 2023 but does outline the systemic relationship with that programme.

The significant issues in the report are:

Proposal

Outcomes Seeking

Current Status

Costs, Capital, Savings

Key Risks/Issues



Policy

This programme is well aligned to priorities for our Children and Young People, set out within the Corporate Strategy and supported by the Belonging Strategy which deliver on the intentions of the Bristol One City Plan, the Bristol Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Bristol Children’s Charter and the Bristol Equality Charter. Furthermore, contributes to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy working with communities, children, young people and families, schools, early years which in turn impacts on strengthening our demand management. Furthermore, the programme contributes to the Inspectorate Local Authority Children Service improvement action plan.

We want every adult in Bristol to care passionately about children and young people and express that through relationships, community, and business life.

Our members demonstrate leadership through the various governance and partnership bodies on which they serve, actively supporting and encouraging our staff, local partners and wider stakeholders to help us in the delivery of our continuous improvement and the growth and development of our city as one where our young people thrive and are included.

The premise of the programme will design effective services with, and for, children, young people, and families; and efficiency of delivery will improve as a result through a whole system change. This change will deliver improved outcomes and inclusion for all, for our children, young people, and families whilst in return deliver financial sustainability for the future.

Consultation

1. **Internal**
None
2. **External**
None

Context

- 3.1 As outlined in [Budget Recommendations Cabinet Report 23rd January 2024](#) Children and Families 2023/24 has been a challenging year for Children’s Services. There has been significant pressure resulting from an increasing number of Looked after Children placements and an even bigger pressure on the unit cost of these placements due to local sufficiency challenges.
- 3.2 To date, the rate of referrals has been higher in 2023/24 than in 2022/23, with our current number of looked after children’s placements as at P8/Q2 standing at 1,442. This is due to a significantly higher number of referrals in May through to July, and in October and November. Re-referral rates in Bristol remain high with monthly peaks in July and September at 38.3% and 36.8% respectively with overall performance at 25% for the year to date compared to the national average of 22% and statistical neighbour average of 23%. After a significant improvement in referrals resulting in No Further Action (NFA) in October at 8.6% there has been an increase again to 17.1%. The national and statistical neighbour averages are 7% and 11% respectively.

- 3.3** Numbers of Children in Care have increased since September and there has been a steady decrease in the rate of these cases placed in foster placements. Short term stability of placement however remains good at 7% of children in care having 3+ placements in the past 12 months compared to 10% nationally and 11% for Bristol’s statistical neighbours and a rate of 68% with long term placement stability slightly below Bristol’s statistical neighbour’s average of 70% and the national average of 69%. A new measure reported this year nationally has indicated the short-term stability details for those with 3 placements in the past 2 years. Bristol also performs well here at 17% compared to 22% nationally.
- 3.4** Overall placement costs have on average risen by 17%.
- 3.5** Children and Education services are operating in a complex and challenging environment, balancing the tension between delivering essential improvements and savings delivery. The urgency of change correlates to the current improvements required now and in the long-term, the financial position, performance across the directorate and the increasing demands and pressures on services.
- 3.6** Our Families Programme will design effective services with, and for, children, young people and families; and efficiency of delivery will improve as a result through a whole system change. There is a systemic relationship between the top 5 programme areas Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Programme, Adult Social Care Programme, Property Programme and Temporary Accommodation Programme as well as other areas within the Council such as Data and Insight, Fleet because greater stability will not be achieved by focusing on one area alone.
- 3.7** The principles that underpin our delivery of change are:
- 3.7.1** Child focused: ensuring that children, young people, and their families are at the heart of assessment and planning to deliver better outcomes.
- 3.7.2** Diverse: ensuring that we recognise that every child, young person and their families have differing needs, and we seek to act fairly in a judgement we make.
- 3.7.3** Responsible: working in an open collaborative way with families and partner agencies to find solutions to manage their differing needs and difficulties.
- 3.7.4** Enterprising: creating the environment that promotes and encourages to be more commercial through stronger partnerships with our partners, agencies, communities, voluntary community sectors in a collaborative way to create solutions to deliver better outcomes at a lower cost.
- 3.7.5** Sustainable: ensuring we work within our financial boundaries through a more strategic approach in our commissioning and delivery model. We want to redesign Children and Education services to bring overall costs in line with the agreed budget by 2027/28.
- 3.8** By addressing the challenges through improvements, we can achieve more ideal outcomes and impact for our children, young people and families, whilst reducing our cost of services and avoiding future costs through various opportunities.

- 3.9** The programme brings together all change activity within Children, Families, Education and Skills. This includes work currently underway, which will be restructured into the programme to ensure strategic alignment and a single view of benefits, risks and issues. The scope being:
- 3.9.1** Directorate wide: operating model; workforce talent management; demand management, early intervention and prevention; commissioning and partnerships; quality, improvement and performance; equality, diversity and inclusion; digital and technology.
 - 3.9.2** Revenue specific projects: Children’s Services (Ofsted) Improvement Plan; Children’s Enhanced Diagnostic; Home to School Travel; Family Hubs; Children and Education finance payment system (Controcc); Transitions; Young People Supported Housing Provision and Single Commissioning Hub.
 - 3.9.3** Capital specific projects: Children’s Placement Sufficiency; Foster Care Sufficiency and Home to School Travel fleet model.
 - 3.9.4** Oversight of Dedicated Schools Grant programme.

