

Brighton & Hove City Council

Children, Young People & Skills Committee

Agenda Item: 87

Subject: Early Help Transformation and development of 'A Fairer Brighton & Hove', a Framework to support those at risk of disadvantage

Date of meeting: 13 June 2022

Report of: Executive Director – Families, Children & Learning

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 This report provides an update on the city's Early Help Review; provides a suggested model of delivery, developing Family Hubs for the city; and launches 'A Fairer Brighton & Hove' - a Framework to support those at risk of disadvantage.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Committee agrees the 'A Fairer Brighton & Hove' Framework proposed in Appendix 1

2.2 That Committee agrees to the principles for Early Help transformation set out in this report, and that these principles should inform the further development of a Family Hub model

3. Context and background information

Why Early Help and supporting families at risk of disadvantage matters

3.1 Brighton & Hove has many strengths and successes when it comes to supporting families. We have an extensive range of services and support available, delivered by a wide range of partners. We also have good outcomes for many, with a high percentage of schools good or better, strong academic achievement for the majority and most of our young people moving into education, employment, or training as they transition into adulthood.

3.2 However, for too many children, young people and families, experiences and outcomes are not where they need to be. Some children face barriers due to characteristics they or their family hold such as additional needs or

disabilities, living in poverty, experiencing racism, having English as an additional language and for some, where they live in the city impacts on their opportunities. Too many families do not have access to the same opportunities as others. The Covid pandemic has negatively heightened this gap and continues to impact in ways we have not yet fully seen or understood.

- 3.3 Getting Early Help and prevention right is one of the main ways we can raise outcomes for all. This is about building resilience, providing support to families when additional needs are identified, and preventing further problems arising.
- 3.4 Local needs analysis indicates that for children in families facing multiple disadvantages, the outcomes gap in the city is growing. The overarching Fairer Brighton & Hove Framework proposed in Appendix 1 brings together the range of local initiatives aimed at tackling disadvantage. A new model for Early Help based around Family Hubs will be a key component and driver for addressing the outcomes disparity too many children and families experience in the city.
- 3.5 The proposed Early Help model ensures that intervention is targeted towards the families who need it most, whilst promoting delivery of universal services in a different way - making better use of partners, parents, local communities, and digital resources. This is necessary to ensure the council's limited resources are focused on improving outcomes for those families most at risk of developing chronic or acute needs and requiring costly statutory interventions.
- 3.6 A partnership approach is essential to embedding the proposed new model, particularly to strengthen the universal offer and ensure a joined-up approach. A multiagency Early Help Partnership Board is in place with responsibility for overseeing the proposed Framework and development of the new model.
- 3.7 There is also a need to have a more strategic approach to overseeing the work planned and in place with disadvantaged children, young people, and families. There are several city-wide strategies already in place and much work underway directly with families. The section below sets out the proposed approach.

A Fairer Brighton & Hove: a cohesive Framework to support families at risk of disadvantage 2022 - 2025

- 3.8 There is a city-wide commitment to improving outcomes for the most disadvantaged families and children. There are several significant strategies in the city which work to support families at risk of disadvantage. These strategies have a focus such as SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), educational disadvantage, health and wellbeing, early years, corporate parenting, and anti-racist education. All focus, in their own way, on getting the right support or service to the right families or individuals at the right time, to make a difference.

- 3.9 The Fairer Brighton & Hove Framework set out in Appendix 1 provides a mechanism for monitoring and overseeing the breadth of work which is concerned with addressing disadvantage. It also provides a set of guiding principles, developed directly from service user and front-line worker feedback.

The Framework offers elected Members, council officers, partners, and families a 'lens' through which all can have oversight on the work in the city supporting those at risk of disadvantage. It is a framework to help drive the work. It can be a critical friend to what we are doing to support improved outcomes so we do things the right way at the right time. It supports reversing the polarity of disadvantage to enhancement.

- 3.10 The Framework has been informed by the extensive Early Help Review, the cross-party members' working group, by discussions at the Early Help Partnership Board including cross sector partners and by a 'call for assistance' with the Voluntary and Community sector undertaken in January and February 2022. A summary of the feedback from this process is given in Appendix 2.

