



Children, Education & Families Directorate

Business Strategy

2013/14 to 2014/15

Introduction

2013/14 will be the third of the four-year directorate business strategies. These were approved by Council in February 2011 and included savings of £119m to be achieved over the period 2011/12 – 2014/15. These are being achieved by reconfiguring services to establish a smarter, leaner and more cost effective operating environment, whilst at the same time reshaping services to fit the changed local and national policy environment. Funding for demographic and other agreed pressures was also built in.

While there have inevitably been some changes, the strategies are being delivered as planned with the majority of the original savings expected to be achieved. £27m remains to be delivered in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and is planned to be delivered in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Changes to the funding of local government from 2013/14 and new pressures identified since the strategies were originally agreed mean there are now some changes to the savings required in 2013/14 and 2014/15. This revised strategy reflects the updated position and incorporates the £27m remaining original savings and changes that will be agreed by Council in February 2013.

New strategies will be developed as part of the Service & Resource Planning process for 2014/15 and will take into account the Government's next Spending Review.

The context for Children's Services has changed significantly in the last two years and will continue to change over the period of this strategy. The **Council's Business Strategy** and the Directorate **Business Strategy** were devised to support us in proactively meeting the challenges and enabling us to react swiftly to unexpected changes affecting our work in the years to come.

We are committed to hearing the experiences and voices of our children, young people and parents/carers and ensuring that our services are shaped and developed in collaboration with them, at all levels from individual care planning, to service delivery and commissioning. We have a number of well-developed mechanisms to ensure this happens, including a Children in Care Council, Children and Young People and Parent/Carer Sounding Boards, a children and young people's disability network and an Oxfordshire Youth Parliament. These allow different routes to ensure a diverse range of children and young people's voices are heard, including those that are least heard and most vulnerable.

There are numerous examples of the ways that voices and views have influenced change and led to improvements, and these have been recognised by external inspections which have rated this area of work as 'outstanding' over several years.

In order to deliver required savings the Business Strategy was designed to fundamentally rethink how we could meet our statutory responsibilities and duties in a different way. In the first year of our Business Strategy significant aspects of service and structure have been redesigned. We have been shaping our services and structure in a more co-ordinated way, based on research of what interventions work and how the most cost effective use of resources can be made. Our aim has been to deliver services that are more efficient **and** effective. We have been implementing change that aims to:

- Keep all children and young people safe
- Raise achievement for all children and young people
- Narrow the gap for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
- Making sure children have a healthy start in life and stay healthy

There are a number of principles which guide the way in which the directorate works:

- Acting as a champion for children and young people and leading debates on their services
- Working in partnership with children, families and other agencies to get the best outcomes and make the most of our funding
- Securing early help for children, young people and their families to help prevent problems escalating
- Using evidence to guide what we do and target our work

Over the last twelve months the Directorate has:

- Kept a sustained focus on delivering savings and improving performance;
- Designed, consulted on and implemented service and structural changes which have kept the savings within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2012/13 on track;
- Kept focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families ensuring delivery of improved service performance for 2012/13 to date in the face of considerable and sustained demand, particularly in children's social care;
- Seen a notable increase in the proportion of children attaining the expected level 4 or above in English and maths at Key Stage 2. Oxfordshire increased its ranking within its statistical neighbours from 7th to joint 2nd in this key measure;
- Launched a multi -agency team (Kingfisher team) to support victims of child sexual exploitation;
- Launched a reading campaign with the objective of increasing the percentage of children reaching level 2b+ at key stage 1 in reading to 80% on 2013 and 86% in 2014. So far 45 schools have signed up to the campaign and 100 volunteers are supporting the programme.

- Supported 26 schools to become academies and seven have had an Academy Order made.
- Achieved outstanding and good assessments in inspections of children's homes and an assessment of good for our fostering service.

The education policies of national government, which include the creation of academies and free schools, mean local councils now have a different role to play in education. The council has embraced this role and clearly set out its intention to support **ALL** schools to become academies in a decision by Cabinet on 17 July 2012 where an Academies policy statement was approved. The headline of which is -

- The County Council wishes to support all schools to become academies. The Council recognises that this is a process and some schools will be at different stages in taking this step.
- The Council wishes to encourage Governing Bodies and the leadership of the school (Head Teachers and leadership teams) to consider how they might become an academy as part of a larger group of schools. This is to ensure that schools are not isolated and are mutually supportive of each other in raising attainment standards.
- The Council will ensure that support services for schools continue to be available, whether they are provided in-house or through the commercial market place. We will not seek to retain them in-house unless there is strategic value in doing so, but will work with schools to ensure they have access to services.

