

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on 8 August 2019

Report of the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Consultation on the Lancashire Break Time Proposal - Update

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update following the recent consultation undertaken on the proposal to cease the Lancashire Break Time service from September 2019.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Agree to a review and redesign of the whole short breaks offer, in partnership with parent carers, young people and providers.
- (ii) Agree to the continuation of the Lancashire Break Time Service, in its current form, until the review and redesign of the short breaks offer is completed.
- (iii) Note that a report setting out the proposal for the future delivery of short breaks will be presented to Cabinet in March 2020.

Background and Advice

At its meeting in December 2018, Cabinet agreed to undertake a period of consultation to assess the impact on parent carers, children and young people and providers, in relation to the proposed cessation of the Lancashire Break Time Service.

The purpose of the consultation was to seek the views of parent carers, children and young people, along with providers, about the impact of the proposal to cease the non-assessed short breaks provision which would inform a future Cabinet decision.

The consultation was carried out through an on-line questionnaire, with a printed version available, commencing for parents on 28 January 2019; children and young people on 11 February 2019 and service providers on 4 February 2019; each consultation being open for a period of eight weeks.

The consultation period was extended on 17 May 2019 to seek further information and to carry out further consultation over a period of eight weeks, with the intention that proposals would be brought back to Cabinet, in relation to the future delivery of short breaks, in Autumn 2019.

Current Position

On 10 July 2019, Lancashire County Council published a statement thanking respondents to the consultation and setting out the decision to review the whole short breaks offer. This decision was taken in light of the additional information and the feedback received during the extended consultation period.

In total, more than 750 responses to the consultation were received. Those responses made clear that the county council needed to look at the whole short breaks service, not just Lancashire Break Time, to deliver a service that better suited families' needs, and specifically to ensure the short breaks offer provided more choice and greater flexibility.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that consideration of the short breaks offer is broadened to include assessed provision, and that the short breaks offer is co-designed to better meet the needs of parent carers, children and young people.

An outline timetable for the proposed review and re-design is set out below:

Action	When
Summarise existing provision by area and need	August 2019
Review best practice and determine common features	August 2019
Seek views of those using and providing assessed provision and further views of those using Lancashire Break Time	August – October 2019
Design proposed offer in partnership with parent carers, children and young people and providers taking into consideration views expressed	October – December 2019
Draft proposed policy, scheme and prepare report	January – February 2020
Report to Cabinet	March 2020
Implementation	April – June 2020

It is proposed that the Lancashire Break Time Services continues in its current form until the review and re-design of the short breaks offer is completed.

Implications

There may be implications for individual parent carers, children and young people who access short breaks and for staff employed in provider services, in light of a re-designed offer.

Risk management

The short breaks offer will be co-designed with parent carers, children and young people and providers to ensure the offer reflects their views and better meets the needs of parent carers, children and young people.

Financial Implications

The agreed saving in relation to Lancashire Break Time (SC119) was in total £1.040m, profiled for delivery over 2019/20 (£683,000) and 2020/21 (£357,000).

The delay in implementing this saving will result in a maximum initial pressure in 2019/20 of £683,000. This service has recurrently underspent in previous financial years. Therefore it is expected that the service will underspend in this financial year, which will contribute towards the partial achievement of the saving, in addition alternative ways of managing this in-year saving shortfall will be required. However, if this cannot be found transitional reserve funding will be required to manage the shortfall, resulting in a reduced balance being available to support the county council's budget in future.

Equality and Diversity

Any change to Lancashire Break Time and short breaks provision will impact on both the age (children and young people) and disability protected characteristics and potentially others. To meet the Council's public sector equality duty responsibilities to give "due regard" to the potential impact of any proposed changes, a full Equality Analysis will be completed.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		