- 3.11 The Framework will deliver on the following points:

- It hears directly from families and those who work with them about their experiences
- It provides a citywide definition of what is meant by children, young people and families being at risk of disadvantage
- It sets out the vision and ambition for those at risk of disadvantage in the city
- It provides a snapshot of what the risk of disadvantage currently looks like for families
- It agrees a set of principles through which to identify, respond to and support those at risk of disadvantage – now and in the future
- It sets out some of the current work in place to tackle disadvantage for families
- It provides a reporting mechanism for allowing the Children, Young People and Skills Committee to maintain oversight of these areas of work

- 3.12 It is essential that the Framework links closely with the Best Start for Life (the first 1001 days) and the Supporting Families programmes, and at every stage informs the development of the Early Help transformation work. The framework also sets out what key strategies it will link to in Year 1, which includes the city's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

- 3.13 The Fairer Brighton & Hove Framework set out in Appendix 1 is intended to be the start of a three-year programme. Year 1 will focus on several (majority of which are Families, Children & Learning led) strategies and trialling a new approach of providing an oversight lens. Year 2 will expand to wider Brighton and Hove City Council areas of work and Year 3 will be a wider look across the city. This will be an iterative process, with the framework being reviewed and developed over time. This does not replace

the sovereignty or status of the component strategies themselves or replace existing reporting or governance arrangements. It is an overarching oversight framework to monitor progress at a strategic level, looking across a number of areas of work.

The case for change – what the Early Help Review has told us

- 3.14 A holistic review of existing preventative services and Early Help provision was undertaken between 2019-22 via an LGA (Local Government Association) peer review, a detailed self-assessment using the national Early Help System Guide framework, and consultant-led work. Appendix 3 summarises the findings of each of the 3 aspects of this review work and makes recommendations across 5 key areas:
- Leadership and Governance
 - Workforce
 - Service delivery and practice
 - Information, communications, and engagement
 - Systems and data
- 3.15 Further documents to support the Review findings are included as Appendices 4 and 5: the report by consultants Peopletoo plus a service map, referrals diagram, options appraisal, and Theory of Change. These illustrate some of the current challenges and align these with a proposed model focused on achieving better outcomes for families.

The need for Early Help transformation to Family Hubs

- 3.16 The Early Help review has identified the need for an integrated whole family approach to supporting families with children aged 0-19 (25 with SEND) and highlighted Family Hubs as the suggested delivery model.
- 3.17 The National Centre for Family Hubs identifies Family Hubs as a system wide model of providing high quality, joined up, whole family support services, delivering services from conception to 19 (25 with SEND). The hub model consists of three core principles:
- Access: there is a clear and simple way for families with children of all ages to access support through a Family Hub building and Family Hub approach.
 - Connection: Services work together for families, with a universal 'front door', shared outcomes and effective governance. Professionals work together through co-location, data sharing and a common approach to their work. Families only have to tell their story once, the service is more efficient, and families receive more effective support. Statutory services and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners work together to get families the help they need.
 - Relationships: The Family Hub prioritises strengthening relationships and builds on family strengths. Relationships are at the heart of everything delivered via Family Hubs.

- 3.18 A successful funding bid for £980,900, to be used over 2022/23 and 2023/24, to support the transformation of Family Hubs in the city has been made. The programme includes roles to support the transformation process, in particular around data transformation which is a vital component of Family Hub development and is now a requirement attached to the Supporting Families grant, which currently funds most of the early help provision provided by the council. The breakdown of the funding is as follows:
- £194,000 for programme management and support posts
 - £51,900 for Community engagement and consultation
 - £535,600 for data and digital transformation
 - £41,400 for workforce development
 - £158,000 for capital costs including ICT upgrades
- 3.19 The proposal is for Family Hubs to retain the seven current Children’s Centres within the hub and spoke Family Hub Network with 4 main hubs, extending the offer to children 0-19 years (25 with SEND) using a whole family approach to assessment and support. Family Hubs would deliver against the Supporting Families outcome areas using whole family assessment and outcome measures.
- 3.20 The development of Family Hubs would enable integration of services for children of all ages, streamline processes and systems to reduce duplication and support integrated services. Extending the co-location arrangements in place with key partners including Health Visiting, Midwifery, Speech and Language and Mental Health services.
- 3.21 Family Hubs would provide a multi-agency response to support for families using a centralised allocation system for referrals and delivery of services via a multi-agency Family Hub allocation pod.
- 3.22 The redesign of core Early Help services and development of a Family Hub team under one structure will reduce inefficiencies within the current Early Help system and build capacity to help meet demand.
- 3.23 In Brighton & Hove Family Hubs would be delivered using a hub and spoke model with core hub buildings and alternative ‘spoke’ delivery sites dependant on community need including the seven Children’s Centres across the city.
- 3.24 The Family Hub model will provide interventions, groups and support across all levels of need both face to face and digitally utilising resources across the multi-agency team and to meet the requirements for the Supporting Families outcomes framework.
- 3.25 The Early Help Review and self-assessment considered data maturity which has been rated as basic and data transformation will be a key priority of the Family Hub transformation and vital to retain earned autonomy status for the Supporting Families Programme.