As experienced by most Directorates within the Council there has been a significant number of Government commissioned reviews, consultations, and policy changes in the last year. These will inevitably require changes to the ways in which we work and these are taken into account in setting the priorities for the services in the coming months and years.

Priorities and objectives of the Directorate

Children and Young People

The priorities for the Directorate as outlined in the Joint Health and Wellbeing and Education Strategies and Targets for achievement during 2012/13 are:

Priority 1: All children have a healthy start in life and stay healthy into adulthood

- Reduce emergency admissions to hospital for episodes of self-harm
- Reduce emergency admissions to hospital with infections
- Review and redesign transition services for young people with mental health problems

Priority 2: Narrowing the gap for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

- Maintain the recently improved rate of teenage conceptions
- The 'Thriving Families' project will have begun work with the first 100 families
- Reduce persistent absence (15% lost school days or more) from school for looked after children

Priority 3: Keeping all children and young people safe

- Collect information to establish a baseline of prevalence and trends of child sexual exploitation in Oxfordshire
- Reduce the number of children who need a subsequent Child Protection Plan
- A regular pattern of quality assurance audits is undertaken and reviewed through the Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Children Board covering the following agencies: children's social care; youth offending service; education services; children and adult health services; early intervention services; services provided by the police

Priority 4: Raising achievement for all children and young people

- Increase the numbers of children who achieve Level 2b or above in reading at the end of Key Stage 1
- Increase the numbers of young people who achieve 5 GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths
- Increase the number of primary schools and secondary schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding
- Reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training

In July 2012 the Council's Cabinet agreed a new education strategy - the "Strategy for Change- Improving Educational Outcomes in Oxfordshire". The approach this takes is in three strands – Outstanding Leadership and Aspiration Networks; Targeted Campaigns and System Redesign for Education. These are underpinned by the core theme of early intervention and a good start in life.

The Children and Young People's Plan has been superseded by the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Education Strategy. The governance of these strategies is now under the remit of the Children and Young People's board which is a subset of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Delivering the Business Strategy

Directorate Statement

The Directorate has implemented significant changes to the design and structure of the service. We have created an entirely new way of delivering our statutory responsibilities and designed our services based on research evidence to deliver a new Education & Early Intervention Service, redesigned some of our Social Care teams and redesigned our performance, quality assurance and commissioning arrangements with Social and Community Services.

The changes and reduction in staffing has involved a major commitment from the Directorate and colleagues from human resources and Finance. There have been a number of challenges to resolve but overall the implementation of new organisational arrangements, with reduced, more focused management whilst protecting front line services, has been achieved without a major reduction in performance. The total combined pressures/additional funding and savings include those agreed by Council in February 2011 and February 2012 as well as the proposed new pressures and savings that are included in Annex 3. Our Business Strategy outlined the importance of ensuring that new structures are supported through good organisational development and training in order to realise the benefits of new ways of working. The success of our revised structure is dependent on supporting staff and managers to work differently through a well-resourced and sustained programme of development and training.

| Year on Year | 2013/14 £m | 2014/15 £m |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Pressures & Additional Funding | 1.440 | -0.590 ¹ |
| Savings | -2.487 | -3.252 |

¹ This relates to a one-off pressures that fall out at the end of 2013/14.

Early Intervention Service

All of the new early intervention hubs have been fully operational since 1 September 2011. The new hubs are operating in line with the restructured budgets for their activities.

2,307 children, young people and families are supported in the Hubs. 5,202 children and young people have been involved in open access/targeted youth sessions. Children's Centres provided services to 17,704 children under five years old in 2011/12 (44% of children). A Quality Assurance Review of Early Intervention services, including case file audits on 139 individual cases has taken place. A programme of integrated training on play has been set up across Childcare and Play, Hubs and Children's Centres. We have successfully re-commissioned our voluntary sector Children's Centres.

The required savings for 2012/13 are on track to be met.

Education 1

As part of our restructuring we have redesigned our Education service and brought it together with the Early Intervention Service under one Deputy Director. The role of the Local Authority in school improvement is clearer following the introduction of the Education Act 2011. All of the grants supporting additional resources for the Local Authority were removed in addition to the funding from National Strategies which was already due to end and which was known prior to the last general election.

Oxfordshire Schools are in the lowest quartile of per pupil funding in England. Local Authority Central Services Equivalent Grant will be replaced in two ways from 2013/14. Schools Block Grant will cease to exist and local authority Block Grant will be replaced by a new grant for education services. An announcement setting out how the new grant will be allocated on a national per-pupil basis to local authorities and academies was made alongside the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2012.