Proposal

- 3.** The proposal is as follows:
- 3.1.** Our Families Programme (Children and Education transformation) was approved by Cabinet: [6th June 2023 Our Families Programme Cabinet Paper](#). The programme seeks a whole system change to ensure delivery of the necessary improvements associated to Children and Education inspectorates, delivering better value and a balanced budget.
 - 3.2.** It is an opportunity for forward thinking and strengthening our co-production and multi-agency working, specifically the way we work and plans we prepare for children, young people and families. It ensures joint decision-making and actions around key initiatives such as Locality Working, Early Help, Family Hubs etc.
 - 3.3.** The programme reviews, develops and transforms services and the way we work, ensuring we use our resources (human and financial) wisely on those things that will deliver the best outcomes for children, young people and families, whilst ensuring we are financially sustainable in the long-term.
 - 3.4.** It is not limited to operations, but includes everyone working in Children and Education and those services outside of Children and Education that are key in supporting the delivery of our outcomes, such as, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Property Services etc. As such, staff are suitably engaged in helping to drive the change required. For this reason, workstreams leads have been identified to lead on the co-ordinated activities necessary to achieve the outcomes of the programme ensuring they bring together people across the services (including services outside of Children and Education) to share responsibility of implementing the change.
 - 3.5.** Doing nothing was not an option. The current model, systems and processes must be transformed to ensure improved services that provide the best outcomes for our children, young people and families, delivering upon our Belonging Strategy and best value through sustainable changes.

3.6. The consequence of doing nothing would mean:

- 3.6.1.** Unable to deliver the required improvements to take us from ‘Requires Improvement’ to ‘Good’ as outlined in Ofsted inspections.
 - 3.6.2.** Further deterioration in unit costs, increase in children in care/care leaver external placements etc significantly worsening the financial pressures.
 - 3.6.3.** Unable to strengthen our relationships with families and carers and design effective services with, and for, children and families.
 - 3.6.4.** Not able to identify the opportunities to mitigate the pressures long-term which would have a detrimental impact on the overall council budget.
- 3.7.** Based on lessons learnt from previous change programmes within Children and Education the directorate required a substantive transformation programme that covered operating model, better demand management and improved commissioning and partnerships underpinned by a strong governance and financial benefits approach.

Outcomes

3.8. The programme seeks a whole system change which will enable our Corporate outcomes and sustainable development goals as outlined in our Corporate Strategy. Key focus on ‘Doing What is Right’ for our children, young people and families. Our programme success will ensure we deliver the necessary improvements associated to our inspectorates, delivering better value and a balanced budget. In addition, new model and offer, stable workforce, new ways of working, improved processes, better demand management, strengthened commissioning, bringing together functions/activities where appropriate, stopping activities that add no value and a consistent use of intelligence to enable Children and Education to make informed decisions.

Ref	We will know we have succeeded when...	High Level Outcomes
1	Delivered sustainable, long-term improvements to our services, including improved governance, quality assurance, compliance, practice and performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culturally, children and young people are at the centre of everything we do; 2. Children’s Services Ofsted inspection moved from ‘Requires Improvement’ to ‘Good’; 3. Strengthened our whole system to work with the health system which impacts on Special Education Needs and Disability, Family Hubs and high-cost placements; 4. Consistent application of practice standards, high quality assessments, plans and recording; 5. Early help services enable issues and problems to be identified as they emerge so that families receive the right support at the right time rather than after a crisis has occurred;

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Improved performance visibility and management that provides members and senior officers with the right information at the right time to ensure effective decision making.
2	<p>Secured better value for money through a balanced budget by addressing the drivers for the increase in spend and future-proofed the service against increasing demand</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Balanced budget, through reduction in internal and external delivery costs; 2. Delivered savings both in Medium Term Financial Plan and additional savings identified through the programme; 3. Maximised our income opportunities; 4. Delivered sufficiency of high-quality placements within the local area, thus securing better outcomes for our children in their own communities; fewer children and young people are placed out of area; 5. Stopped doing things that do not contribute to our outcomes and priorities
3	<p>Resources are deployed efficiently and effectively, with decisions on service development informed by insight, quality and cost analysis</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource is aligned to demand and priorities; 2. Business improvements and financial efficiencies are delivered through extended integration, reduction of duplication, streamlined systems and reporting; 3. Unit costs are reduced, and effective contract management is in place to ensure Bristol gets what it pays for; 4. Being able to predict and measure impacts and interventions. Acting on real evidence not assumptions; 5. Using data, technology and analytics to prepare for the future.
4	<p>Developed more effective working relationships with key stakeholders and partners</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and Education agendas fully embedded in the DNA of the council and in the approach of our city leadership; 2. Strengthened our commissioning and relationships through better collaboration and co-production with our children, young people, families, internal and external stakeholders, health partners and voluntary community sectors. 3. Improved partnership response to corporate emerging risks and issues including child criminal exploitation and mental health; 4. Integrated collaborative service delivery with improved outcomes; 5. Strengthened data and insight sharing between Children, Education, Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health in order to strengthen decision making

		<p>and earlier intervention;</p> <p>6. Collaborative working with our partners to better plan, predict and prevent events that affect our communities;</p> <p>7. Equity of investment between partners to deliver improved outcomes</p>
5	<p>Strengthened the capacity and capability of our workforce - developing the workforce to deliver a children/young persons centred approach</p>	<p>1. Bristol is an employer of choice and is where supportive leadership and outstanding work delivers satisfaction for our staff and our children/young persons and our wider relationships with partners and our communities;</p> <p>2. Talent management framework providing a focus for investment in people to enable the best outcomes for the Children and Education services;</p> <p>3. Strengthened our recruitment and retention of our workforce through a talent management framework - alternative models and approaches such as apprenticeships, international recruitment, social work academy;</p> <p>4. Collaboration across organisational boundaries (internally and externally) in order to provide better services.</p>

3.9. The change journey will be one of:

- 3.9.1.** Responding – Delivery of our essential improvements and recommendations.
- 3.9.2.** Strengthening - Designing and developing a stronger strategic approach.
- 3.9.3.** Embedding- Delivering the approach and adapting it based on learning.

