

Cabinet

16 July 2019

Title: Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health and Integration	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
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Accountable Director: Chris Bush; Commissioning Director, Children's Care and Support	
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Elaine Allegretti; Director of People and Resilience	
Summary <p>The Children's Improvement Programme has been developed in response to several emergent factors over the past 12 months that have coalesced to make clear both the need for improvement in Children's Care Support services as well as the nature of those improvements required.</p> <p>In June 2019 Cabinet were presented with the findings of the OFSTED ILACS inspection conducted in February 2019 where the service was judged as 'Requires Improvement'. This report was introduced alongside the 'OFSTED Improvement Plan' that we as a Council are required to publish, setting out how we will address the recommendations made by OFSTED at the conclusion of the inspection.</p> <p>Cabinet consented to this plan and it was formally published on 9 July 2019.</p> <p>Whilst 'getting to good' is our ambition, the required improvements go beyond just responding to OFSTED. In recognition of this, several strands of improvement activity have been carefully compiled into a coherent whole. These strands of work comprise the Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme and are described in a Programme Initiation Document (PID) in accordance with the Council's methodology for delivering transformation and improvement.</p> <p>This report introduces the PID for the Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme. It describes the four key strands of improvement activity, summarises the approach that will be taken and sets out both the expected benefits and outcomes alongside resource – and other - implications of the programme. Approval to proceed is requested.</p>	

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is recommended to agree:

- i. The Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme at Appendix 1 and note the inherent commitment to the set of standards and prerequisites as set out in section 3.3 of the report.

Reasons

The Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme is a key pillar of the Council's plans to deliver the required improvement to Children's Social Care and secure an improved inspection outcome in 2021.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The model for Children's Care and Support is no longer fit-for-purpose. The entrenched needs of some of our residents, coupled with emerging risks to children are placing strain on a system that is increasingly unable to meet them. The situation is compounded by a growing, rapidly changing population that is pushing the existing system close to breaking point.
- 1.2 In February 2019 the service was subject to a two-week OFSTED ILACS Inspection. This inspection judged that the service 'requires improvement' and makes clear and specific recommendations where that improvement is most needed to get to 'good'. In many cases work was already underway to make these improvements, and OFSTED recognised that we were already aware of what needed to improve, that our plans for doing so were sound and - in some cases – already making a difference.
- 1.3 To meet these challenges, several strands of improvement activity have been carefully compiled. These strands of work comprise the Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme. The Programme Initiation Document brings these together into a coherent whole and seeks to connect the clear drive for improvement to the financial challenges the Council is facing, addressing the OFSTED Improvement Plan, the new Target Operating Model (presenting first an 'Improvement Structure' and then an 'Efficient Structure'), as well as several policy and strategic requirements. This programme is also closely linked to the emerging Theory of Change and where possible, we have referred to this and ensured the programme is aligned to the developing structure and work of the Council, both now and in the future.
- 1.4 This report introduces the PID for Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme. It describes the four key strands of activity, summarises the approach that will be taken and sets out both the expected benefits and outcomes alongside resource, and other implications of the programme.

2. The Children's Improvement Programme

- 2.1 To develop the improvement programme a series of approaches were taken to ensure that the proposed changes are the right ones and will have the intended

impact. Several externally commissioned tests of the system were performed to ensure a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and culminated in the production of the Annual Self Evaluation. To supplement this, the OFSTED ILACS Inspection provided both a test of the system itself, as well as of our plans (as set out in the Self Evaluation) to improve. This was an important stage in evaluating our intended approach.

- 2.2 Our plans were further developed through a series of facilitated workshops with key stakeholders, particularly those with expertise in frontline practice and, most importantly, those who are/will be delivering services to children and young people. We will continue to use these methods and expand on our use of various user-led forums to ensure the changes being implemented will meet the needs of our vulnerable residents, of our staff, and of the Council. Most importantly this approach, alongside the Programme Outcomes Framework, will tell us if the change is working.
- 2.3 Put simply, the objective of the programme is to improve the quality and long-term financial sustainability of Children’s Care and Support. The programme incorporates all our work under a single plan, with four key strands:

Fig 1. The four strands of the Children’s Care and Support Improvement Programme

Strand One Practice Improvement	Strand Two Service Improvement
<p>Detailed plan to improve Social Work Practice and respond specifically to learning from OFSTED (as well as what we already knew).</p>	<p>The tools, policies and procedures that set out our approach to Social Work practice and supports practitioners to do their jobs.</p>
Strand Three Service Design	Strand Four Strategic Planning
<p>The structural and organisational changes to be made in order to directly support the first two strands i.e. getting the right people.</p>	<p>Our Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children arrangements and the Council’s Theory of Change.</p>

- 2.4 The size of this programme should not be underestimated in terms of scope, ambition and financial implications. Each strand of work has a detailed delivery plan, and in some cases these plans are already underway. There are also a series of key outputs that the programme must deliver, as below.

1	Deliver the OFSTED Improvement Plan.
2	Implement the new Target Operating Model for Children's Care and Support.
3	Move to the Efficient Structure Target Operating Model within the specified timescale.
4	Improve outcomes for children and young people, particularly – but not limited to - those identified in the OFSTED Improvement Plan.
5	Ensure the relevant policies, procedures and protocols are in place to support high-quality Social Work practice.
6	Develop the requisite Commissioning Plans (to make sure that the correct services are in place in the most cost-effective way).
7	Deliver the above objectives within the financial envelope specified and against the projected financial trajectory.

2.5 To understand whether the programme is working, a bespoke outcomes framework has been developed. This framework sets out the key indicators with a set of success criteria for each outcome to demonstrate what is improving and what is working well throughout the life of the programme. It does not replace the existing Children's Care and Support performance management framework and is not inclusive of all key performance indicators across the service.

2.6 The indicators have been selected to demonstrate the programme effect and to aid the refresh of the Vital Signs dashboard. They are closely linked to the recent OFSTED inspection and the resultant Improvement Plan and can be grouped as follows:

Fig 2. Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme: Outcomes Framework themes



2.7 The outcomes framework is just one way that we will know whether the programme is working and having the intended impact. There are a range of tests that we will apply as part of a routine package of assurance. Many of these are tests that we would apply as a matter of good operation, but these will be tailored to ensure that they are also able to determine the effective implementation of the programme. This work will include:

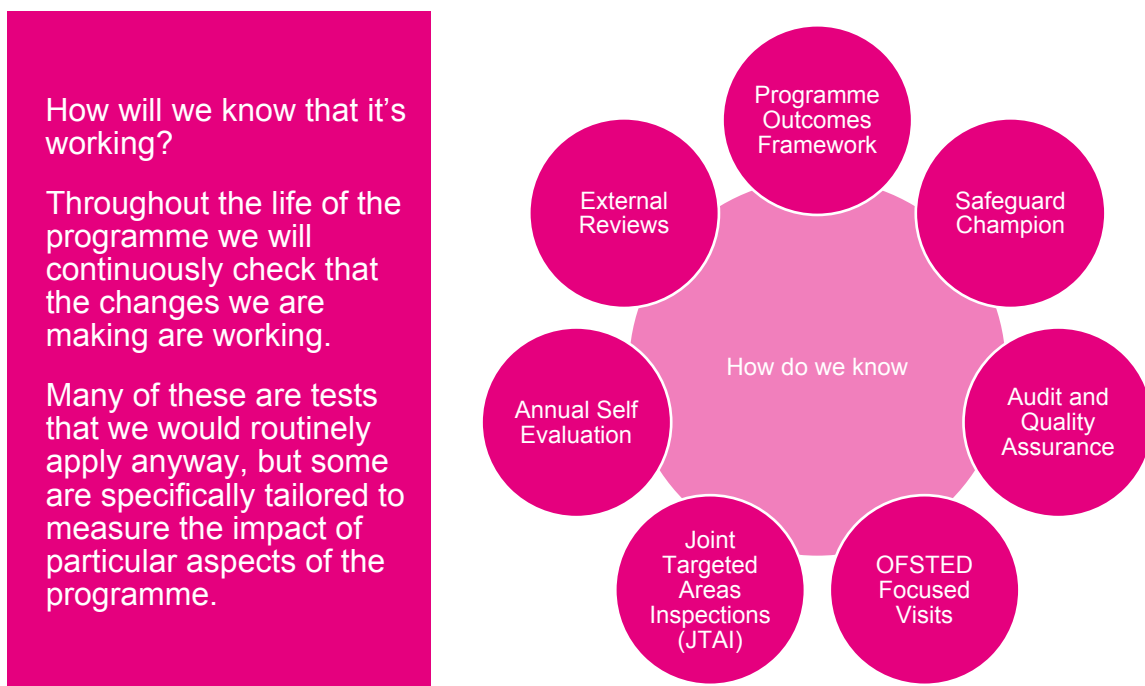
External tests of the system: this will include those we commission for ourselves e.g. peer-reviews and targeted evaluations in key areas such as Early Help, as well as those that are mandated i.e. Focused Visits and Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI) that will be performed by OFSTED inspectors.