The Department for Education has announced major changes to school funding arrangements for 2013/14. The changes required have superseded the need for a local formula funding review for mainstream schools. Modelling indicates that schools will face a period of uncertainty about funding, but the impact on schools in 2013/14 and in 2014/15 will be limited by application of the government's Minimum Funding Guarantee. The funding changes have a direct impact on a number of advisory teams previously funded from centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant, notably the Behaviour Support Service and the Ethnic Diversity

Achievement Service, which can only continue in a reduced form on a wholly traded basis. Education and Finance teams will continue to provide additional support to schools whilst they adapt to the new funding regime.

As part of the Directorate's engagement with schools we are committed to challenging poor attainment levels. We are ambitious as part of our community leadership role to work with parents, governors and the local media to ensure that in Oxfordshire we are more aspirational for all of our children and young people. The Lead Member for Education has ensured a targeted focus on improving those schools who were below floor targets or who were seen to be "coasting". Actions have where appropriate been taken to sustain current provision and arrangements. The on-going impact for the Directorate and Schools will be addressed through the roll-out and monitoring of the Education Strategy "Strategy for Change-Improving Education Outcomes in Oxfordshire".

Extra funding was set aside in 2012/13 to explore the leadership role of the Council and the part it can play in shaping a new generation of school leaders. National and international evidence suggests that the quality of schools is linked to the quality of the leadership, not just from head teachers, but also from Governors and other senior professionals. Reports confirm that high performing schools have leadership excellence, a professional career infrastructure and collaborative practice. As a strategic leader the Council has a role to create an environment for good leadership and where best practices can be identified, developed and allowed to flourish.

The programme will:

- Develop a concentrated approach to secure outstanding leadership and governance through a development programme aimed at Executive Head Teachers; Head Teachers; Deputy Head Teachers and Governors.
- Deliver an Oxfordshire Teaching School Framework which over time will enable schools to seek formal accreditation through the National College as a Teaching School.
- Development of a suite of support and intervention strategies to empower and enable governing bodies to:-
 - Focus on school improvement
 - Recruit high quality leaders
 - Find innovative leadership solutions
 - Production of a framework model that can be sustained through school to school support

New funding arrangements for 2 year olds were announced on 27 November 2012. The allocations for Oxfordshire for 2013/14 are as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Statutory Place Funding | £3,368,615 |
| Trajectory Building allocation | £1,322,427 |
| 2012/13 Capital Allocation | £872,334 |

The funding for circa 1,200 places and trajectory building will be included in Dedicated Schools Grant and are therefore ring fenced to the Schools Budget. By September 2014 a new statutory duty will require that 40% of Oxfordshire 2 year olds should be able to access free foundation stage places. Eligibility criteria for this cohort will be announced by Government soon as this is a greater number than those that would be eligible for free school meals or have special educational needs. Officers will work closely with representatives of foundation stage providers to develop the new provision.

The proposed residential special school for children with autism and learning difficulties is scheduled to open as an academy in September 2014. Planning permission and final approval are pending. The need for places is unchanged and the residential provision will provide savings against the cost of out county provision, as well as providing local provision for children and their families. Estimates for savings in 2014/15 and 2015/16 are uncertain as progress has been hampered by late information from the government relating to both the high needs block funding, and how personal budgets would be implemented if introduced (one of the Green Paper proposals).

The coalition government has made schools responsible for providing impartial careers guidance for students in Years 9 – 11. The Early Intervention Service has picked up responsibility for tracking and assisting young people to engage who are not in employment, education or training.

Work has commenced to review the management structure and commissioning arrangements currently in place for Children's Centres. This review would seek to align the service provision along the hub model ensuring a seamless service for children and their families from birth to 19 years old. This will protect services and reach to families provided by the county's 44 children's centres whilst making modest savings from eradicating duplication, sharing best practice and exploring innovative management and administrative solutions.

Children's Social Care

The reorganisation of services has been completed and new managerial arrangements have been put into place. Teams have changed the way in which they are organised. CSC has continued to work with increased and sustained demand for child protection services over the last year.

As part of the 2012/13 business strategy refresh we re-designed the Youth Offending Service (YOS). Redesigning management and staffing structures consistently with the restructuring of other parts of the Directorate saved £0.300m per annum. Changes in regulations have required local authorities to pick up the remands to custody costs for young people sentenced by the youth courts. On the basis of previous sentencing patterns it is estimated that the additional revenue cost that will fall to local authority are likely to be in the region of £0.150m. Children who are remanded are now classed as looked after children.