3.10. There are three angles from which we are approaching the challenge:

- 3.10.1.** Demand– tackling the number of children, young people and families that need our support and reducing the level of that need.
- 3.10.2.** Supply – how we organise our resources and commission to respond to that demand.
- 3.10.3.** Workforce – how we organise and support our staff to deliver the most effective and timely response to families.

Current Status

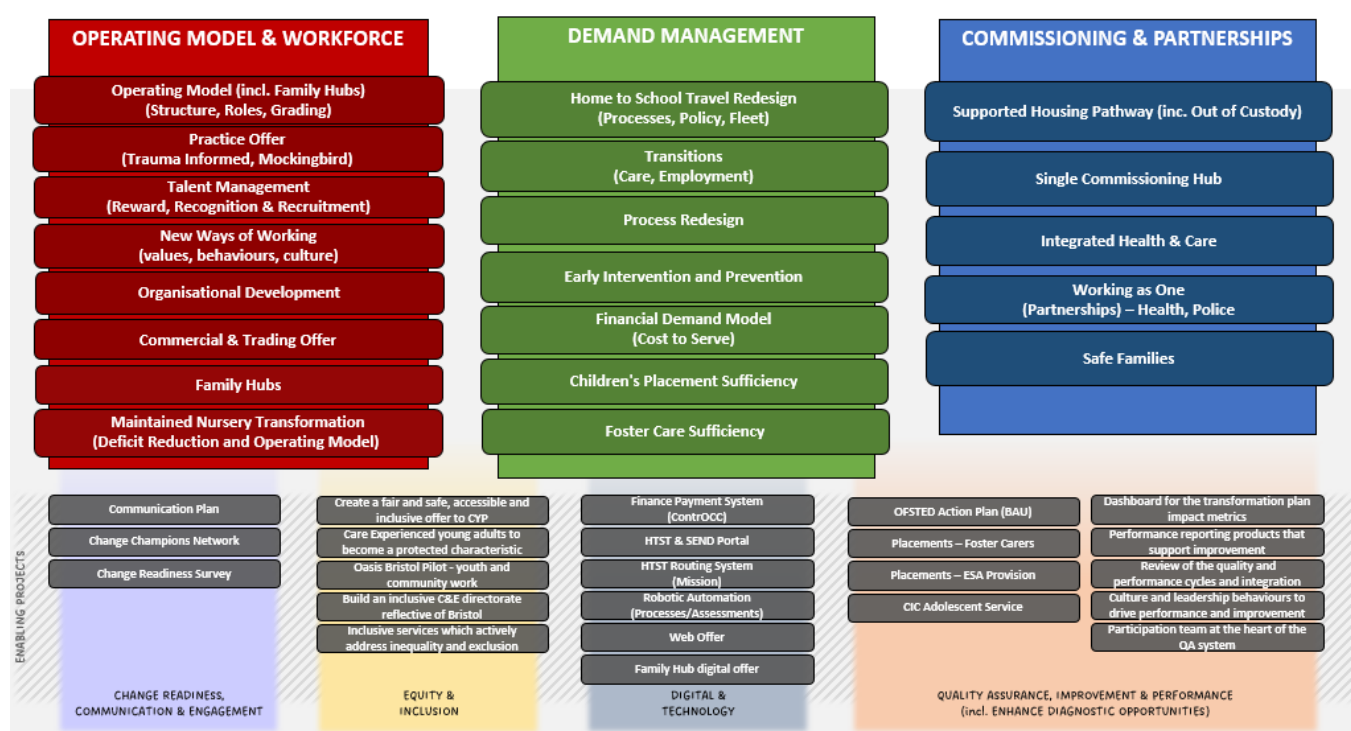
3.11. The programme is structured through 3 workstreams with a suite of projects associated to each workstream. The workstreams are enabled through a series of digital and technology, equity and inclusion and quality assurance, improvement and performance projects. The 3 workstreams being:

- 3.11.1.** Operating Model and Workforce: A system-wide approach where good Children Services

