

To: Customer & Communities Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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Subject: Community Budgets

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: This report explains the national context of the Community Budget pilot. The first phase pilot in Kent and the key findings to date are described. The development of the Community Budgets pilot in Kent is led from the Service Improvement Team in Customer and Communities and supported by Families and Social Care and Business Strategy and Support.

FOR INFORMATION AND COMMENT

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** The Community Budgets initiative was launched by the Department for Communities and Local Government in April 2011 and is focused on delivering better outcomes for families with multiple problems through a co-ordinated approach to budgets and interventions at the local level. An estimated 120,000 families nationally account for around £8 billion of public spend annually, with apparently little change in their circumstances or identified needs. Analysis of recent public policy initiatives suggested the effectiveness of the investment was compromised by multiple schemes, separately funded and narrowly focused and by direct interventions which were insufficiently co-ordinated. This was understood to be both difficult for families to engage with and wasteful of public resource.
- 1.2** The government's key ambitions for this programme are to:
- a. Improve outcomes for families with multiple problems
 - b. Pool budgets
 - c. Redesign and integrate frontline services
 - d. Reduce costs to enable re-investment of savings back into services.

National roll-out of the programme is planned for 2013-2014. It will retain its specific focus on families with multiple and complex needs.

- 1.3** Kent County Council made a successful bid to be one of 16 'first phase' areas in England to develop Community Budgets for 'families with multiple problems. Currently

pilot projects have been initiated in Kent in Swale and Thanet districts. Gravesham, Canterbury, Shepway and Maidstone are participating in the extension of the programme. It is envisaged that all districts will be involved by autumn 2012.

1.4 Pilot areas have received no additional funding for this programme but have benefited from central government support. Each pilot has a nominated champion at central government level whose role is to provide support and monitor progress. For Kent this is Tom Jeffrey, Director General at the Department for Education. In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government has a lead officer, with whom a very productive and helpful relationship has developed.

1.5 Pooling budgets so that spend is focused and rationalised is a key element of the Community Budgets approach. The expectation remains that, at the local level, agencies will align resources while moving towards pooled budgets. However, early indications that government departments would consider pooling relevant spend at the locality level have now been abandoned. This reflects the complexity of pooling budgets.

2.0 The Kent Community Budgets pilot

2.1 There are two overarching aims for Kent's Community Budgets programme:

- a. To produce a real change in outcomes for families: to encourage them to become more self-sufficient and less dependent on public services in the future.
- b. To evidence cost reduction: a reduction in future demand on public services as well as cost savings from pooling funding, decommissioning ineffective services and reprioritising resources.

2.2 The specific focus of each of the two pilot projects has been developed in consultation with the relevant District Council and there has been very active sponsorship of the programme at Chief Executive level. Localism is central to the Community Budgets programme. Local governance arrangements are developing and are linked to the formation of Locality Boards. Progress reports are provided for the Joint Kent Chiefs and the Kent Forum and there is widespread sponsorship of the programme.

2.3 No additional resources have been made available for local projects. Project managers have been identified from within existing officer resource in the locality. A small budget, £40K, has been made available to each locality. This has come from the Think Family Early Intervention grant. In line with other pilot areas nationally, an intervention model based on the Family Intervention Project (FIP) model has been developed. This means in practice that families have a single key point of contact who can assess needs and co-ordinate resources.

2.4 The Swale Community Budget pilot identified a particular need to focus on those families where substance misuse is a major risk in the family. Identifying the families with most complex needs has been done by identifying families who have one or both parents in substance misuse treatment services as well as having dependent children within the extended family and where parents are known to Kent Police and Kent

Probation. The project management lead comes from an existing KDAAT staff member and Family Intervention worker has been designated from within existing substance misuse service practitioners. The expectation is that 15-20 families will be directly engaged and progress is being made towards this number of families.

2.5 In Thanet the agreed focus of the project is on inter-generational worklessness with an expectation of working with 25 families. The project is not yet working with this number of families but making progress. In this context, work is focused on engaging families where at least one adolescent child is experiencing difficulties at school and there are unemployed adults in the household or young people classified as NEET and one or both parents have involvement with adult services. This focus has been influenced by the work of the Margate Task Force, but the programme is not limited to the wards within the Margate Task Force remit. The project management lead comes from KCC with strong support from Thanet District Council. The Family Intervention worker comes from the existing Primary Intervention Project. The programme in Thanet builds on existing interventions and resources to ensure that a locally sensitive approach is developed.

3.0 Supporting Activity

3.1 Local delivery is supported by a number of additional activities designed to increase effectiveness and facilitate the roll-out to other districts. An evaluation framework, compatible with the national evaluation has been developed and a financial model is being developed and refined to capture cost data provided by all partners. This will enable costs to be assigned to different interventions and demonstrate any savings made and, critically, where they accrue. Evidence nationally is that police and health tend to accrue notional savings before other agencies.

3.2 Close working relationships have been developed with Families and Social Care directorate to ensure that the Community Budgets approaches support the Children's Services Improvement Plan. Further links are being made with the FSC commissioning unit so that strategic commissioning is informed by locality needs and service re-design.

4.0 Planned work

4.1 The four districts in the extension to the pilot have already made some progress in identifying the focus for projects in their localities. In Gravesham the focus will be on new communities in the district. Shepway District Council has received funding from the national "Working Families Everywhere" programme and will work collaboratively with that organisation to relieve worklessness in families. Canterbury City Council has hosted a multi-agency meeting to agree priorities and intends to work with families where domestic violence is an issue. Maidstone Borough Council is contacting other agencies and will undertake a collaborative needs assessment to identify the focus in the borough.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 POSC members are asked to note and comment on this report

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