3.26 Early Years will be a key component for Family Hubs with a clearly defined start for life offer as identified within the national vision for Early Years: The Best Start for Life: a vision for the first 1001 days (March 2021). The Early Years Strategy will be revised to reflect the key priorities for Early Years as part of the family hub model.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 The Early Help review summary report shown in Appendix 3 highlights the detailed recommendations for Early Help transformation that have been reviewed and agreed by the cross-party working group, Early Help Partnership Board and wider engagement sessions.

4.2 The Peopletoo review completed an options analysis which identified that maximizing Early Help effectiveness will reduce demand for statutory services, which would in turn reduce expenditure. It outlined four options which could be considered. These are summarised below and detailed in Appendix 5.

- Option 1: Do nothing. This would not address the current demand issues for Early Help or identified inefficiencies. It could lead to increase in demand for statutory services.
- Option 2: Redesign in-house Early Help services. This would provide opportunities to address the identified inefficiencies for FCL services, but it would not support or increase wider multi-agency strategic ownership and delivery of Early Help.
- Option 3: Commission Early Help externally. This would require significant redesign and would not build on the existing strengths of Early Help services currently delivered by BHCC. This would not address the inefficiencies identified through the Early Help Review.
- Option 4: Redesign Early Help around a place-based model. This would see the redesign of Early Help services and development of Family Hubs, working closely with VCS partners, wider agencies and communities. It would enable systemwide resources to be focused on support across the levels of need bringing together services, processes and systems under a shared model and approach.

4.3 The preferred option for Brighton and Hove is to redesign Early Help Services and develop Family Hubs as the delivery model. Family Hubs would build on the existing work of Children's Centres, Integrated Team for Families, Youth and Parenting Service and the Family Information Service, offering services under one structure for families with children 0-19 (25 with SEND); whilst enabling a move to more integrated work with wider partners in the best interest of children and families. This model would help reduce demand for statutory services, reduce inefficiencies within Early Help and provide a robust service offer for children and families.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Fairer Brighton & Hove Framework proposed in Appendix 1 is directly informed by feedback from children, young people, families and services that support them. It is also informed by the wide range of feedback provided throughout the Early Help Review.
- 5.2 The Early Help Review consulted with many stakeholders over a two year period. This included group and individual engagement sessions, surveys and service visits. It explored in detail with eight families their journey through Early Help support and services; the subsequent report is included as Appendix 6.
- 5.3 Following the review, feedback and co-production sessions have started with staff and stakeholders to explore the findings and discuss a new model of Early Help.
- 5.4 If the Committee agrees with the development of the Family Hub model public, staff and stakeholder consultation and co-production will be planned through June, July and August 2022 to develop the proposed model. These will include a Stakeholder Consultation and Co-Production Conference with a series of sessions with service users and families, as well as public consultation via the consultation hub.
- 5.5 A Communication and Engagement Strategy will be developed as part of the transformation delivery plan.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Fairer Brighton & Hove Framework to support families at risk of disadvantage is an important tool for the city to enable a more collective view on families at risk of disadvantage and oversight of the work underway to mitigate that risk.
- 6.2 The Early Help Review has identified the need to move to a systemic integrated approach to providing Early Help support via whole family and relationship-based practice. The need to streamline services, processes and systems to build capacity and reduce inefficiencies is key in providing seamless support for families.
- 6.3 Family Hubs have been identified as the proposed model for the delivery of Early Help and support building on the existing Children's Centres, Integrated Team for Families, Youth and Parenting Service and Family Information Service and extending support to 19 (25 with SEND) within one structure and working with wider stakeholders and partners across all sectors.
- 6.4 Family Hubs would provide a coordinated multi-agency response to support families across all levels of need with shared ownership and governance arrangements.