Annual Self Evaluation: we are required to produce a self-evaluation of Children’s Care and Support each year, and this will be a key document that will outline progress. This will be presented to OFSTED colleagues each year at our Annual Engagement Meeting.

Audit and Quality Assurance: our Quality Assurance Framework sets out how we will use our rolling programme of case audits and thematic ‘deep dives’ to understand that effectiveness of our services and inform continuous improvement. This includes multi-agency auditing to test the response of partners in the system.

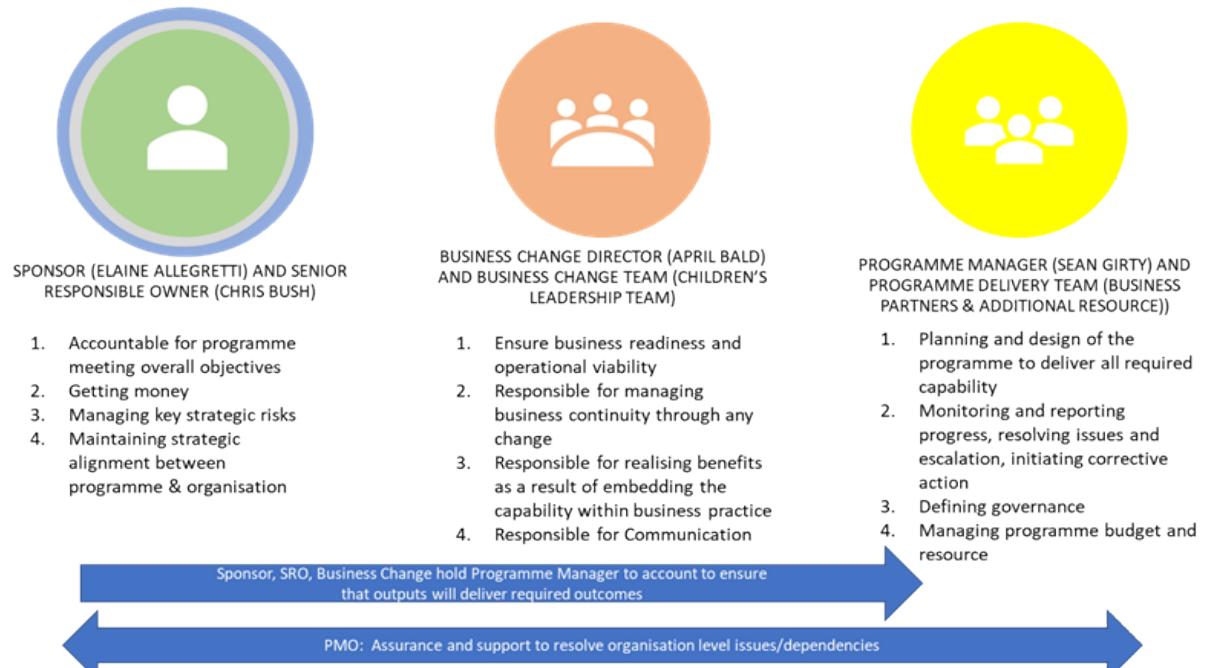
Safeguarding Champion: the role of Safeguarding Champion – as set out in the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) – will ensure that the lived experiences of our children and families are a constant feature in our assurance processes and actively used to inform continuous improvement.

Fig 3. Children’s Care and Support Improvement Programme: Assurance themes



2.8 The PID proposes the following governance, to ensure the secure delivery of the Improvement Programme (section 4.3 of the PID, appendix 1).

