

Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED  
ALL WARDS (CORPORATE ISSUE)**

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:**

**SOCIAL SERVICES AND PERSONAL HEALTH SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
CABINET**

**8th MARCH 2001  
19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2001**

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**THE CHILDREN'S FUND**

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**Report of the Director of Social Services**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to alert Cabinet to the implications of the Children's Fund.

**2 Summary**

2.1 On November 15<sup>th</sup> 2000 Gordon Brown, David Blunkett and Paul Boateng launched the Children's Fund, which is a vital part of the Government's strategy to tackle child poverty and social exclusion, forming a key element of the range of measures to ensure that children and young people at risk of social exclusion get the best start in life.

2.2 The total for the Fund is £450 million over three years with £380m being targeted on preventive work with children aged from 5 – 13yrs, and £70m being distributed directly to local community groups through a network of local funds administered by the voluntary sector.

2.3 The Chief Executive of Leicester City Council received a letter from Andrew McCully (Interim head of the Children's and Young people's Unit) in January 2001 advising him that Leicester had been chosen as one of the 40 areas in England to be invited to apply for funding in the first wave. The maximum amount of the fund available to Leicester over the three-year period is £4.8m, although the precise amount will depend on the detail of the proposals put forward. If the full amount were awarded it would be likely to arrive in a phased manner, with £800k arriving this September, followed by £2m 2002/3 and 2003/4. The guidance explains that we should plan for 5 – 6 years but makes it clear that the funding will taper after 2003/4.

2.4 One of the initial tasks is to identify a partnership which is capable of delivering the aims and objectives of the fund, primary among which is the intention to fully involve the voluntary and community sectors in the planning and delivery of the fund, as full and equal partners with the local authority and health community. In this regard, the Chief Executive invited the Leicester Children's Planning Partnership to consider undertaking this responsibility, and at

a recent extra-ordinary meeting of the partnership (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2001) the partnership unanimously agreed to accept this responsibility.

- 2.5 Accompanying the letter was part 1 of the Children's Fund guidance which covers the preventive aspect (£380m) of the fund. The guidance sets out the intention of the fund to create a web of services and support by providing additional resources over and above those provided through existing mainstream statutory, specific programmes and earmarked funding streams. The fund will prioritize the active involvement of voluntary and community organizations, children, young people and their families. Part 2 of the guidance will provide additional detail about the types of service the fund might cover and will be issued in late February 2001. It is expected that there will be a strong emphasis on the development of the voluntary and community sectors as service providers.
- 2.6 The fund will target 5 – 13 years olds at risk of social exclusion bridging the gap between the Sure Start programmes for pre-school children (of which there are three to date in Leicester) and the Connexions service for 13 to 19 year olds, and there are important transition issues in this regard. The Children's Fund is intended to enable local partnerships to deliver a range of preventative services over and above those delivered by the statutory services and specific programmes.
- 2.7 The Children's Fund is intended to deliver a change in culture locally, leading to local agencies working alongside voluntary and community groups, faith groups, children, young people and parents. By targeting prevention the fund aims to identify difficulties at an early stage to reduce the causes of risk of social exclusion, and it is expected that local partnerships will be imaginative and innovative in developing services which are open and accessible to all parts of the community.
- 2.8 The guidance makes it clear that there must be clear linkages with the other relevant initiatives (e.g. Sure Start, Connexions, Quality Protects, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, Youth offending Teams, Drug Action Teams, Education Action Zones, Health Action Zones) and that Children's Fund Proposals are carefully cross-referenced to the local Children's Services Plan and the developing Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies.
- 2.9 This fund has the potential to make a real difference to the lives of some of the most socially excluded children in our community, reducing social exclusion and improving the life chances of those most in need.

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the strategic importance of this fund and agree to the submission of a bid to the fund.
- 3.2 That Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee note this report and provide any observations.
- 3.3 That both Cabinet and Scrutiny committee receive further reports with regard to the outline submission due 14<sup>th</sup> May and the final submission due 29<sup>th</sup> June.

