

Creation of Service Director for Delivering Better Value and SEND Transformation

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	26 March 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Report Author:	AnnMarie Dodds Executive Director of Children's Services
Forward Plan Reference:	C4505

1 Purpose of the Report.

- 1.1 It is crucial that the Council has sufficient capacity at senior level to drive the SEND Transformation through the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV). The programme will expedite transformation activity across the SEND system in West Berkshire. The transformation will enhance the operations of the organisation and the wider SEND system whilst responding to the financial challenges faced by the Council's High Needs Block (HNB) deficit. The increasing level of cost, demand, complexity of need, pace of change, accessibility and availability of current and potential services, and the latest inspection frameworks place new and increasing demands from children and families on the Council.
- 1.2 This report's purpose is to set out the proposed addition to the senior management structure in the People Directorate (Children's Services), focussing on the DBV programme, adding greater resilience in Children's Services (People Directorate) to respond to the SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) financial and operational challenges.
- 1.3 The proposed addition will bring additional capacity to Children's services for a fixed period of one year in line with the wider council senior directorate structures. The post holder will have senior management responsibility for all elements of the DBV programme.

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- 2.1 Approve the creation of the Service Director (SD) post in the Children's (People) Directorate;
- 2.2 Note that the post is for one year fixed term, funded from DBV grant funding.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
Financial:	<p>Immediate recruitment to the Service Director post at a full year cost of £135,560 assuming an appointment from April 2024 at mid-point.</p> <p>The post will be entirely funded using the DBV grant.</p>			
Human Resource:	<p>Effective and clear communication will be required prior to any recruitment processes being commenced.</p> <p>It is expected that the post will be advertised internally and externally immediately following approval.</p>			
Legal:	<p>The Head of Paid Service (the CEO) is required under the Constitution to report to full Council on the way the discharge of the Council's functions is co-ordinated, the number and grade of Officers required for the discharge of functions and the organisation of Officers (Part 2, Article 10.8). This report ensures effective compliance with that duty.</p>			
Risk Management:	<p>There is limited risk in the proposed model.</p> <p>Risk lies in failing to address the lack of strategic capacity in Children's services to deliver the required DBV SEND transformation programme.</p>			
Property:	<p>None.</p>			
Policy:	<p>This proposal is impacted by HR policies and procedures in relation to Job Evaluation, Pay and Grading, Organisational Change and Redundancy and Recruitment. The proposals already take account of these policies.</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary

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Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			Once the post is created, it will be advertised internally and externally for all staff to be able to apply for as in all other posts. Once any new post is created, it will be evaluated based on up-to-date information.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	X			As above.
Environmental Impact:		X		None.
Health Impact:		X		None.
ICT Impact:		X		None.
Digital Services Impact:		X		None.

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Council Strategy Priorities:	X			<p>A fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for all.</p> <p>Thriving communities with a strong local voice.</p> <p>A more efficient Council will enable the new Council Strategy to be delivered in a more cost-effective way.</p>
Core Business:	X			<p>The SD role will improve the Council's overall strategic direction, SEND transformation, improved management of statutory functions, efficiency and core business for children and families (the customer).</p>
Data Impact:		X		None.
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>Internal communication has taken place and external partners have also been engaged. This has included SEND colleagues within the council; the Department for education via the review and sign off process for DBV submissions; other local authorities who are engaging in the DBV programme and school leaders via the Heads Funding Group, primary and secondary head teachers.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The proposal is to create one Service Director (SD) post. The post will be a fixed term post for one year and will be equivalent to existing Service Director posts. The post holder will undertake the role of senior responsible officer (SRO) for the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme. This programme requires strategic leadership and subject specific knowledge relating to SEND transformation in line with the requirements of SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, Right support, Right Place, Right Time.
- 4.2 Following the LGA Corporate Peer Review the need to expedite SEND Improvement Activity was highlighted with specific commentary on the need to drive SEND and AP Transformation via the Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme. The capacity and existing capability within the organisation was recognised as a challenge to deliver necessary systemwide transformation whilst improving business as usual functions.
- 4.3 The creation of the SD post will provide increased strategic transformation capacity across the SEND system in West Berkshire. Managing the challenging and complex demands of the Delivering Better Value Programme primarily addressing the significant High Needs Block deficit.

5 Supporting Information

Proposal

- 5.1 At present strategic leadership of the DBV programme is delivered by Service Managers in West Berkshire's SEND services. As Such strategic capacity is limited and the DBV programme requirements impact on the delivery of business as usual. This further impacts the council's ability to appropriately prepare for the area SEND inspection.
- 5.2 The proposed directorate senior structure with 1 Executive Director, 2 x SDs and a DBV Service Director is consistent with the senior structure across similar sized local authorities who are participating in the DBV programme. It reflects the risks managed by the individual SD holding significant practice, financial and reputational risk across the SEND system. Recent financial and operational challenges across SEND have demonstrated the need to expedite transformation and for greater strategic leadership capacity. The SD will be responsible for the line management of additional posts recruited to the council on a fixed term basis to deliver elements of the DBV programme.
- 5.3 An indicative structure for the management of the DBV programme has been shared with the Department for Education advisors and to date has been deemed appropriate.
- 5.4 Appendix A shows the current 'To Be' proposed structure.

HR Process

- 5.5 Appointment to the role of the fixed term Service Director will be based on current recruitment and redundancy policies and will be advertised internally and externally as with all previous posts through a member appointment panel. Job descriptions will be provided, and the grades evaluated.

Financial Implications.

- 5.6 The cost of the new post will be entirely met from DBV grant funding.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 These proposals bolster the ability to expedite transformation activity across the SEND system whilst further adding resilience and management capacity for Children's Services and will speed up the pace of change addressing the financial deficit in the High Needs Block.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A – 'To Be' structures in People's Directorate - Children's Services.

Background papers

Job Description Service Director for Delivering Better Value on SEND
Diagnostic Overview for DBV in West Berkshire.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval.

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council.

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position.

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months.

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only
