

People Scrutiny Commission

19th February 2024



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

Title: Children and Education – Our Families Programme Update

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

Recommendation:

For the People Scrutiny Commission to note the update report and progress for Our Families (non-Dedicated Schools Grant) programme. Provide comment and feedback on any additional opportunities we may wish to consider managing the demands and pressures to mitigate further against the financial challenges Children and Education face due to national and local picture.

The significant issues in the report are:

None – just an update on progress.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide the People Scrutiny Commission 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.
- 1.2 This report does not cover Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit programme but does outline the systemic relationship with that programme.

2. Context

2.1 Our Families Programme – background

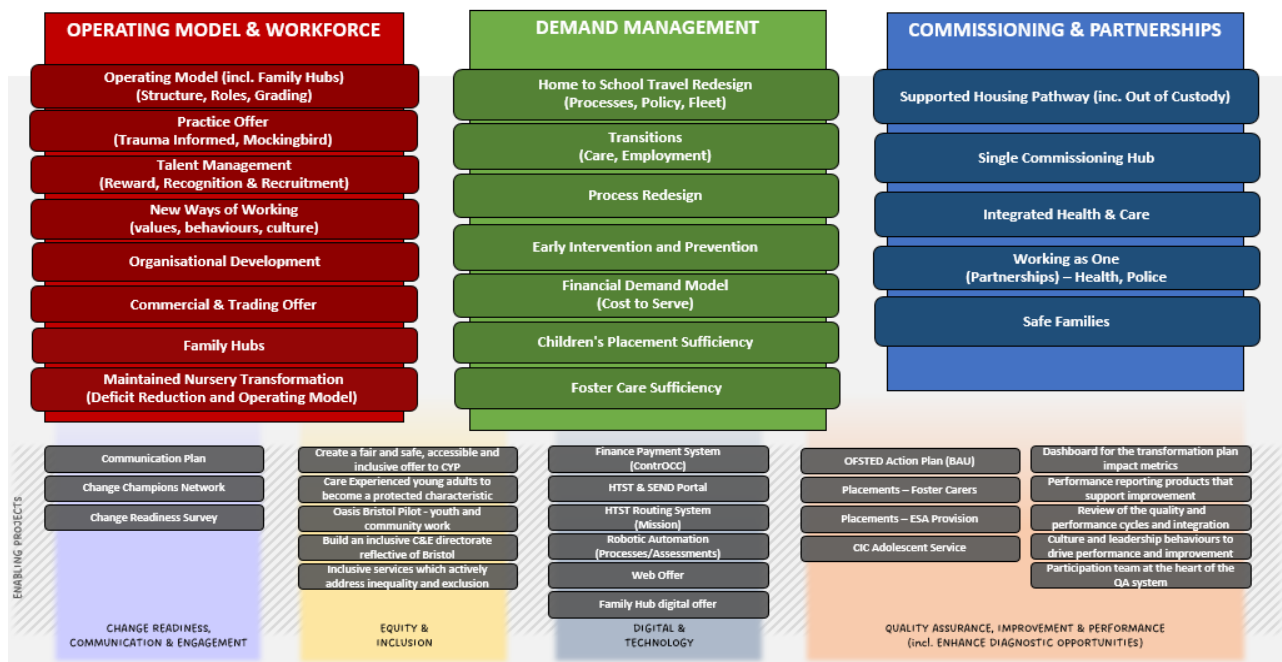
- 2.1.1 The programme will design effective services with, and for, children, young people and families; and efficiency of delivery will improve as a result through a whole system change. There is a systemic relationship between the programme areas of focus and deliverables because greater stability will not be achieved by focusing on one area alone.
- 2.1.2 There are three angles from which we are approaching the challenge:
 - DEMAND – tackling the number of children, young people and families that need our support and reducing the level of cost and need through alternative models and initiatives.
 - SUPPLY – how we organise our resources and commission to respond to that demand and, within that.
 - WORKFORCE – how we organise and support our staff to deliver the most effective and timely response to children, young people and families.
- 2.1.3 The key outcomes being:
 - Delivered sustainable, long-term improvements to our services, including improved governance, quality assurance, compliance, practice and performance.
 - 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.
 - Resources are deployed efficiently and effectively, with decisions on service development informed by insight, quality and cost analysis.
 - Developed more effective working relationships with parents, carers, families, key stakeholders and partners.
 - Strengthened the capacity and capability of our workforce - developing the workforce to deliver a children/young persons centered approach.