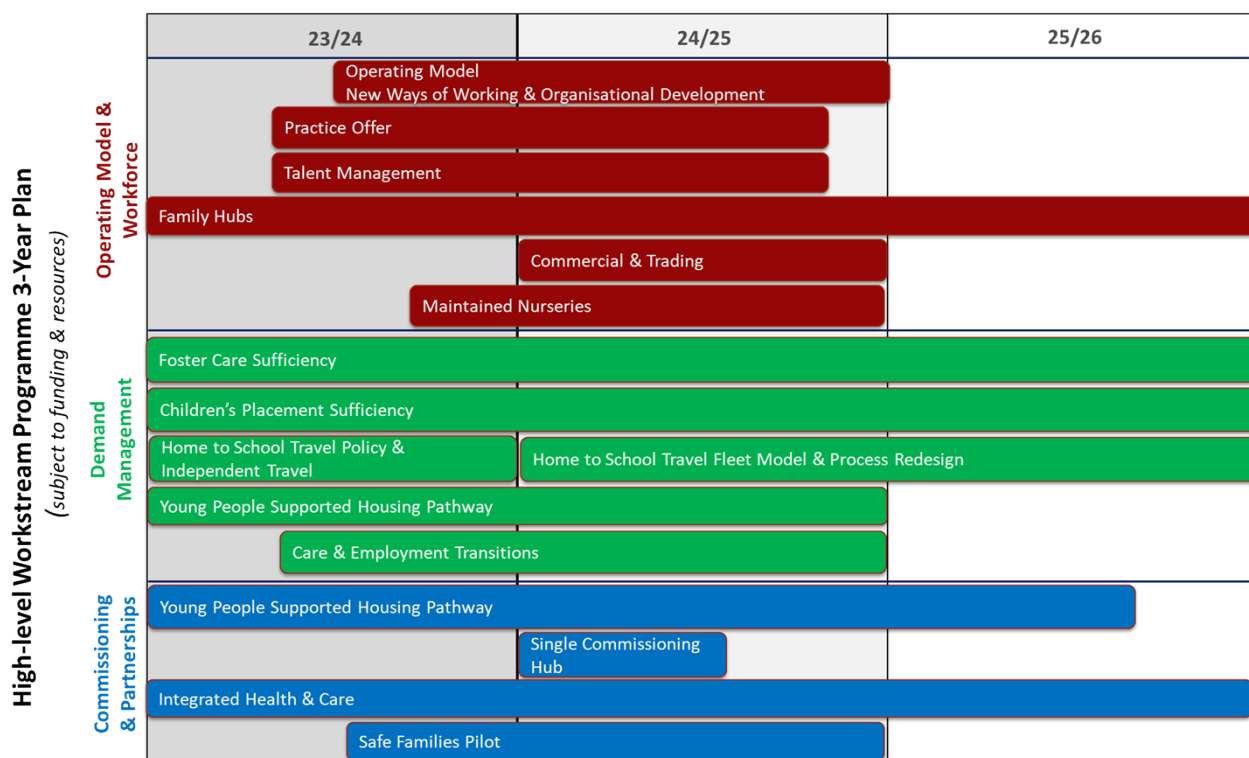
and Education is the foundation for meeting a wide range of needs.

- 3.11.2. Demand Management: Achieving efficiencies that reaches beyond the boundary of Children and Education and the organisation.
- 3.11.3. Commissioning and Partnerships: Harnesses the power of our partnerships to enrich the lives of the children, young people and families we work with to deliver the goal of better early outcomes for children/young people with increasingly greater efficiency. Alignment and efficiencies in the wider integrated care system.

3.12. The following below outlines the suite of projects against each workstream and the enabling projects.



3.13. The current timeline of the programme is outlined below. This remains subject to ongoing review, funding and resources.



3.14. The following table provides an update on current lifecycle status of work within the programme:

Workstream	Lifecycle Stage	Narrative	Links to associated public documents
Operating Model & Workforce	<i>Delivery</i>	Children and Education operating model and restructure Phase 1 completed December 2023. Phase 2 currently case for change is under development on proposed structures under each Head of Service subject to consultation with staff February 2024. Culture change programme to be developed in parallel with Phase 2 to rollout April 2024 onwards. The development of an assessment programme for management teams, with a specific focus on: leadership competencies, values and behaviours, financial acumen to be delivered April 2024.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Practice Offer – Trauma Informed is grant funded 1 day a week to raise awareness and support staff wellbeing across Childrens, Adults and Health services. As part of our workforce development, we have provided training to over 600 people across the Bristol Trauma Informed	<i>None</i>

		network and delivered a compassionate leadership course. Looking to use a framework for a local approach and pledge for integrated care system partners to commit to.	
	<i>Planning</i>	Adopting the ‘Mockingbird’ programme. This is an innovative method of delivering foster care using an extended family model which provides sleepovers, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and social activities. The programme improves the stability of fostering placements and strengthens the relationships between carers children and young people, fostering services and birth families.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Talent Management – strengthen our talent management (recruitment and retention) framework through alternative models such as apprenticeships, international recruitment, social work academy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed of all social worker pay grades, evaluation of job paperwork. Consultation with 150 staff (closes end of January 2024). Increase pay grades in line with regional salaries. International Social Worker team manager in place. Agency procured to manage the recruitment of international social workers, aim to start work from April 2024. Systemic practitioners recruited and will be in post in April 2024, and commence degree course at university in September. 	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Behavioural workshops taking place on 3 identified opportunities (proof of concept: School Attendance, Foster Carers, Sufficiency and Family Hubs/Early Education.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Family Hubs – 3 physical hubs went live in June 2024. Working on defining scope for 2 new workstreams – digital and youth (exploring how we can add value to the youth provision in the city).	<u>Cabinet approval September 2022 Family Hubs and Start for Life</u>
Demand Management	<i>Delivery</i>	Children Homes Placement Sufficiency – extension to current capital programme mandate to develop children’s placement sufficiency in the city; children’s homes, including crisis homes and disabled children’s homes, and supported accommodation to address revenue base budget pressure in 23/24. Subject to approvals at Budget	<u>DfE Capital Funding to develop two new Children’s Homes</u> <u>January 2024 Cabinet Approval - x2 Children Homes</u> <u>Cabinet approval</u>

