

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITIES and HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD**

**17 November 2014**

**Report of the Director of Chief Executive**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMME – PHASE 2**

**To set out proposals for a national troubled families phase 2 programme and to seek agreement to the Borough Council's continued involvement in this work.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 As reported previously to this Board, the current Kent Troubled Families Programme is aiming to 'turn around' the lives of 2560 families across the county. The first phase, 3 year, programme runs from 2012 to April 2015. National criteria for all troubled family initiatives seek to target families with issues of poor educational attendance, anti-social behaviour / youth crime and worklessness. Each district in Kent has developed a local programme and the one operating in Tonbridge and Malling has been re-branded as a 'Family Focus' initiative to put the programme on a more positive footing with families at the point of engagement. Each district programme is overseen by a KCC-employed local delivery manager. Our manager is Glenn Page who has an office at the Borough Council which enables him to engage directly with Council staff in relevant services such as housing and finance and also with the Community Safety Unit.

1.1.2 Each local programme is supported by a team of local family intervention and family support workers who provide intensive support and challenge for those targeted families who have been assessed as meeting the national entry criteria. Each family agrees a single family plan with a lead professional setting out what changes need to be achieved. The lead professional is responsible for the co-ordination of that plan and getting to grips with the family's problems. The worker has access to multi-agency support and a range of externally commissioned complementary activities and interventions to help support those families.

1.1.3 The Tonbridge and Malling programme now also benefits from:

- A team of seven Family Intervention and Family Support Workers who engage with the most challenging and complex families.

- A dedicated Troubled Families Employment Advisor from Jobcentre Plus and an employability mentor from RBLI who provide intensive support in getting targeted adults into work.
- A dedicated local police officer focusing solely on the troubled families agenda particularly seeking to address anti-social behaviour and youth crime issues.
- Development of a new mentoring service for young people aged 11-16 who present with challenging behaviours and who are lacking positive adult role models in their life.
- Family support budgets for intervention workers to access in meeting individual family needs related to the programme, for example, to pay for school uniforms or bus passes where these present a barrier to attending school
- A supported apprenticeship and training programme for young people identified through the programme.

1.1.4 To date, the local programme has identified a total of 206 families against an original target of 175. Of these, 113 have now been successfully 'turned around' - 64.5% of our target number. Our performance is broadly in line with the overall Kent figure of 66.7%. 20 cases have been closed with no successful outcome and we are continuing to engage with those remaining cases on our list. A particular challenge for Tonbridge and Malling is the high proportion of Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Income Support (IS) and Carers Allowance (CA) claimants which account for about 78% of the families on our target list. These Jobcentre Plus customers present with a range of complex issues that are significant barriers to securing sustainable employment either for a fixed term or indefinitely. Claimants on these benefits are not expected to look for work. These factors make it very difficult to achieve successful outcomes in relation to work for a significant number of our families. This challenge is shared by our neighbours in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells.

## **1.2 The New Troubled Families Programme: 2015 – 2020**

1.2.1 Government announced in August of this year that a second phase Troubled Families programme will be launched from April 2015. Unlike the first phase programme, the new programme will run for a five year period and end in 2020. £200M has been set aside by Government to fund the first year of the new programme.

1.2.2 The aim of the phase two programme is to significantly expand the number of families able to benefit from the support being offered. Government has suggested that the new programme will aim to address the needs of 40,000 families across the country. A key element of the new programme will be greater flexibility with regard to the adopted entry criteria. There will be six new national criteria, and to qualify, families must meet at least two of these to gain entry to the programme. The overall national criteria are:

- Evidence of crime and/or anti-social behaviour
- Record of poor educational attendance
- Children assessed as being in need of help
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion
- Evidence of domestic abuse
- Health issues – poor mental health, drugs and alcohol abuse.

1.2.3 More specific and detailed definitions are currently being developed at national level for each of these six criteria. In addition to the added flexibility provided by the increased number and scope of the entry criteria, there is also to be introduced an 'equivalent concern' criterion whereby professionals can refer in families to the programme who might not fully meet the national criteria but the assessed level of local concern from professionals about individual families could warrant a referral to the programme being made. These will apply in relation to all of the above criteria apart from worklessness and domestic abuse.

1.2.4 To achieve a successful outcome for each family, the new programme will require each to have a Family Action Plan setting out which 2 of the 6 criteria will need to be addressed alongside other identified needs. In order for an Authority to make a successful claim for a family, all outcomes identified in the plan will need to be achieved. Those achieved outcomes must be 'sustained and significant'. This will need to be defined locally.

1.2.5 Whilst the full details of the programme have yet to be finalised, it is likely that Kent County Council will wish to carry forward the structures adopted for phase 1 of the programme with a series of district based programmes led by a delivery manager with support from a centrally-based KCC officer team and involving a wide range of local agencies including the direct involvement of district council staff.

### **1.3 The Way Forward**

1.3.1 Whilst the phase 1 programme has achieved some local success, the criteria and approach adopted nationally has proved to be a constraint on delivering more effective support and reaching out to wider range of families in need. Administration of the programme both at County and District level has been unnecessarily burdensome, particularly at the beginning of the programme.

1.3.2 The proposed phase 2 programme, however, promises to be a more flexible model and will enable district schemes, including that for Tonbridge and Malling, to have greater freedoms to focus interventions and support on a wider range of families in need of help. The development of a new five year programme will also enable a longer term approach to be adopted. Experience from phase 1 has

shown that the amount and length of interventions with the more challenging families has been more substantial than was originally planned for. In addition, the longer programme will also enable staff employed to deliver the interventions to have longer term contracts and greater job stability. As the phase 1 programme start was delayed, most current staff only have 1 year renewable contracts. Key staff have left to find more stable employment elsewhere which has impacted on the success of the programme.

- 1.3.3 There is no doubt that on-going interventions to address the needs of troubled families are still required. The second phase will enable a wider range of families to be included in the scheme and the longer timescales should lead to better and more sustainable changes in those family's circumstances. The current district-based model has also worked well, enabling local teams to come together to assess the needs of local families and provide the right support for them. Borough Council staff across several services have all been involved in assisting with the programme but the assistance given and the time resource involved has been accommodated without any undue impact on other areas of work. On this basis, it is recommended that the Borough Council confirms its support for the phase 2 programme and our continued involvement in troubled families work.

## **1.4 Legal Implications**

- 1.4.1 Kent County Council, as lead authority, is responsible for the legal framework related to the troubled families programme.

## **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.5.1 Our main input into the local family focus programme is the staff time required to assist the Local Delivery Manager in assessing the eligibility of families, their individual needs and the administration of the programme generally. This will continue to be accommodated within existing staff resources.

## **1.6 Risk Assessment**

- 1.6.1 In the absence of a new, more effective programme, there is a risk that the adverse impact on communities and the associated costs that some troubled families can generate would increase.

## **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **1.8 Recommendations**

- 1.8.1 That proposals for a phase 2 troubled families programme **BE NOTED** and that the Borough Council's involvement in an extended family focus initiative based on the phase 2 proposals **BE SUPPORTED**.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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Chief Executive