

# REPORT FOR DECISION



<b>DECISION OF:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>4 NOVEMBER 2015</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ADOLESCENT SUPPORT UNIT</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURE</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>JACKIE GOWER ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (SOCIAL CARE AND SAFEGUARDING)</b>
<b>TYPE OF DECISION:</b>	<b>CABINET - KEY DECISION</b>
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:</b>	This paper is within the public domain
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	<p>This report proposes that Bury Council invest in an Adolescent Support Unit (ASU). By preventing children and young people from entering care, as well as supporting foster placement stability, the unit will work immediately to reduce the upward pressure on the children's social care budget, while improving outcomes for some of Bury's most vulnerable young people and their families. Over the longer term, the ASU may deliver an actual reduction in expenditure on looked after children.</p> <p>An exercise to model the financial benefits of investment indicates a benefit cost ratio of around 2:1. Over and above the benefits modelled, it is expected that preventing children entering care will reduce demands on social workers, improve educational attainment and performance and reduce the number of young people entering the Criminal Justice system.</p> <p>The cost to the Council of the unit is £375,000 to establish the ASU in the latter part of 2015/16 and contribute to its running costs in 2016/17. The requested breakdown in funding is £75,000 in 2015/16 and £300,000 in 2016/17.</p>

<b>OPTIONS &amp; RECOMMENDED OPTION</b>	That the Cabinet approve the proposal of establishing an Adolescent Support Unit and funding.
<b>IMPLICATIONS:</b>	
<b>Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:</b>	<p>Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework?</p> <p>Yes, the proposals accord with the following Corporate Priorities as set out in the Council's Vision, Purpose and Values</p> <p>4.I - Reduce the demand for high end targeted and specialist services to keep children and young people safe from harm through prevention and early help.</p> <p>4.J - Improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families by effective multi-agency working and integrated service delivery.</p>
<b>Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:</b>	<p>This proposal requires initial funding of £375,000 over 2015/16 and 2016/17.</p> <p>Thereafter the proposal delivers annual savings rising to £405,000 in 2019/20.</p> <p>Project risks are outlined in section 4 of the report.</p>
<b>Health and Safety Implications</b>	The Adolescent Support Unit will be registered with Ofsted as a children's home and will therefore meet all the relevant regulated standards for Health and Safety.
<b>Statement by Executive Director of Resources (including Health and Safety Implications)</b>	<p>This proposal will mitigate the need for expensive external care packages and improve outcomes for vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Health and safety implications are addressed in section 4 of the report.</p>
<b>Equality/Diversity implications:</b>	Yes (see paragraph below)
<b>Considered by Monitoring Officer:</b>	Yes <b>There are no legal implications at this stage</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Depends on location – this to be determined
<b>Scrutiny Interest:</b>	

**TRACKING/PROCESS**

**DIRECTOR: Mark Carriline – Executive Director for Children, Families and Culture**

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Cabinet Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
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Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet/Committee	Council	
	4 November 2015		

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report proposes investment in an Adolescent Support Unit (ASU) in Bury. By preventing children and young people from entering care, as well as supporting foster placement stability, the unit will contribute to improving the life chances of some of Bury's most vulnerable young people and to reducing the upward pressure on the children's social care budget. This is line with Bury Council's corporate priorities, specifically to reduce demand for high end targeted and specialist services through prevention and early help.
- 1.2 Adolescent Support Units (ASUs) are being developed by a growing number of authorities in the North West and nationally and have been endorsed by the Department of Education. They combine a short term respite service with family outreach to provide young people and their families with a service committed to maintaining and rebuilding family and parenting relationships where these are under severe pressure. By operating from a friendly 'home' base, staffed by a dedicated team of experienced family support workers, the unit is able to provide a flexible offer to families in crisis which addresses both the need for family members to have 'time out', and for intensive family therapy, either on site, or at the family home. While staying on site, the unit provides young people with a structured range of recreational and educational activities that help rebuild self-esteem and encourage team working and peer support.
- 1.3 There is increasing evidence that ASUs are delivering positive outcomes for young people, preventing family breakdowns and young people entering care. Blackburn and Darwen, which established its ASU in late 2006, now has the lowest proportion of 11 to 16 year olds in residential care in the country. The number of teenagers entering care of any type (including foster and residential care) has declined from 47 in 2008/09 to 11 in 2014/15. This compares very favourably to national trends.

## **2.0 THE PROPOSED ADOLESCENT SUPPORT UNIT IN BURY**

- 2.1 It is proposed to establish a four bed unit in Bury with a staffing establishment of nine. The unit will be required to register with Ofsted as a children's home although overnight stays will be for respite only. The size and staffing levels proposed reflect expected demand and comply with regulated standards. They draw on Blackburn's experience, where the actual level of demand for the unit is similar to that anticipated in Bury. CYPC is currently working with Corporate Property Services to identify a suitable property.
- 2.2 The unit will provide social care professionals with a service to which to refer children and young people who may be on the edge of care, or at risk of placement breakdown with foster carers. The unit will assess referrals and accept them on the basis of a clear support plan that sets out how the combined offer of short term respite and family outreach will address the needs of the young person and their family in preventing relationship breakdown and an escalation of need.
- 2.3 The unit will be open 24/7 on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays and open on the other days between 07:00 and 22:00, though not normally during

school hours. Respite stays for up to four children will be available on the days of 24 hour opening. These stays will be booked in advance, as set out in individual care plans. While receiving the service, children and young people will remain under the care of their social work professional.