		<p>Cabinet 23rd January 2024. Full Business Case for approval July 2024.</p> <p>This will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase local sufficiency for children in care and care leavers. • Improve stability for children in residential care and the ability to ensure these homes remain safely at full capacity best utilising the resource. • Reduce usage of high-cost unregistered placements. • Reduce of 16- and 17-year-olds coming into care through the availability of crash pad/assessment provision. • Increase availability of provision to support children and young people to transition smoothly from residential provision, or for those with more complex needs. • Focus development of a service supporting children to move out of hospital (or similar) into suitable registered accommodation. • Increase availability of suitable provision in Bristol for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) 	<p>March 2023 Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2023-2024</p>
	<i>Delivery</i>	<p>Fostering Sufficiency – digital campaign, and Southwest Fostering Recruitment Hub April 2024. Fostering grant scheme for extensions and adaptations to homes subject to approvals at Budget Cabinet 23rd January 2024. Full Business Case and Policy for approval July 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater local sufficiency for children in care in fostering services. • Greater stability for children in residential care and the ability to ensure these homes remain safely at full capacity best utilising the resource. • De-escalate the use of residential and high-cost placements for children in care and significantly increase our cohort of local foster carers and reduce the use of more expensive distant placements and the use of Independent Fostering Agencies. 	<p>Children’s Independent Fostering Agency Framework – South Central</p>
	<i>Delivery</i>	<p>Home to School Travel – Post-16 and Pre-16 policy went out to consultation in December 2023 for implementation in September 2024.</p>	<p>None</p>

	<i>Planning</i>	Subject to approval at Cabinet in March 2024. Home to School Travel - Independent Travel Training Programme being developed and exploring pick up points and handheld devices for Escorts. Options for hybrid electric vehicle fleet - options to be scoped and costed, including social enterprise model.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Maintained Nurseries – aim to secure an in-year financially sustainable operating model for 12 Maintained Nursery Schools in Bristol and establish a clear payment plan to address the historical deficits. A strategy developed and workshops with Headteachers in October 2023 Meeting with Bursars in January to analyse financial reporting.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Transitions - mandate signed off through the Adult Social Care Programme Board July 2023. Young people 13+ involved in transition pathway. Data cleansing exercise of almost 2000 records from many sources across social care and education. Merged data from social care and finance systems and now broken down into subsets. AS IS processes and pathway mapping completed. TO BE workshops commenced January 2024. Outline Business Case developed and subject to approval at Adult Social Care transformation board in February 2024. Performance reporting requirements will be requested through the Full Business Case from summer 2024. Full Business Case by July 2024 for complex or high-cost change items.	<i>None</i>
Commissioning & Partnerships	<i>Delivery</i>	Safe Families – procured the implementation of a 2-year pilot with families who link children with volunteers to provide support such as respite. Offers bespoke packages of support, delivered through a network of volunteers providing support to families in crisis or in need. The direct support is provided by volunteers and may take the form of hosting, befriending and practical resources. Safe Family manager recruited and now recruiting volunteer – 1 approved and 6 more in the process. Just received our first referral.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Development of alternative arrangements and frameworks for strengthening our children/young people’s commissioning of provision - draft	<i>None</i>

	<i>Planning</i>	Supported Housing Delivery Plan developed. Decision pathway process March 2024.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Planning</i>	Options appraisal for Single Commissioning Hub	<i>None</i>
		Create an environment that promotes and encourages to be more commercial through providing the necessary foundations - stronger partnerships with our partners, agencies, communities, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in a systemic way to create solutions to deliver better outcomes at a lower cost. Maximising and pooling of knowledge through self-service tools to assist with trading / income generation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring and or a commercialisation academy that internally supports directorate(s). • Increase number of successful grants and improve toolkits to support grants. 	<i>None</i>
Enabling	<i>Delivery</i>	Change readiness – engaged a number of Change Champions across Childrens and Education to support and embed the changes being delivered.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Planning</i>	Developing shared approaches to co-production, participation, engagement, and collaboration across Education, Social Care and Health	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Technology – looking at ways we can improve processes by replacing onerous manual task with systems and applications. Home to School Travel re-tender of new routing system and looking at new additional functions – parent/carer/supplier portal, integrated invoicing.	<i>None</i>
	<i>Delivery</i>	Single view of transformation performance across Children and Education (outcomes and impact) – developed an Our Families programme scorecard which correlates with the formal performance reports that are produced every 3 months with are reported publicly through Bristol City Council Cabinet and Scrutiny Commissions.	<i>None</i>

Financials

Programme has an estimated cost of delivery of £11.6m and projected financial benefits £10.7m over the five period 23/24 to 27/28 of which, £2.831m per annum are recurrent thereafter.