2.2 Current Status

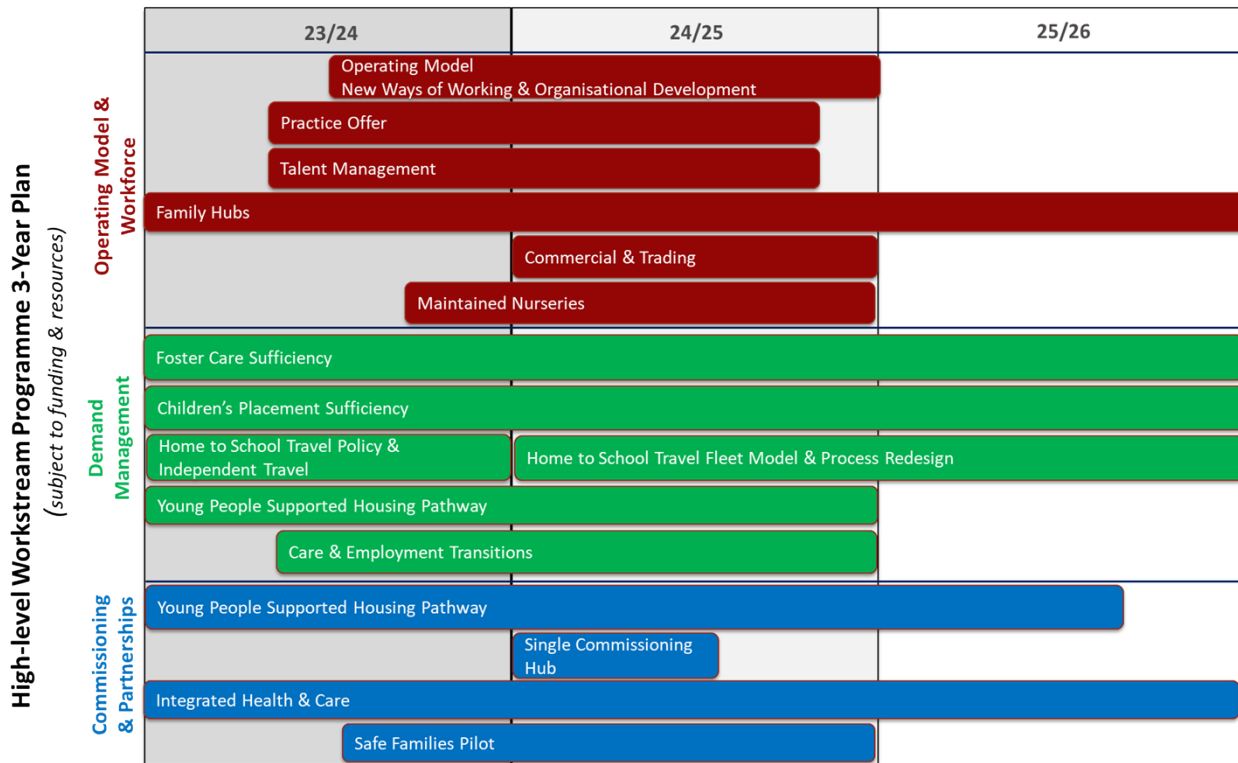
- 2.2.1 The programme is structured through 3 workstreams with a suite of projects associated to each workstream. The workstreams are enabled through a series of digital and technology, equity and inclusion and quality assurance, improvement and performance projects. The 3 workstreams being:

- Operating Model and Workforce: A system-wide approach where good Children Services and Education is the foundation for meeting a wide range of needs.
- Demand Management: Achieving efficiencies that reaches beyond the boundary of Children and Education and the organisation.
- 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.

