Scottish Borders COUNCIL

EDUCATION EXECUTIVE **ITEM [insert Item No.]**

3 MARCH 2009

REPORT BY DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION FROM TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report provides information on the approach used in developing implementation plans for the recommendations from the Transforming Children's Services project and seeks approval to continue this work.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 In March 2007, Council approved proposals for a comprehensive review of all services provided to children and young people through Education & Lifelong Learning (ELL) and Social Work Services (SW). The project was taken forward through a series of separate work packages, the outcome of which was a significant number of recommendations for improvement to services and service delivery. An overview report was prepared to encapsulate the project and its outcome and all of the very detailed reports and appendices produced for each work package were placed on the Council website.
In mid-June 2008, a four month engagement process was launched. The process included direct communications with parents, staff (and their representative bodies) and more than 30 public and staff meetings. By the end of the process over 500 written responses had been received and more than 1,300 members of the public and staff had attended the meetings.

2.2 Following the engagement process the responses were evaluated and further discussions were held with Headteachers and Senior Officers. As a consequence a number of the recommendations were amended; while others were amalgamated or not taken forward. A total of 132 recommendations were put forward for Council consideration in December 2008 and all but three were approved. Everyone who responded through the consultation process (and provided contact details) was thanked for their participation and were sent information on the recommendations going forward.

3 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

3.1 An implementation steering group has been established to ensure that the benefits identified through the project and the cost savings are realised. Membership of the group comprises Directors of Education & Lifelong Learning (Chair) and Social Work Services; Director of Resources; Chief Financial Officer; Head of Properties and Facilities Management, with quality assurance functions provided by the Business Improvement Unit.

3.2 The recommendations have been sorted into 'themed' actions and a lead officer appointed for each. A list of all the approved recommendations, with their lead officer and the initial guidance on the timescales is attached as Appendix 1. This 'themed' approach will improve the efficiency of implementation, enabling staff to plan, work together and spread tasks across several recommendations.

3.3 The level of detail in the action plans reflect the complexity and significance of the individual recommendations – or in some cases group of recommendations and the timescale to complete this work. This range of detail is illustrated in Appendix 2 which includes two action plans: recommendation 39 on Shared Headships and recommendation 83 on action to replace regeneration kitchens.

3.4 Implementation timescales are largely driven by operational priorities; capacity of staff resources and for asset related work, availability of funding (see paragraph 3.7c) is also a factor.

3.5 The Head of Integrated Children's Services post has been established and a post holder is in place. The post holder will lead an Implementation Team including a fulltime Education and Social Work Officer. This team will focus on getting the structures in place for the integrated service for August 2009. With the increased level of responsibility of this new post, line management responsibility for the Criminal Justice Service will now be managed within the Housing and Social Work Strategy service.

3.6 To accelerate the process for schools, the Acting Heads of Service for the Schools team have been relieved of some duties to concentrate on TCS, with backfill provided by other staff within the Department.

3.7 There are a number of policies and factors that are guiding the work of the recommendations:

a. Staffing: specialist HR support is being provided to the implementation leaders, which will support the action necessary to establish new structures for both APT&C staff and staff on teachers' terms and conditions. The principles of acceptable alternate posts, matching and conservation of salaries are equitable for all employees and will follow approved Council policies. Steps will be taken to minimise compulsory redundancies and a separate report will be submitted to the Executive before Easter with recommendations on eligible teaching staff on promoted posts who have expressed an interest in taking early retirement or voluntary severance. Because of the inclusion of personal information related to named individual members of staff, this report will be considered in private.

b. Support Services Review (SSR): a number of recommendations involve the transfer of staff to corporate teams. Action plans for these recommendations are not being provided at this time as they are now being taken forward by the SSR teams, but the Project Board will monitor these to ensure they are implemented effectively and with the engagement of the staff involved.

c. Properties: development of recommendations relating to use of buildings will be taken forward as part of the Council's asset management strategy. In terms of capital investment - an essential requirement of a number of recommendations - as the capital programme is committed for the next five years it may be some years before funds are available for new schools or other major investment. The action plans for these recommendations are indicative only. Therefore there may be a need to establish some interim bases for the integrated services in order to have staff co-located and accessible to the public once they are in post. The project board will monitor this process and ensure recommendations are properly prioritised, to maximise the benefits to children and young people.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The financial implications from the recommendations were covered within the December 2008 report and at this time the assumptions on savings have not changed. Costs for implementation may be supplemented by earmarked balances from the current financial year and this will be reported in detail to the Executive through the budget monitoring process. A copy of the financial assumptions from the December report is attached as Appendix 3.

5 RISK COMMENTARY

5.1 The risks identified in the December 2008 report are unchanged. These are attached as Appendix 4.

5.2 As noted in December, there are no environmental risks and there may be environmental benefits.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Heads of Corporate Administration, Legal Services and Human Resources were consulted on the content of this Report. The Chief Financial Officer has approved the financial implications.

7. EQUALITIES

7.1 An equality impact assessment was completed for TCS in May and December 2008 and as a consequence of this work it is anticipated that there will be no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals contained within this report.

7.2 An assessment of the proposals on rural communities was completed and as a consequence of this work it is anticipated there will be no adverse impact on rural areas and indeed there will be a positive impact arising from the more local delivery of some services and the commitment to support rural schools.

8 SUMMARY

8.1 In December 2008, Council approved 129 recommendations from the Transforming Children's Services project which had reviewed all aspects of services and service delivery provided to children and young people by the Council in the Borders.

8.2 Since December, a Steering Group has been established and lead officers identified to develop action plans for almost all recommendations. The level of detail in the action plans corresponds to the complexity, significance of the recommendations and delivery timescales.

8.3 There are no changes to the financial assumptions on savings presented to Council in December, nor to the risks identified.

9 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 I have to recommend that the proposed approach to implementation detailed in paragraph 3 is accepted and that a further progress report on implementation is presented to Education Executive in September 2009.

Approved by

Name	Designation
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Background Papers: [insert list of background papers used in compiling report]
Previous Minute Reference: Council: Dec 2009

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