Costs

- 3.15.** The overall revenue investment needed to deliver the transformation programme for the next 3 years is £11.567m of which £6.129m is already funded (grant and previously approved corporate budget). £1.7m of the remaining £5.438m was approved on [6th June 2023 Our Families Programme Cabinet Paper](#) to cover the period 23/24. The remaining £3.738m for 24/25 and 25/26 will be requested as part of the wider Transformation Portfolio programme ensuring appropriate allocation of available funding and resources and maintaining a focus on securing maximum return on investment.
- 3.16.** Funded costs relate to Family Hubs (£4.5m), Home to School Travel (£0.8m), Children and Education Finance Payment system Controcc (£0.483m) and initial approved resource/investment costs for April, May and June 2023 (£0.346m).
- 3.17.** Within the £5.438m is £1m associated to operating model for transitional costs.
- 3.18.** The approval for early release of investment in the sum of £0.8m for Home to School Travel (HTST) was agreed by Delivery Executive on 27 January 2023 following a review of Home to School Travel during October to December 2022 to enable key areas of work to proceed pending Cabinet approval of the full investment. The early work included:
- 3.18.1.** Commissioning a delivery partner to support the rapid redesign of Home to School Travel service, process redesign and new ways of working;
- 3.18.2.** A change in post-16 and pre-16 policy for 24/25 and the introduction of Independent Travel Training (ITT) for all applicable children from age 11+ ;
- 3.18.3.** Develop options for local transport delivery model, including development of our in-house vehicles;
- 3.18.4.** A technology appraisal and research into the current technology used by the team for various parts of the process and to consider other technology options that may provide a more suitable functionality to the Home to School Travel team, parents and carer and escort’s needs, whilst optimising efficiencies throughout the service, improved and more accurate invoice and streamlining processes.
- 3.19.** The approval of Change Reserve to implement a Children and Education finance payment system (Controcc) integrated with the case management systems, improving financial view of a child was agreed by Corporate Leadership Board in June 2022.
- 3.20.** The approval to spend the £4.5m for Family Hubs programme was granted by Cabinet on 6th September 2022. Department of Health and Social Care/Department for Education Family Hubs and Start for Life programme 2022-25 to improve family services through a single access point/ and front door to a range of universal and early help services - including co-located physical, virtual and outreach services. Providing an offer that meets the diverse needs of children and young people and their families across the 0-19 (up to 25) age range, recognising that a creative approach and collaborative work with families, children and young people is needed to make sure the offer is meaningful and connects with the wider development of our community-based services, including services for young people.

Capital

3.21. Subject to approval of [Budget Recommendations Cabinet Report 23rd January 2024](#) capital invest to save for the proposed projects:

- 3.21.1.** Children’s Placement Sufficiency Invest to Save (ITS) project - extension to current capital programme mandate to develop children’s placement sufficiency in the city; children’s homes, including crisis homes and disabled children’s homes, and supported accommodation to address revenue base budget placement pressures.
- 3.21.2.** Foster Carer Sufficiency Invest to Save (ITS) project - digital campaign, and Southwest Fostering Recruitment Hub April 2024. Fostering grant scheme for extensions and adaptations to homes to address foster carer saving proposals and placement budget savings and pressures. Full Business Case and Policy for approval July 2024.

3.22. Subject to approval 23rd January 2024 Cabinet funding available to support invest to save projects.

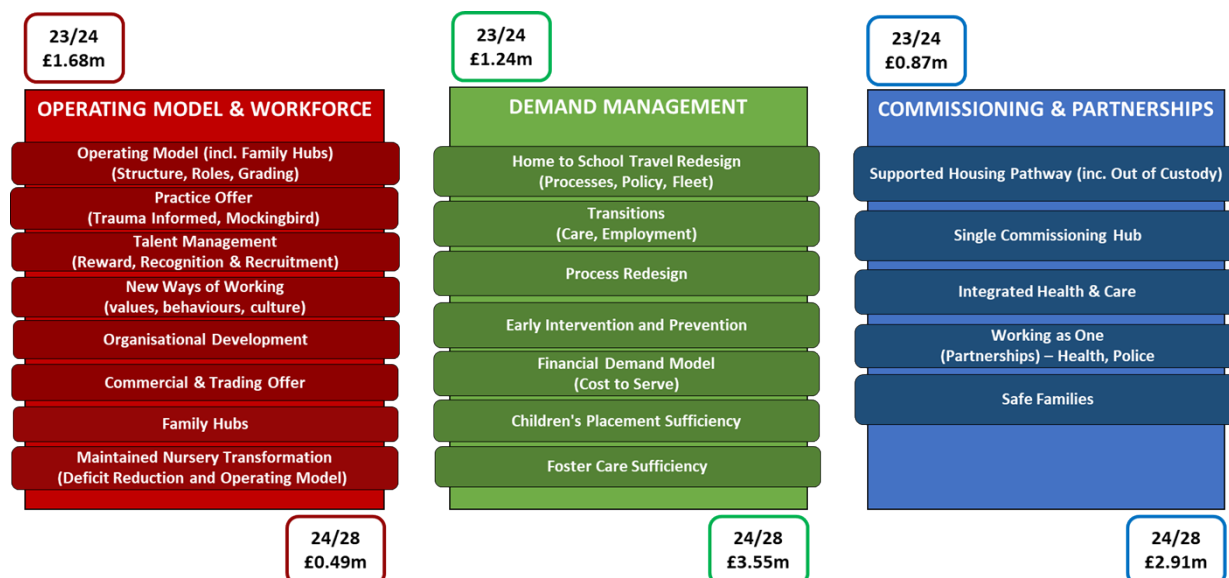
Allocate to Invest to Save Projects <i>(Excludes reimbursement from the ITS savings)</i>	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29 - 34/35	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children’s Placement Sufficiency ITS Project	1.570	3.200	-	-	-	4.770
Foster Carer Sufficiency ITS Project	0.333	0.333	0.333	0.333	1.998	3.330

3.23. Subject to approval 23rd January 2024 Cabinet new savings associated to the above capital programmes, in addition to Medium Term Financial Plan savings already approved for these two projects.