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



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



2.2.4 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 network and delivered a compassionate leadership course. Looking to use a framework for a local approach and pledge for integrated	<i>None</i>

		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 Cabinet 23 rd January 2024. Full Business Case for approval July 2024. This will:	<u>DfE Capital Funding to develop two new Children’s Homes</u> <u>January 2024 Cabinet Approval - x2 Children Homes</u> <u>Cabinet approval March 2023 Sufficiency</u>

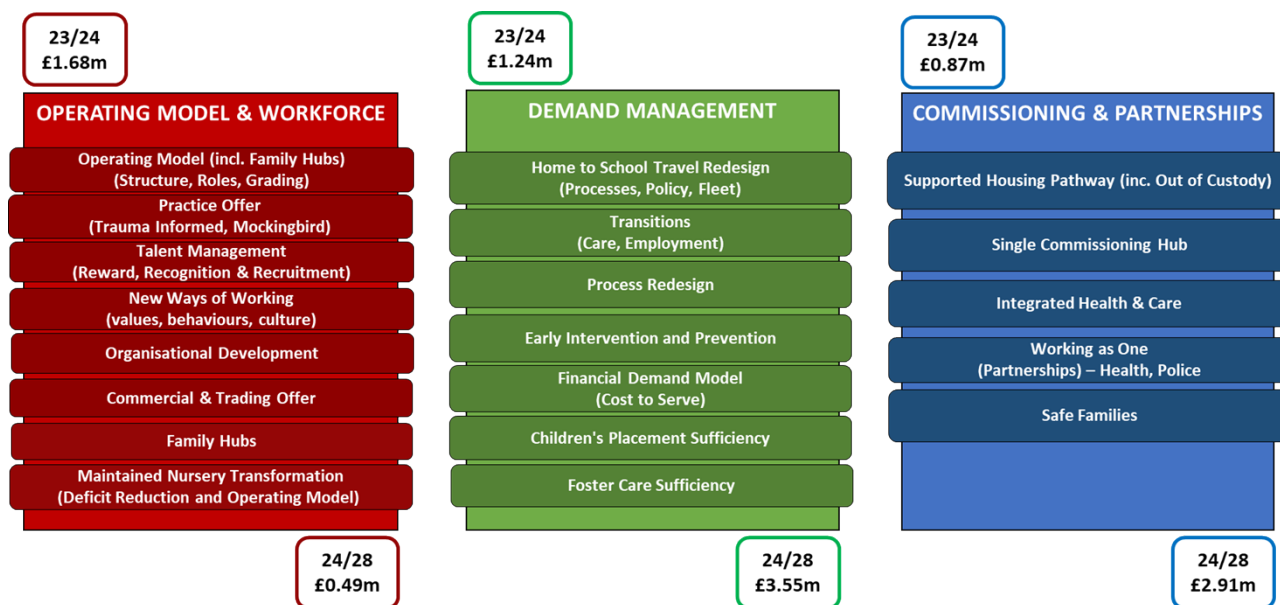
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase local sufficiency for children in care and care leavers. • Improve stability for children in residential care and the ability to ensure these homes remain safely at full capacity best utilising the resource. • Reduce usage of high-cost unregistered placements. • 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>Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2023-2024</p>
	<p><i>Delivery</i></p>	<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>
	<p><i>Delivery</i></p>	<p>Home to School Travel – Post-16 and Pre-16 policy went out to consultation in December 2023 for implementation in September 2024. Subject to approval at Cabinet in March 2024.</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p><i>Planning</i></p>	<p>Home to School Travel - Independent Travel Training Programme being developed and exploring pick up points and handheld devices for</p>	<p>None</p>

	<i>Delivery</i>	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 Ful 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 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>
	<i>Planning</i>	Create an environment that promotes and encourages to be more commercial through	<i>None</i>

		<p>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.</p> <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. 	
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>

2.3 Savings

2.3.1 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](#).



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

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

2.4 Risks

2.4.1 Risk 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.

3. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 3a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under

the Equality Act 2010.

- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 3b) [Equality Impact Assessments](#) completed for all validated savings within the programme as part of the 23/24 budget process. Equality Impact Assessment approved at Full Council 21st February 2023. [Budget 24/25 Equality Impact Assessments](#) completed for proposed new savings for 24/25 as outlined in the Budget Cabinet Recommendations report 23rd January 2024. Any new proposed savings will have an Equality Impact Assessment. Where we have a policy change, or a restructure change a separate Equality Impact Assessment will be completed.

Appendices: None