Roles and Responsibilities



2.9 In addition to this governance, the Programme will draw on the expertise and critical challenge of the PMO, using their regular processes to incorporate financial tracking, vital signs and programme oversight. The detail of this is included in the PID and has been approved by the PMO.

3. The Cost of the Improvement Programme

3.1 Transforming Children's Care and Support and delivering the improvement required to get to good will require significant investment. This investment comes in two forms: an increase in the revenue budget required to support the new Target Operating Model (TOM) for Children's Care and Support (predominantly an increase in staffing); and the short-term, one-off capital costs required to adequately resource the Improvement Programme activity.

3.2 The majority of the revenue costs are associated with increasing – and changing – the staffing establishment to implement the new TOM. There are two distinct phases to this:

The Improvement Structure: the short-to-medium-term structure required to stabilise the service, respond to immediate demand pressures and deliver the improvements outlined in the OFSTED Improvement Plan; and

The Efficient Structure: as improvements are made, changes embedded and the expected impact that working differently will have on the system we expect to be able to move to a leaner structure.

3.3 When developing our plans, careful consideration was given to how the service could best be structured to meet the needs of our children and young people in the most efficient possible way, whilst delivering the improvements required for an improved OFSTED inspection the next time around. In doing so, there were some key parameters defined, and assumptions made. These were:

- A caseload ratio of no greater than 1:15 would be established;
- The ratio of Managers to Social Workers would not exceed 1:6;
- The proportion of the social workforce that are agency staff can be reduced to 15%;
- Demand models used to predict future demand growth are not exceeded i.e. demand management strategies in other parts of the system e.g. Community Solutions are successful;
- The one-off resources required to deliver the programme are made available.

Whilst other assumptions have been made, as outlined in the PID, these are the ones that are most critical to the success of the programme and it is important to note that meeting these standards is a key commitment that we are making.

Revenue Budget Implications

3.4 The new Target Operating Model (TOM) for Children's Care and Support services costs, at its' peak, £3.5m more per annum than the existing model. £1.6m of these costs will be met by using existing resources from elsewhere in the Council differently and through external funding sources i.e. either contributions from partner agencies or grant funding. The remaining £1.9m will be funded through an increase in expenditure by Children's Care and Support.

3.5 The first phase of the proposed Target Operating Model (the 'Improvement Structure') places an additional pressure of £1.9m on the Children's Care and Support budget in 2019/20 and 2020/21. In the second phase of delivery – at the end of 2020/21, for impact in 2021/22 - a reduction in expenditure of £1.15m is planned as the 'Efficient Structure' of the TOM is implemented.

3.6 In 2019/20 growth of £1m was allocated through the MTFP and a further £1.56m of funding has been made available from the Social Care Grant. This £2.56m is tempered by a removal of pre-existing savings targets from the based budget of £1.12m. A net growth of £1.44m. There are plans in place to make these savings.

3.7 In 2020/21 the MTFP proposes growth of £3m and makes provision to replace the £1.56m Social Care Grant should it cease. This £3m of growth is, again, tempered by pre-existing savings targets of £1.46m for which savings plans will be in place to be removed from the base budget. A net growth of £1.54m.