Saving Ref	Description	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	Total
		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
24/25-ITS2/3/4/5/7	Children’s Placement Sufficiency ITS Project	-	0.390	0.570	-	-	0.960
24/25-ITS1/8/10	Foster Carer Sufficiency ITS Project	-	0.159	0.159	-	-	0.317

Savings

Projected financial benefits £10.7m over the five period 23/24 to 27/28 of which, £2.831m per annum are recurrent thereafter. Does not include savings proposed as part of [Budget Recommendations Cabinet Report 23rd January 2024](#).



3.24. Further stretch cashable saving opportunities in the pipeline for 2024 to 2028 to reduce costs on placement and provision of accommodation:

- 3.24.1.** Increased local sufficiency for children in care and care leavers.
- 3.24.2.** Improved stability for children in residential care and the ability to ensure these homes remain safely at full capacity best utilising the resource.
- 3.24.3.** Reduced usage of high-cost unregistered placements.
- 3.24.4.** Reduction of 16- and 17-year-olds coming into care through the availability of crash pad/assessment provision.
- 3.24.5.** Increased availability of provision to support children and young people to transition smoothly from residential provision, or for those with more complex needs.
- 3.24.6.** Focused development of a service supporting children to move out of hospital (or similar) into suitable registered accommodation.
- 3.24.7.** Increased availability of suitable provision in Bristol for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

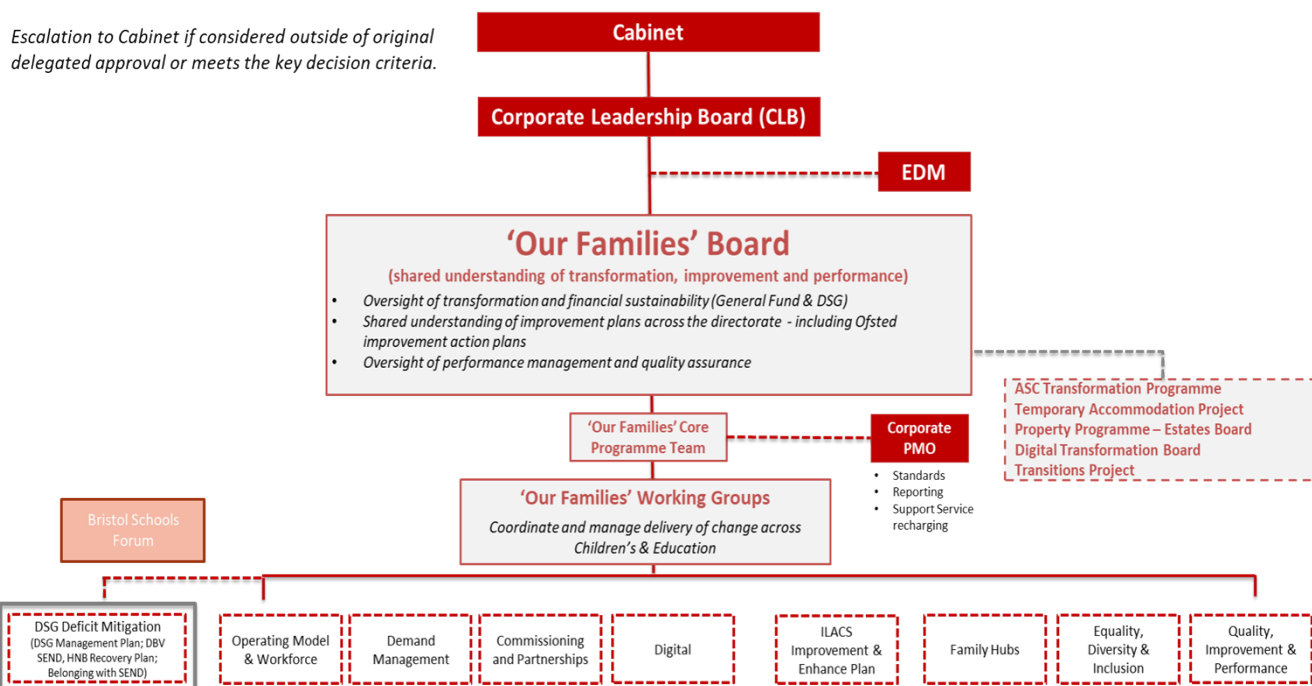
Governance

3.25. The programme is governed as follows, with a 6-weekly programme board chaired by the Executive Director of Children’s and Education to monitor status, costs, savings, issues, risks, performance, assurance of overall programme and to delegate funds and approvals to individual projects, upon provision of appropriate business cases or proposals. The programme has a performance scorecard that has a series of measures against each workstream such as number of children transferred to in-house provision from an external provider.

3.26. Oversight of delivery is managed at the strategic level through the Children and Education

Transformation Director and at an operational level through the programme manager. The board has multi-officer attendance including wider council representation such as Audit, Adult Social Care, Public Health, Growth and Regeneration and external representation from Integrated Care Board.

3.27. Individual project leads are then tasked with managing the delivery within their baseline approvals and escalating to Transformation Director and programme Board as required.



Risk Assessment

4. Risks and issues are monitored through the programme team and escalated to the Our Families Programme Board where appropriate and registered on corporate risk register if required. The key programme risks/issues and associated mitigations is outlined below.