The demand for Childrens Social Care has continued to increase year on year:

- **Contacts** to Childrens Social Care have increased year on year: in 2008/09 they were 10,208; in 2009/10 they were 12,046; in 2010/11 they were 14,734; in 2011/12 they were 15,260 and we in the first six months of 2012/13 were 11,666.
- **Referrals** have increased from 4,928 (2008/09); to 5,501 (2009/10); 5,394 (2010/11); 6,359 (2011/12) and in the first six months 2012/13 were 3,127
- **Initial assessments** have increased from 2,715 (2008/09) to 3,292 (2009/10); 3,373 (2010/11); 3,513 (2011/12) and within the first six months of 2012/13 were 1,712.
- **Core assessments** have increased from 880 (2008/09) to 1,317 (2009/10); 1,859 (2010/11); 2,333 (2011/12) and in the first six months of 2012/13 will increase to 1,225.

The number of children with a child protection plan has increased and the number of care proceedings has seen a corresponding increase. The service is both meeting this increased demand, and sustaining performance improvements: - a significant achievement although clearly increased demand has led to additional resource and capacity pressures.

Over the past 12 months, the number of eligible young people for the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Service has reduced, with the trend likely to continue in the upcoming years. The expected current year underspend is proposed to be carried through to the rest of the financial plan as an additional £0.300m savings through minimising support levels to all rights expired clients

Cross Directorate Delivery

In 2011 the government announced that almost £4.5m would be made available in a cross-government drive to turn around the lives of 120,000 'troubled families' in England. It has been estimated that there are 810 such families within Oxfordshire. The government has allocated £0.100m for the next three financial years to fund a co-ordinator in each upper tier local authority to lead the local response to the programme and to continue to enable our Children's Social Care and Early Intervention Services to work even more closely together. The council has agreed £0.800m per year for the financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14 to fund this programme known as 'Thriving Families' locally. The government is committed to a payment by results approach (i.e.40% of the cost of the interventions) based on the following outcomes - adults into work; children at school; cut in crime and anti-social behaviour; cutting costs, saving money.

The Music Service was transferred to Children, Education & Families in 2011/12. A saving for the Music Service to achieve a greater saving as part of this year's Business Strategy was set and is on target to be met. Our approach has been consistent with the Outdoor Centres, in that we expect the Music Service to be self-funding. The Music Service has a plan to deliver and will be assisted to deliver further reductions, for example any new appointments for music tutoring will be made on Local Government terms and conditions unless a qualified teacher is required for the role.

The Munro review into Child Protection made recommendations nationally, regarding valuing professional expertise, clarifying accountabilities, improving learning, sharing responsibility for the provision of early help and developing social work expertise. This included a specific recommendation that Local Authorities should designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker, who is a senior manager with lead responsibility for practice in the local authority and who is still actively involved in frontline practice and who can report the views and experiences of the front line to all levels of management. These recommendations will be taken into account in the forthcoming review of corporate parenting and the development of integrated working to improve the child's journey from needing to receiving help.

Additional Budget pressures identified

- **14CEF1** - Increase capacity in Family support Teams to reduce caseloads to an average of 20 per worker £1.400m per annum from 2013/14
- **14CEF2** - Pressures resulting from restructuring with Children's Social Care including the regrading of newly qualified social workers £0.130m per annum from 2013/14

Additional Savings identified

- **14CEF3** - Management and admin reduction (following other reductions within service area) £0.250m per annum from 2013/14
- **14CEF4** - Children's Centres Management Savings £0.800m per annum from 2014/15
- **14CEF5** - Schools converting to academy status reduce requirement for School Improvement service £1.200m per annum by 2014/15
- **14CEF6** - Outcome of Corporate Parenting review of service area taking place during 2012/13 £0.360m per annum by 2014/15
- **14CEF7** - Remove previously agreed funding for Southwark judgement (which obliges the Council to provide accommodation and support for homeless 16 and 17 year olds) as impact of judgement lower than anticipated £0.500m per annum by 2014/15
- **14CEF8** - Reduce over provision in support levels to All Right Exhausted clients (for failed asylum seekers) £0.300m per annum by 2014/15

Conclusion

This report outlines the current position of the Directorate in relation to its current operational and financial performance along with the key risks that must be addressed. It provides proposals to address the financial challenges facing the service in 2013/14 and 2014/15 along with details of how variations to the agreed medium term financial plan will be managed.

There have in recent months been considerable challenges for the Directorate, in particular, the reorganisation of our services, the delivery of significant savings and the outcomes of a number of major service inspections from our regulators. These have in large part been met and place us in a position to move positively forward in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Jim Leivers
Director of Children, Education and Families

January 2013