6.5 The Family Hubs Transformation Fund will support a 2 year transformation programme of the Early Help system across the city.

7. Financial implications

7.1 The redesign of Early Help services to a Family Hub model will be funded from within the existing employee budgets for Early Years, Integrated Team for Families, Youth and Parenting Service and the Family Information Service. The total employee budgets for these teams is £3,477,140 including funding from the Supporting Families programme.

7.2 The successful funding bid will support the transformation programme over a 2-year period as broken down below:

- £194,000 for programme management and support posts
- £51,900 for Community engagement and consultation
- £535,600 for data and digital transformation
- £41,400 for workforce development
- £158,000 for capital costs including ICT upgrades

7.3 Name of finance officer consulted: Louise Hoten Date consulted:05/05/2022

8. Legal implications

8.1 Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a responsibility to promote inter-agency co-operation to improve the welfare of all children. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area

8.2 'Working Together', the statutory guidance to inter agency working to safeguard children (2018) provides that local organisations and agencies should have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs of individual children and families. Local authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined-up early help services based on a clear understanding of local needs.

8.3 The guidance recognises that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Any strategy now developed will need to ensure that the specific expectations of Working Together can be met. Early help provides a focus on intervention before a challenge facing a family escalates to the point where statutory services are required.

8.4 In due course any proposals arising from the development of a family hub model will need to be the subject of consultation and review.

Name of lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson Date consulted (30/05/2022)

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Early Help transformation programme and the framework to support families at risk of disadvantage will have a focus on supporting disadvantage within vulnerable communities including those with protected characteristics ensuring inclusivity, accessibility and equity within its development.
- 9.2 A full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the consultation process on Family Hubs development with consideration to implications of the proposed redesign of services and model.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The utilisation of property and services may have implications to the local community so it will be important to engage members and community stakeholders in this work. Any future plans for the continued or change use in physical assets such as buildings will consider sustainability and environmental concerns.
- 10.2 The work of the Early Help transformation plan and the oversight provided by the framework enables a better focus on supporting and developing sustainable and resilient communities across the city.
- 10.3 The digital family hub will support sustainability by offering an alternative delivery model which can be accessed with limited travel and at any time.

11. Other Implications

Social Value and procurement implications

- 11.1 Commissioning arrangements for wider children's services will need to be considered as part of the transformation including Public Health commissioning of the Healthy Child Programme.

Crime & disorder implications:

- 11.2 Crime and anti-social behaviour is one of the 10 Supporting Families headline areas. The Family Hub team would work to achieve outcomes as per the Supporting Families outcomes framework to address any identified issues.
- 11.3 Through the Family Hubs development we will be working alongside the Violence Reduction Unit to consider the links between the programmes.
- 11.4 As the Framework to support families at risk of disadvantage develops into Years 2 and 3 links with the Police and the community safety partnership will be key to ensure the right links to the Framework are made.

Public Health implications:

- 11.5 The Family Hub model will include the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme to provide support and interventions to reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for children and families.

- 11.6 The Best Start for Life Offer for Early Years will include the delivery of services to meet the six high impact areas for Health Visiting.
- 11.7 Mental Health and Wellbeing is one of the Supporting Families 10 headline areas and outcomes identified against this will be addressed through the Family Hub model.
- 11.8 The Starting Well chapter of the city's Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a key link within Year 1 of the Fairer Brighton & Hove Framework to support families at risk of disadvantage, recognising the importance of the link with the work overseen by Public Health and will link to development of the Early Years strategy for the city.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. A Fairer Brighton & Hove: A cohesive framework to support families at risk of disadvantage 2022 - 2025
2. Summary of Voluntary and Community Sector feedback
3. Early Help Review Summary Report
4. PeopleToo Early Help Review Report
5. PeopleToo Report Appendices
6. PeopleToo Customer Journey Mapping

