

SUBMISSION TO COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HEALTH (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY)

COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item: 5

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SUBMISSION BY CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TROUBLED FAMILIES

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Committee, a query was raised regarding the national programme to support Troubled Families and the opportunities this may present to Lichfield District Council. This report updates Members on the programme, its aims and objectives and progress on local implementation.
- 1.2 The County Council is providing the strategic lead for this area of work and therefore Wayne Mortiboys, District Commissioning Lead for Lichfield District, will be in attendance at the meeting to contribute to the discussion.

2. The Troubled Families Programme

Introduction

- 2.1 The government has announced a programme of work to address the complex and often intergenerational needs of 120,000 troubled families nationwide. Through co-ordinated and targeted effort, it is intended that the lives of these families can be turned around so that better prospects and outcomes can be achieved for individual family members, the family as a whole and the neighbourhoods and communities in which they live. This in turn will reduce the very high costs that these families place on the public purse.
- 2.2 The title 'troubled families' is a Department of Communities and Local Government term which will be amended locally to avoid negative associations with this initiative. The local working group favour the term 'supporting families'. These families are being identified by using criteria provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government; in order for a family to be 'troubled', at least one member of a household will be:
 - Involved in crime and anti social behaviour, and
 - Have children not in school, and
 - Have an adult on out of work benefits

The three agreed defining characteristics tend to lead to high cost to the public purse.

Across Staffordshire only 114 households will fall into all of the three categories.

In addition, to these criteria, Staffordshire has added a further two local discretionary criteria:

- Adults on Probation caseload
- families known to Local Support Teams

Further local discretion can be applied around issues such as the following:

- emotional and mental health problems
- drug and alcohol misuse
- domestic abuse
- under 18 conceptions
- homelessness (or risk of)

this list is not exhaustive.

2.3 The majority of troubled families will be well known to statutory and voluntary agencies and efforts are likely to have been made over a lengthy period of time to support these families toward better outcomes. However, in many cases, these efforts have not been of long-standing success and therefore the focus of this programme will be to improve the co-ordination and effectiveness of the interventions made.

2.4 The programme will be of three years duration; it is an opportunity to change how public sector agencies do business in the longer term, making the 'whole family' approach mainstream practice.

The Staffordshire Context

2.5 It is estimated that there are 1400 troubled families in Staffordshire which cost £105m per year (i.e. £75k per family). The County Council and partners have been working with these families for some time through existing systems and pilots. The introduction of Families First Local Support Teams in 2011 was an important step in refocusing County Council resource towards prevention and early intervention so that emerging problems can be nipped in the bud and not allowed to escalate. Locally, Lichfield District Strategic Partnership (Chaired by the Leader of the District Council and supported by the Cabinet Member for Community and Organisational Development) has helped to develop a partnership approach to the Families First model through its Supporting Families project which produced a simple protocol for multi agency working which has been used to good effect within the two Local Support Teams covering the majority of the District.

2.6 In considering how to take the troubled families programme forward in Staffordshire, it has been recognised that it is impossible (indeed short sighted) to deal with families in isolation. There is a need to address the wider social determinants underlying the behaviours within families rather than focusing on individual need within the families themselves so that a brake can be put upon the creation of additional families which become 'forgotten' in the system. The approach therefore is not simply a system of more effective case management but a multi agency initiative engaging with partners and providers to collaborate strategically, integrate planning and delivery around the whole family, pool and align resources and jointly commission to meet needs.

2.7 The need to engage and actively involve a wide range of partners will be critical to the achievement of success; efforts are being made to achieve this at the highest level by seeking endorsement for the programme from the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership.

3. Local Action

3.1 Government's expectations and aspirations for these troubled families represents a substantial challenge to our local partnership. An initial scoping meeting took place in the spring where partners considered the longstanding issues associated with turning around the lives of these families; it was recognised that the key to success will be improved co-ordination between agencies which are committed to doing some things differently and some different things.

3.2 Key elements of the local approach are likely to include:

- Training for practitioners in both engaging with and challenging these families
- Clear identification of a lead professional who is trusted by the family
- Seeking out role models within the family to work with e.g. a grandparent
- Incentives to encourage families to engage e.g. personalised budgets
- Effective communication between agencies; all practitioners to use the Patchwork tool
- Use a community development approach to understand behaviours within the context of place and identify sustainable solutions which the community buy into

3.3 The initial list of Lichfield District's troubled families (for year one of the programme) is awaited – equating to 44 families. Following a local data cleansing exercise the work can begin to actively plan how this programme will be implemented locally, including deciding how the up front funding will be allocated. It is anticipated that at least some of these families will be known to the District Council through our work on housing and homelessness,

environmental protection (particularly in relation to noise nuisance and neighbour issues), anti social behaviour and community safety, projects such as Positive Futures and community development projects and activities. In addition, local Members may also be familiar with some families through their local intelligence on issues within their wards.

- 3.4 In addition to the families defined as ‘troubled’, we will also seek to identify those families who are on a trajectory towards becoming ‘troubled’.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That this report is noted.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The County Council will receive an allocation from the government (£175k per year for three years) to co-ordinate and grip the troubled families programme locally. A one off contribution of £90k has also been made by the countywide Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group. The County Council has decided that this funding will be used to employ a countywide team of co-ordinators who will be deployed locally to support co-ordination effort between practitioners on the ground. In addition, DCLG has a Payment by Results framework, some of which is payable up front to help facilitate the changes required. As well as a joint approach to commissioning around troubled families, it is proposed that the use of community and personalised budgeting is explored with the identified families as it is likely that they are likely to be close geographical neighbours.

6. Community Benefits

- 6.1 ‘Troubled families’ tend to pose risks to themselves, undermining their own life chances including greater likelihood of poor educational achievement, unemployment, poor physical and mental health and limited prospects for the future. They can also generate issues for their neighbourhood and local community as a consequence of their higher risk of truancy, substance misuse, domestic violence, anti social behaviour and criminality.
- 6.2 The vision of the project is for families to be enabled to play their full part within their communities by building their resilience and raising aspirations so that their needs can be met by universal services.
- 6.3 It is anticipated that in addition to the identified families, the project will involve the wider community based on the principle that long term sustainable behaviour change must come from within the individual and community.

7. Plan for Lichfield District Implications

- 7.1 By supporting the ‘troubled families’ programme the District Council will be contributing to all four of the long term outcomes it wants to achieve by ‘Supporting People’; these include:
- Helping people to be and feel secure in their homes and neighbourhoods by tackling crime and anti social behaviour
 - Supporting and encouraging individuals and groups to take responsibility for shaping and improving their communities through voluntary effort and social action
 - Helping and supporting vulnerable adults, families and children to live independent and fulfilled lives in their own homes and communities, and preventing homelessness wherever we can
 - Improving the health and well being of the whole population of the district making sure we make the biggest improvement for people with the lowest life expectancy