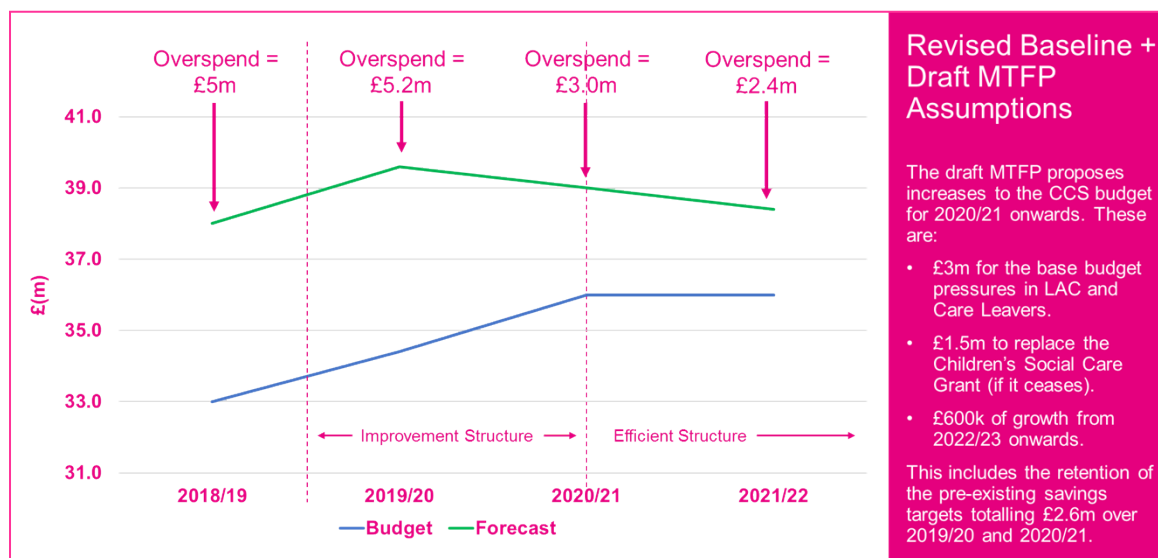
3.8 In the second phase of delivery – at the end of 2020/21, for impact in 2021/22 - a reduction in expenditure of £1.15m is planned as the 'Efficient Structure' of the Care and Support Operating Model is implemented.

3.9 The new MTFP also proposes a growth of £600k per annum to account for an expected increase in costs for Looked After Children. The proposal is that this does

not commence until 2022/23 so does not impact on the forecasts for the next three years.

- 3.10 The implications for the Children’s Care and Support budget over the next three financial years is set out below. Given the inherent pressure of circa. £5m from 2018/19, the true cost must be considered within this context: the implications of this are a pressure in Children’s Care and Support of £5.2m in 2019/20; £3m in 2020/21 and £2.4m in 2021/22.

Fig 4. Children’s Care and Support Budget and Expenditure Forecast: 2018/19 – 2021/22



Transformation Budget Implications

- 3.11 In order to support the delivery of the improvement plan, this PID proposes the release of £1.095 in transformation funding. (This means one-off funding to be provided via the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts or from the Budget Support Reserve.) This funding which will be held separately from the day to day operational budget will enable the project team to deliver the full programme of improvement, including its asks of other areas of the Council, such as Finance, HR, systems and Communications. This budget will be held by the Programme Manager and delegated as posts are recruited to and/or work is delivered. Any underspend will be returned at the close of the programme. The full breakdown of these costs is detailed in section 4.1 of the PID with wholly new resource in yellow.

- 3.12 These posts will be individually approved by Workforce Governance Group ahead of recruitment.

4. Programme Plan

- 4.1 A detailed Delivery Plan has been developed that stages the implementation of each component of the Improvement Programme. This is described in some detail in the Programme Initiation Document.

The key milestones are:

Date	Element/Change
Sep 2019	New Brokerage and Placements Service
	New Service Development and Business Support function
Oct 2019	New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements begin
Nov 2019	Accommodation reorganisations/moves completed
	New Recruitment and Retention Scheme launched
Dec 2019	Plans fully implemented: OFSTED recommendation 5
Mar 2020	Full implementation of the new Target Operating Model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Targeted Intervention Service • New Corporate Parenting and Permanence Service • New Adolescent and Youth Offending Service • New Assessment and Safeguarding Service
Apr 2020	Launch of all Digital Enhancements (some will 'go-live' sooner) Plans implemented fully: OFSTED recommendations 1 and 3
Jul 2020	Plans fully implemented: OFSTED recommendations 2, 4, 6 and 7

5 Consultation

- 5.1 The OFSTED Improvement Plan and Children's Care and Support Improvement Programme was developed in conjunction with key stakeholders across the Council, including the Lead Member for Children's Services. This included colleagues outside of Children's Care and Support who will play a significant role in delivering improved outcomes for our children and young people.
- 5.2 Colleagues from the Barking, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group were integral to responding to the specific OFSTED recommendation concerning the delivery of health provision in the borough.
- 5.3 Findings from the inspection have also been presented to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Once published the LSCB will be briefed on the part they must play, both now and in future in the form of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements. The Improvement Programme will also be formally presented to the local Health and Wellbeing Board.

