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**FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME – UPDATE AND DRAFT TRANSITIONS  
ARRANGEMENTS – DRAFT CABINET REPORT**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide Members with the opportunity to consider and review the Draft Cabinet Report providing an update on the Families First Programme and the draft transitions arrangements following the Welsh Government's decision to end the current programme on 31 March 2017 and the introduction of new programmes (copy attached at **Appendix 1**).

**Background**

2. The Council currently receives a Welsh Government grant of just over £5m per annum for the Families First Programme, to provide early intervention and prevention services for families. The programme is one of the Welsh Government's key initiatives for tackling poverty.
3. The Council manages the grant on behalf of the Cardiff Partnership, which is made up of all the main statutory and third sector partners working together to deliver Cardiff's Integrated Strategic Plan, *What Matters: 2010-2020*. For this reason, the Vulnerable Children and Families Board, which is part of the Cardiff Partnership arrangements, has a role in governance of the programme in addition to the Council's own governance processes. This Board is currently chaired by the Director of Social Services.
4. The Welsh Government's initial Guidance identified that the initial Families First programme would end in 2017. The Guidance also contained a requirement that services should be 'strategically commissioned'. In line with this, services under the Families First Programme were commissioned by the Council via two competitive tender processes resulting in the award of seven contracts which commenced on 1 April

2013. These contracts are due to expire on 31 March 2017, although they contain an option to extend on an annual basis for 12 month periods if continued grant funding is made available.

5. The main specification for the initial programme comprised six lots, providing for themed packages of services. Each of these packages is led by a Lead Provider who has entered into sub contracts with a range of other providers. In this way, each package provides a number of different projects or services. The packages are:
  - Early Years – led by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.
  - Child and Youth Engagement – led by City of Cardiff Education Services.
  - Sustainable Employment – led by Sova.
  - Healthy Lifestyles – led by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.
  - Emotional and Mental Health and Wellbeing – led by Barnardo's.
  - Disability Focus – led by Action for Children.
6. Under the same Programme (although commissioned under a separate procurement process) there is an additional 'Team Around the Family' service for which a contract is in place with a single provider, Tros Gynnal Plant.
7. A number of smaller Infrastructure projects also support delivery across the Programme. These are mainly delivered in-house or secured by way of grant, although an additional contract was entered into during the current financial year to support the development of Time Credits. This contract is managed by the Council's Communities, Housing and Customer Services Directorate through a joint funding arrangement.
8. The Families First grant funding for this programme remained at the same level between 2012/13 and 2015/16 at £5,743,339 but was reduced to £5,072,763 in 2016/17.
9. In July 2016, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary Carl Sargeant confirmed that there would be another Families First programme. His

decision paper is attached to this report as **Appendix A**. The decision paper sets out his intentions for the new programme and clarifies the distinctive contribution that Welsh Government want the Families First programme to make alongside other programmes and initiatives. The paper confirms the elements of provision that Welsh Government want to continue, identifies some areas of service that they will be funded in the new programme and some potential gaps that Welsh Government want to be addressed.

### **Previous Scrutiny**

10. The Committee considered the Families First Annual Review report for 2015/2016 at its meeting on 18 October 2016. Members heard that Cardiff had not yet set any transitional arrangements for the end of the contract in March 2017 and was advised that the advice received was that these arrangements could not be set until such times as further guidance was received for the future of Families First, together with budget information.
11. Whilst the extension of the contract has to be a Cabinet decision, notice to extend can be given, and Officers confirmed that they were committed to moving forward as soon possible without any compromise of integrity. Members expressed concern that there may be a risk that Families First will not be in a position to continue to help families in need in light of the underspend on staff and the number of staff leaving. Officers advised that they are satisfied that Families First will continue, although the format may be somewhat different.
12. After the meeting, Members agreed to consider the draft Cabinet report as soon as it was available to ensure that it is considered by Cabinet in a timely manner.

## **Draft Cabinet Report**

13. The draft Cabinet report sets out the proposed interim arrangements for the transition period, which includes varying some existing contracts in order to extend their initial contract terms, decommissioning some of the services and potentially commissioning pilot/alternative arrangements during the transition period.
14. The report also sets out a timetable for the governance arrangements to ensure a smooth progression to new arrangements for service users (paragraph 18).
15. Equality impact assessments have also been undertaken which have been used to inform the proposals for the interim arrangements (see **Appendices B to E**).

## **Scope of Scrutiny**

16. The scope of this scrutiny is for Members to:
  - Gain assurance that the draft Cabinet Report provides appropriate interim arrangements for the decommissioning of those Families First programmes not being funded after 31 March 2017 and the commissioning of the new programmes starting on 1 April 2017;
  - Pass on any observations, comments or recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Families prior to the consideration of the Draft report by Cabinet.

## **Way Forward**

17. Councillor Sue Ient (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Families), Tony Young (Director of Social Services), Angela Bourge (Operational Manager Strategy, Performance and Resources) and Ceri George (Improvement Project Manager – Prevention and

Partnerships) will present the report to the Committee, and will be available to answer any questions Members may have.

18. This report will also enable Members to provide any comments, concerns or recommendations to the Cabinet Member prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

### **Legal Implications**

19. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

20. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is recommended to:

Review the information contained in the draft Cabinet Report, attached at **Appendix 1**, together with information provided at the meeting and provide any recommendations, comments or advice to the Cabinet Member and / or Director of Social Services prior to the report's consideration by Cabinet.

**Davina Fiore**  
**Director of Governance and Legal Services**  
**30 November 2016**