Risk/Issue Description	How risk/issue is being mitigated and monitored
Scale of transformation and cashable savings is unachievable within required timescales.	Robust governance through Our Families Programme Board and Corporate Leadership Board. Clear individual accountabilities and responsibilities, benefits management, effective issue and risk management and prioritisation framework
Cashable savings not fully realised due to increase in costs, inflation etc.	Robust financial governance to monitor cashable savings, forecasting of any projected increase in costs. Programme is continuously reviewing further opportunities for savings to bridge any shortfalls and pressures.

Business as usual does not operate effectively during transformation and lack of capacity and/or expertise to drive the Transformation Plan	Adequate capacity will need to be in place so that BAU roles do not become diverted. Balanced use of dedicated programme team members and current service delivery resources with backfill as appropriate. Robust resource planning programme resourced with suitable skills and capabilities
Performance baselines for services are not reviewed during the programme to reflect any changes on those services i.e. increase in demands due to economic climate or changes in legislation then benefits realisation for performance may be less than expected	Monitor as a risk during the time of the phase and adjust any performance benefits realisations accordingly. Raise at Our Families Programme Board on key changes in performance
Potential lack of capacity within key corporate services e.g Finance, legal, HR, Communications to support the delivery of the programme	Approval of programmes resources, including corporate services against what internal capacity can be provided. Buy-in from Corporate Services to support the delivery of the programme
Family Hubs model, solutions/approaches are not considered as part of the wider Children and Education model then Family Hubs will become financially unsustainable, as Department for Education grant funding is only available until 2025.	Seek long term sustainability outside of Department for Education funding through the new operating model as part of the Early Years offer. Working closely in line with the Digital Transformation Programme and Citizen’s Services, prioritising utilising existing internal infrastructure/systems/technology on Council infrastructure.
Any delay to the implementation of the new Operating Model beyond April 2024 will impact 24/25 target savings.	Weekly meetings with key stakeholders to review progress, discuss issues and risks and remove blockers.
Funding for 24/25 not yet approved – may have to halt some projects if there is insufficient funding for resources to deliver all the projects/workstreams.	All current projects and workstreams being reviewed and assessed in terms of priority for Corporate Leadership Board approval.

Next Steps

- 5.
- 5.1. There is a significant amount of planned delivery until the end of 23/24 across the programme, with a clear focus on maximising both the revenue savings that can be delivered and the development of business cases for 24/25. In addition, resources will be prioritised on to the enabling projects that will enable future savings and more efficient and effective ways of working.

- 5.2. The programme team is also undertaking detailed planning for the development and prioritisation of project and programme activities required moving into the next financial year. This includes ensuring appropriate allocation of available funding and resources and maintaining a focus on securing maximum return on investment.

Summary of Equalities Impact of the Proposed Decision

6. Equalities impact assessments will be produced at a project level, but overarching programme EQIA was provided as part of the June '23 Cabinet paper: [6th June 2023 Cabinet Our Families EQIA](#)

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

The Our Families Programme was approved by Cabinet in June 2023. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report which provides the Committee with an update on the key priorities and progress for the Our Families Programme.

All proposals and actions must comply with the statutory framework regarding the Council's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in its area.

Consultation will need to be undertaken as relevant in relation to any specific proposals and legal advice will be provided as needed.

The committee will note the Equalities impact assessment.

Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor
Nancy Rollason, Head of Legal Services
17th January 2024

Financial

(a) Revenue

The Our Families Programme is focused on services funded by the Council's General Fund and therefore excludes the separate Dedicated Schools Grant Programme. The Our Families Programme has an estimated cost of delivery of £11.6m and projected financial benefits £10.7m over the five period 23/24 to 27/28 of which, £2.831m per annum are recurrent thereafter. Of the cost of delivery, £3.738m for 24/25 and 25/26 has yet to be approved and this will be requested as part of the wider Transformation Portfolio programme funding request. Delivery of the savings targets attached to this programme are critical to enable delivery against the forthcoming budget for 2024/25 due to be set by Council in February 2024. Rigorous governance and monitoring of savings and costs to deliver will therefore be required.

(b) Capital

Two new Invest to Save project mandates are subject to approval at Cabinet on 23rd January 2024 with a combined capital value of £8.1m.

Guy Marshall, Finance Business Partner, 17 January 2024**Land**

Not Applicable

HR

There are a number of HR implications arising from this report. Phase 1 focused on the Head of Service (HOS) roles across Children and Families, and Education and Skills where each department reduced from five to four Heads of Service. There were no redundancies at this stage as vacancies have been covered by temporary staff and internal development opportunities.

We are currently recruiting to two vacancies, HOS Safeguarding and Early Years and HOS Inclusion. Selection processes are due to take place on Monday 22nd January 2024, and Tuesday 23rd January 2024 respectively.

Phase 2 will focus on consultation with employees on the new proposed structures the HOS having been working on for their respective services. The Management of Change policy will apply where there are changes to structures proposed. It is anticipated that consultation will commence mid to late February 2024. There may be changes to numbers of employees in some services however we will work with employees and their trade union representatives to redeploy staff where possible as it is our intention to retain skilled workers where at all possible in mitigation of any redundancies.

This process may be iterative and any changes from reviewing services and the effectiveness of changes will be fully consulted on through the Management of Change policy.

A leadership and culture change programme is currently being developed for delivery to HOS and Service managers from April 2024.

Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner, 17th January 2024**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985****Background Papers:**

None