- 2.4 The respite service and outreach service will be available to 11 to 16 year olds. Younger children (from eight to 10) and their families will be supported through the outreach service.
- 2.5 Assuming the proposal is approved, it is expected that the outreach team will become operational in June 2016 and the respite unit will open in December 2016. The longer lead time to open the unit is determined by the Ofsted registration process.

### 3.0 BUSINESS RATIONALE – BENEFITS

- 3.1 The ASU will deliver benefits through improved outcomes for young people and their families, leading to reduced expenditure on children’s social care. Specifically the service will deliver:
- Reduced admissions into local authority care under Section 20 (admission with parental consent).
  - An acceleration in the safe discharge of children and young people from placements at home.
  - A reduction in the rate of breakdown in foster placements.
  - Reduced expenditure on bespoke packages of care delivered at home.
- 3.2 An exercise to model these impacts indicates that within three years of becoming fully operational, the unit will ultimately deliver gross annual benefits of over £800,000. With costs at approximately £400,000, the benefit cost ratio is equivalent to 2:1. The Business Case provides the detail behind these calculations. Table 1 projects net annual benefits to 2019/20.

**Table 1 ASU – Net benefits (financial benefits less annual expenditure)**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<b>Set-up Costs</b>					
Project Manager	25	25			
Refurbishment	50				
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Staffing		325	330	335	340
Running Costs & Fees		60	60	60	60
Rent		20	20	20	20
<b>Annual Expenditure</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>420</b>
<b>Financial Benefits</b>		<i>(3 mths)</i>	<i>Full Year</i>	<i>Full Year</i>	<i>Full Year</i>
S20 admissions - 25% reduction		(65)	(275)	(275)	(275)
One less residential placement each year		(15)	(150)	(250)	(350)
'bespoke' care packages		(50)	(200)	(200)	(200)
<b>Annual Benefit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(130)</b>	<b>(625)</b>	<b>(725)</b>	<b>(825)</b>
<b>Benefit less expenditure</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>(215)</b>	<b>(310)</b>	<b>(405)</b>

- 3.3 The immediate effect of the ASU will be to reduce the upward pressure on the social care budget. Over a number of years, if the flow of children into care reduces relative to the flow out of care (as children already in the care system reached 18), then a *reduction* in the total spend on looked after children will be possible. This has been Blackburn's experience, evidenced by the figures on the number of looked after children. Between 2006/07 and 2014/15 the number of 11 to 16 year olds coming into care fell from 47 to 11.
- 3.4 Over and above the benefits modelled, it is expected that preventing children entering care will reduce demands on social workers, improve educational attainment and performance and reduce the number of young people entering the Criminal Justice system. The benefits modelled in the business case are therefore likely to be a conservative estimate of the total attributable to the proposed investment.

#### 4.0 RISK MANAGEMENT (INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY)

4.1 Table 3 presents risks and corresponding mitigation measures.

**Table 3 - Risks and mitigation measures**

<b>Risk category</b>	<b>Specific risk</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Mitigation strategy</b>
<b><u>Internal management</u></b>	Failure to comply fully with Ofsted regulations, including location assessment (new in April 2015)	Registration delayed	Experience of registering a residential facility with Ofsted to be an essential criterion for recruitment of Project Manager.
	Delay in recruiting unit manager/staff team	Service delivery delayed	Appoint suitable Project Manager ASAP.
			Experience of working within Children's Social Care within an outreach or residential service to be an essential criterion for recruitment of Project Manager.
Insufficient referrals	Service not financially viable (costs outweigh benefits)	Referral pathways and service protocols developed during project implementation stage to ensure that role and contribution of service is fully understood by all stakeholders in advance of service going live.	
<b><u>Environmental</u></b>	Delay in locating a suitable building in a suitable location within Bury	Project delayed	Look at all options straight away including purchase of a suitable property.
	Refurbishment costs higher than anticipated	Increased project cost	CYPC to make adequate contingency to offset this risk.
<b><u>Political</u></b>	Local councillor objects to location of unit in their ward	Project delayed	Ask Blackburn councillor with lead for Children and Young People to invite a small cross party group of councillors to visit the ASU in Blackburn

	Local residents object to location of unit in their locality	Vociferous public/press/social media campaign seeking to prevent establishment of unit leads to delay	PM to work with Comms team to develop a media/comms strategy well in advance of any public announcement.
			Choice of location to anticipate reasonable community 'nuisance' issues including staff/visitor parking.
			Rename unit - 'adolescent' may have negative connotations.

4.2 The Adolescent Support Unit will be registered with Ofsted as a children's home and will therefore meet all the relevant regulated standards for Health and Safety.

## 5.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

5.1 The ASU will advance the interests of some of the borough's most vulnerable young people, including those with disabilities, teenage girls who are pregnant and young carers. Service design and development will be culturally sensitive to ensure that it is accessible to all of Bury's diverse communities. By supporting young people at a time of acute crisis where there is a risk of family breakdown, the unit will contribute to improvements in the lives of a range of groups with characteristics which are protected under equality legislation.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 This report recommends that Cabinet invests £375,000 in an Adolescent Support Unit to meet the needs of some of Bury's most vulnerable children and young people. By providing a combined offer of short term respite and family outreach the service will prevent family breakdown and rebuild family and parenting relationships where these are under severe pressure. This will reduce admissions of children and young people into local authority care and support foster placement stability, reducing the upward pressure on the children's social care budget, while improving outcomes for vulnerable young people and their families. Preventing children from coming into care will also reduce demands on social workers, and may have a positive impact on educational attainment and performance as well as reducing the number of young people entering the Criminal Justice system.

### List of Background Papers:-

ASU Business Case  
Equality Analysis

### Contact Details:-

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