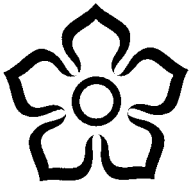
### **4 Financial and legal Implications**

4.1 **Financial Implications:** there is potential for a small amount of inward investment related to the extent of council infrastructure support for the Children's' Fund Programme. After the completion of the 3-year programme (from 2004/5 onwards) there is a clear expectation that mainstream services will 'bend' in a preventative direction, i.e. a tapered pick up of the Children's fund programme.

4.2 **Legal implications:** the authority's involvement in the partnership proposed and the submission of any bid to the Children's Fund are compatible with the authority's general duties and powers under the Children Act 1989. (Guy Goodman, Assistant Head Of Legal Services ext 7054)

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### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### 1. Report

1.1 The letter from Andrew McCully (Interim head of the Children and Young People's Unit) to Rodney Green Chief Executive of Leicester City Council outlines the guidance. Key sections of the guidance are summarised below.

1.2 The Mission statement of the fund is as follows:

*"The Children's fund is intended to provide a flexible and responsive approach to meeting needs and developing good practice for services for children at risk of social exclusion, supporting them and their families in breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage"*

And the overarching objective is:

*"...to provide additional resources over and above those provided through mainstream statutory, specific programmes and ...earmarked funding streams. It should engage and support voluntary and community organisations in playing an active part and should enable the full range of services to work together to help children overcome poverty and disadvantage".*

1.3 The Objectives And Outcomes Of The Fund - The 2 key objectives are:

1) *Ensure:*

- ▲ *agreed programme of interventions in each area which...*
- ▲ *Identifies early signs of difficulties, needs, and...*
- ▲ *Introduces Children, young people and families to appropriate services*

2) Ensure:

- ▲ *Children and young People who have experienced early signs of difficulties receive appropriate services to gain maximum life chances*

1.4 Other Objectives include:

- ▲ *Close & co-operative working between agencies*
- ▲ *Clear responsibility for management of child/family involvement*
- ▲ *Informal and self-referrals (no stigmatisation)*
- ▲ *Accessible, particularly to those most in need*
- ▲ *Actively involving Children Young People and Families in planning and delivering services, and creating individual packages of support*
- ▲ *Empowering Children Young People and Families to take responsibility and control of solutions for themselves*
- ▲ *Universal services play a part in referrals*

1.5 Core Principles

- ▲ *Focus on those Children Young People & Families most at risk of social exclusion through poverty and disadvantage (i.e. targeting) and those communities most in need*
- ▲ *Co-ordinate and add value to existing services, building on and linking to existing government initiatives and projects*
- ▲ *New provision to reduce risk of social exclusion*
- ▲ *Promote participation*
- ▲ *Minimise local bureaucracy & ensure high levels of take up*
- ▲ *Be culturally appropriate*

1.6 The key outcomes are:

- ▲ *Children and young people will grow up healthy*
- ▲ *Emotionally secure and confident (e.g. fewer Children and young people needing to enter care)*
- ▲ *Having succeeded at school (reductions in truancy and exclusions)*
- ▲ *Having stayed out of trouble (reduced youth crime and reconvictions)*
- ▲ *Living in a safe place*
- ▲ *Having the opportunity to succeed in achieving their dreams*
- ▲ *More use of existing services by excluded groups e.g. Black And Ethnic Minority / disabled Children and Young People*
- ▲ *More participation of Children and Young People and local adults in service delivery*

Developing a shared value base will:

- ▲ *Lead to more effective and new services which fill gaps and meet needs*
- ▲ *Add value (e.g. support and extend existing time limited programmes)*
- ▲ *Enhance our ability to communicate effectively with Children, young people and families about the services available*
- ▲ *Help us to provide facilities where needed*
- ▲ *Support the training of existing professionals & volunteers to pick up early warning signs*
- ▲ *Improve joint working and co-ordination*