6 Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Group Manager – Service Finance

- 6.1 This report sets out the proposals for the Children’s Improvement Programme. This programme together with the associated plans and policies and the new Targeted Operating Model is designed to address the Ofsted recommendations and other required improvements for the service.
- 6.2 Children’s Care and Support budgets have been under a high level of financial pressure for a considerable time, factors that are common across London and are not wholly within the Council’s control. The Council’s response as set out in its MTFS has been to fund as far as possible these external pressures whilst requiring the service to develop and implement savings plans and cost containment strategies.
- 6.3 The main areas of pressure are the overall demand pressures on the service and numbers of children requiring assessment and intervention of some kind, increasing complexity and cost of care for the small numbers of children with the highest need, especially the cost of secure accommodation and difficulties in recruiting and retaining social work staff leading to the need for large numbers of more expensive agency staff.
- 6.4 The Target Operating Model and the Improvement Plan will over time contribute to the mitigation and reduction of these cost pressures. However as set out in paragraph 3.10 above, in the short-term pressures will remain in the service – especially in 2019/20 and so will mean a draw down from the Council’s reserves is likely to be required.
- 6.5 It is therefore very important that the service continues to develop and implement savings plans to meet the targets already in the MTFS. The additional costs of the TOM can be funded from within the growth allocated into the budget in 2019/20 however there is a risk that the staffing costs will still exceed the budget as the service currently has some staff above establishment and agency levels are still high. It is therefore important that implementation proceeds as swiftly as possible and that any transitional/double running costs are minimised.
- 6.6 In addition, it should be noted that one off funding for transformation and improvement projects is limited. This programme is a very high priority for the Council and funding of £1.095m will be allocated as set out in paragraph 3.11. This amount should not be exceeded.

7 Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Lindsey Marks; Deputy Head of Legal Community

- 7.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007 requires, a Local Authority to prepare an action /improvement plan that responds to the findings in the OFSTED ILACS Inspection Report.

7.2 The Children Act 2004 made local authorities responsible for ensuring and overseeing the effective delivery of services for children, working closely with others.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Risk Management – there is significant risk in failing to deliver a good Children’s Service. There are considerable risks to the children and young people who we have a duty to safeguard, as well as the risks to the Council of failing to adequately discharge statutory duties. As part of our governance and programme management arrangements, risks are being identified and will be managed through this process.

8.2 Staffing Issues: completed by Jackie Cleary; HR Business Partner

The management team will ensure all staff are given all necessary support and access to our welfare services throughout the process. Regarding staffing issues, corporate governance processes will need to be complied with and all policies and procedures relating to organisational change followed. This involves submitting a report to Workforce Board and approval of the consultation documentation by the Workforce Board Sub Group prior to commencement of formal consultation with staff and unions.

8.3 Safeguarding – safeguarding children is a core focus of the OFSTED Improvement Plan.

8.4 Property/Asset Issues: Staff in Children’s are currently based across 4 sites – Townhall, Roycraft, Mayesbrook Centre, and The Foyer, with most staff based at Roycraft. The increase in staff will have an impact on the office space required. To maximise usage of council assets, capitalise on the benefits of mobile/flexible working and deliver the necessary Ofsted improvements, the following property changes are proposed:

- Children’s staff to be moved out of the Foyer into Roycraft House – it is estimated this will generate a saving on rent for the Foyer of @£30k/year. To accommodate this, we propose to redesign the ground floor and public reception area – we estimate this will cost @£75k (one off).
- Maximise the use of buildings and green space across the Borough to deliver direct work and group work with children, fathers, mothers in areas closer to where they live – this will involve better use of children’s centres, Mayesbrook and/or health owned spaces – work is underway to determine any cost implications.
- Change the positioning of some of the furniture 1st and 3rd floor of Roycraft House – creating a quiet zone/touch down space with no monitors – we estimate this will cost @5k (one off).

These implications have been discussed with the Asset Management Team within My Place who will provide support with spatial design and implementation, with the reconfiguration helping to inform the wider asset review process agreed by CPG in May

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of this Report

- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham: Inspection of Children's Social Care Services (OFSTED Letter)

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1: Programme Initiation Document, Children's Improvement Programme