1.7 Some characteristics of services 'on the ground':

- ▲ *Identify early warning signs i.e. early assessment*
- ▲ *May pick up Children and young people at risk of abuse or those already receiving statutory services (though this is not the primary purpose)*
- ▲ *Offer support or refer on through common systems or multi-disc teams based in schools or health centres*
- ▲ *Parenting classes, out-of-school activities, mentoring (guidance on services due late Feb 2001)*
- ▲ *Strengthen communities which children and young people relate to (eg their local neighbourhoods, or ethnic or faith groups, etc)*
- ▲ *Work with individual children*
- ▲ *The Partnership will have an important role in quality assurance and monitoring service uptake*

1.8 On partnership structures the guidance states that they:

- ▲ *Are crucial to the successful delivery of the Children's Fund*
- ▲ *Should not result in additional bureaucratic structures*
- ▲ *Should be based on an existing structure with additional membership*
- ▲ *The expertise of Voluntary sector as key service providers must be recognised*
- ▲ *That LA, Voluntary Sector, Health and others will be equal partners*
- ▲ *That membership should include:*
  - ▲ *The Voluntary & Community Sectors (which work with Children, Young People and Families at risk of social exclusion)*
  - ▲ *The Statutory Sector*
  - ▲ *Local Authority*
  - ▲ *Education*
  - ▲ *SSD*
  - ▲ *Housing*
  - ▲ *Arts and Leisure*
  - ▲ *Health Authority*
  - ▲ *Primary Care Group/Trust*
  - ▲ *Schools*
  - ▲ *Police*
  - ▲ *Children, Young People and their Families*
  - ▲ *Carers and local people*
  - ▲ *Local Communities*

1.9 Links should be made with the following programmes:

- ▲ *Children's Services Plan*
- ▲ *Community Plan & Local Strategic Partnership*
- ▲ *Health Action Zones & Health Improvement Program*
- ▲ *Sure Starts (and Tackling Teenage Pregnancy)*
- ▲ *Connexions*
- ▲ *Quality Protects*
- ▲ *Early Years Development & Childcare Partnerships*
- ▲ *Youth Offending Teams*
- ▲ *Drug Action Teams*

▲ *Education Action Zones*

1.10 There is an outline of the mapping process required to develop a needs analysis:

▲ *Need to map existing need*

▲ *Need to map risk factors (see below)*

▲ *Building on work of Children's Services Plan and other planning documents*

▲ *Need to map existing preventive services*

▲ *Statutory Services*

▲ *Voluntary and Community services*

▲ *Views of Children Young People and Families have been sought in determining gaps*

1.11 The guidance identifies a long list of potential risk factors, none of which will in themselves identify a family as being at risk, but when several are present (four or five) they are indicators of risk of social exclusion:

▲ *Community:*

▲ *Poor housing*

▲ *Disadvantaged neighbourhood*

▲ *Significant proportions of*

▲ *BEM families*

▲ *Four or more children per family*

▲ *Mothers aged 16 –24*

▲ *Lone parent families*

▲ *Workless households*

▲ *Low income families*

▲ *Transient families*

▲ *Family:*

▲ *Lax parental supervision*

▲ *Abuse or neglect*

▲ *Inconsistent / violent discipline*

▲ *Domestic violence/family conflict*

▲ *Paternal criminal convictions*

▲ *Poor child relationship with both parents*

▲ *Refugee status*

▲ *Social isolation*

▲ *Child:*

▲ *Troublesome behaviour at school/home*

▲ *Difficult temperament*

▲ *Friends condoning or involved in risky behaviour*

▲ *Low educational achievement / IQ*

▲ *Truancy /Exclusion*

▲ *Homelessness*

▲ *Bullying*

▲ *High rates of attendance at casualty*

▲ *Alcohol and drug use*

▲ *Poor nutrition / Smoking*

▲ *Depression & Low self esteem*

▲ *Specific Developmental delays / Learning disability*

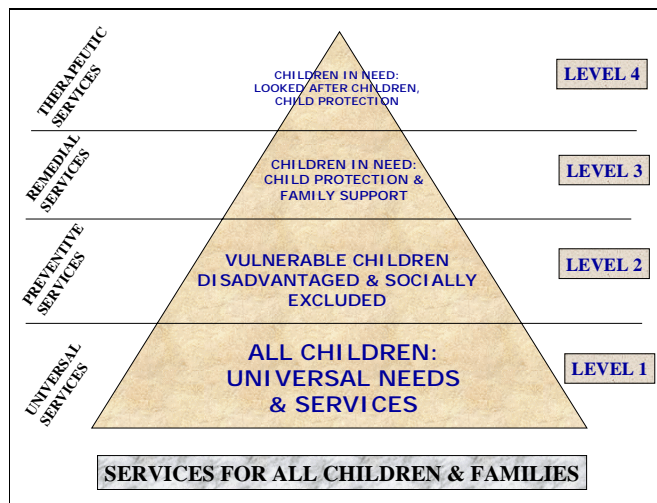
▲ *Speech / Communication problems*

▲ *Physical illness especially chronic and / or neurological*

1.12 The guidance defines four levels of prevention which are shown below:

- ▲ **Level 1:** diversionary – before problems can be seen
- ▲ **Level 2:** Early prevention – beginning to manifest
- ▲ **Level 3:** Heavy end prevention – multiple, longstanding and complex difficulties
- ▲ **Level 4:** Restorative prevention: reducing the impact of intrusive intervention

These levels need to be related to the four levels of service approach introduced for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (as advised by the Health Advisory Service) that are being adapted to include all children’s services across Leicester’s health and social care network (see diagram below):



1.13 The guidance makes it clear that the assessment of the level of risk and the provision of an appropriate level of service are crucial elements of the Children’s Fund Strategy, and that they need to be located firmly within the Assessment Framework for Children in Need. They make a clear distinction regarding the assessment tools that accompany the framework pointing out that there is no requirement to use these for assessments of risk of social exclusion.

1.14 The use of the term ‘risk’ and the linking with the assessment framework are areas which will require a considerable amount of work across the health and social care network in Leicester, so that front line staff are completely clear about the assessment process and about how to refer children and families into the ‘children in need’ system.

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **2. Financial Implications**

2.1 As mentioned in the main report there is some potential for a small amount of inward investment into the council to provide infrastructure support for the implementation of the Children’s Fund. This might be in the shape of policy and planning officer(s) to support the planning process with respect to the interface of these services with the councils existing preventive and crisis response services. There may also need to be some infrastructure to



support the administration of the grant if the council is chosen by the partnership to undertake this role.

2.2 Less tangible at this stage is the impact that these preventive services will have on demand for the councils crisis response services, and the need to disinvest in these areas to invest in preventive services which the Children's Fund supports when the funding taper commences in 2004. If the demand for crisis services has not declined then the expectation that the council will pick up the taper for preventive services will be difficult to accommodate.

**3. Legal Implications**

The legal implications are dealt with in paragraph 4.2 of the covering report.

**4. Other Implications**

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	The provision of services to excluded groups (i.e. black and ethnic minority children and families and disabled children is a key element of the fund)
Policy	Yes	These services will impact on the Social services department's refocusing its services away from crisis responses to more preventive approaches
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	Sustaining the population and reducing social exclusion is central the Children's Fund.
Crime and Disorder	Yes	Some of the services will be targeted at preventing offending amongst the 5 – 13yr population
Human Rights Act	Yes	These services will support the rights of the individual to make choices about their life and to remain with their family and community

**5. Report Authors:**

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