



CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

PAPER FOR THE BOARD MEETING ON 5 FEBRUARY 2010

Outline Business Plan 2010/11

1. AIM AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present to the Board a proposed Business Plan for 2010/11.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTION FOR THE BOARD

- 2.1 The Board are asked to approve the outline Business Plan 2010/11.

3. SHORT SUMMARY

- 3.1 The proposed outline Business Plan 2010/11 retains the six operational priorities from the 2009/11 Business Plan as they remain the right ones going forward. The emphasis will be on business transformation and practice transformation – in the light of continuing pressures upon the service which cannot be sustained without further significant adaptation. Some individual programmes have changed, to sharpen up delivery of the priorities and associated targets. The Business Plan also incorporates the action plan for the Issues Analysis carried out by PA Consulting. In addition it proposes delivery of these priorities through 7 work programmes, to be taken forward by a Transformation Board Steering Group, and to be co-ordinated through a Programme Office

- Estates Rationalisation – less offices and lower running costs
- A single National Business Centre, to handle all data processing for C100's and a number of other functions capable of being delivered more efficiently in this way
- A Standard Operating Model – a more standardised operational model throughout the country
- FrontLineFirst – this programme will introduce and roll out a small number of professional practice changes that will be needed to stay on top of demand within our resource allocation.
- Tools for Effective Working – improving Flex, CMS and other systems to support the more focussed practice models
- Workforce development – enhancing staff skills and performance in delivery of the Business Plan.
- Engagement – greater service user engagement, staff engagement, stakeholder engagement and public engagement

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On 3rd April 2009 the Board approved a Business Plan covering the two years ending on 31 March 2011, aligning the business planning cycle with the current three year funding cycle.
- 4.2 The Corporate Business Plan 2009/11 covered two financial years and set out actions across 6 operating priorities. Heading now in to the third of the three years of the current funding settlement, with as yet no indication of funding levels from April 2011 onwards, we

must ensure that attention over the next twelve months is directed towards areas of work that will yield the highest leverage to priority areas for both improvement and transformation objectives, across the whole of our work (practice improvement, productivity improvement including the elimination of unwarranted differential performance between individual service areas, and the full range of business support services)

- 4.3 Importantly there is also a very small window of opportunity to present a business case for additional one off funding in 2010/11 to meet the costs of a programme of change activities that respond to the findings and opportunities for improving capacity reported by PA Consulting in December 2009.
- 4.4 Agreement of the Outline Business Plan is also essential to enable the cascade of objectives with direct impact on local operations so these can be incorporated in the local business plans of our 21 service areas.

5 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE BOARD TO CONSIDER

- 5.1 Whilst further change is needed, it must be carefully managed, given the demand pressures the organisation is constantly having to absorb, and the other pressures such as the cycle of Ofsted inspections which, despite representations, remains unchanged at 7 full service area inspections a year. The main driver for the changes proposed is the risk of a challenging 2011/14 resource allocation, because of the overall worsening financial position across the public sector. The transformation programmes in 2010/11 must leave the organisation as efficient, effective and economic as possible for the start of the next Comprehensive Spending Review period, especially with demand likely to continue throughout 2010/11 at high levels, and uncertainty beyond this.
- 5.2 A critical part of this will be to secure additional one-off funding next year to support these programmes which in turn will improve value for money overall. Also, being realistic about capacity will require us to strip out all but the highest priority improvement areas with maximum effort from all then put behind these. This is true at both national and local levels so a simple streamlined set of priorities is agreed corporately and supported locally.
- 5.3 The 7 programmes below (see summary) will be able to incorporate all other requirements of the business plan and the PA Issues Analysis action plan.
- A reduction in offices aimed at reducing running costs, and aimed at ensuring offices are in the right place for local service users to access, and to deliver core office-based services such as duty advice and early intervention services. This programme will take up to 3 years, but as much as possible will be front-loaded next year, depending on the finance available
 - The development of a National Business/Service Centre to handle C100 processing for all teams, customer services including complaints tracking and progress chasing, and a number of business-related services which can be provided more efficiently centrally, leaving local teams to concentrate on providing the core casework service to children, families and courts. This programme will build upon the successful processing hub in Birmingham (the Central Intake team) which currently processes (data inputting) C100's from C3, C5 and C7 and which will absorb all Central Area's C100's by March this year.
 - Using the processes capable of being delivered centrally in a standardised way, we will develop a standard operating model, some elements of which will be developed with partner agencies like HMCS
 - The practice change programme, FrontLineFirst, will seek to achieve a high level of engagement by frontline staff, so that practice changes are as rooted in operational reality as they can be. Service area management teams will be the vehicle to lead on

particular changes, many drawn from the current work on developing a Safe Minimum Working toolkit

- Making improvements to core IT and management information systems like Flex and CMS so that they are more fit for purpose
- Delivering training programmes which equip our staff to deliver these operating priorities on both the practice and business sides of our work. This will build on the performance management programme, intensive where needed. It will be co-ordinated by Operational Directors through the Service Improvement meeting process.
- Engaging and communicating more effectively with all those who use and provide our service, and those interested in it for good reason

5.4 Further adjustments to the structure and staffing levels are likely over the next few months, building on the 2009 restructuring which has now been completed. This will clarify the roles of specialist service managers; create different levels of administrators in local teams to support practitioners in their work most effectively – Grade 1 for office junior work like filing; Grade 2 for diary management, case progression (jointly with HMCS), IT training, etc

5.5 It will be crucial that the changes we make are supported by all of our partners in the family justice system. In particular, it is important the President's Interim Guidance and our own Operating Priorities are updated, consolidated and extended into 2010/11. One document rather than two will be best. It is likely the focus will be on public law cases, as changes to the private law system, which are not contentious and which have worked well, will be consolidated in a new Practice Direction, probably applicable from August 2010. Without such an extension, there is a risk backlogs will rise again. They have been significantly reduced in recent months and this is an important trend to build upon.

5.6 A mechanism for stronger service user engagement in the programmes will also be essential, building on the service user engagement work started this year.

5.7 It is essential that the governance arrangements for these programmes are robust. It is proposed that the current National Transformation Board remains the main driving force behind further change. It is proposed this is chaired by the Chief Executive, with senior Board and CMT members as core members. It is proposed that two sub groups are formed, one for practice changes, and one for changes on the business side. A Programme Office, staffed by experienced and trained Cafcass project managers, would co-ordinate all programmes and delivery of the 2010/11 business plan in its entirety.

6 BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

6.1 Our Business Plan for 2010/11 should provide a realistic set of ambitions to improve services for children that will be affordable within the funds available to us next year. By setting out the contents of an overall programme of work responsibilities can be assigned to ensure there is ownership of the improvements we are seeking and the cascading of objectives throughout the organisation so every stakeholder is clear about our aims to deliver benefits for children. Reassurance based on evidence will be needed that our more focused administrative family court practice models still enable us to represent the 'voice of the child' sufficiently in the proceedings referred to us.

7 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

7.1 Funding for 2010/11 has previously been agreed as part of a three year funding settlement. Budget holders have been issued with indicative budget allocations for the new financial year. In assessing the impact of their allocation in comparison to existing expenditure commitments, budget holders will need to consider the cost implications of taking forward actions that are cascaded into local business plans from the corporate business plan,

developing both the local area business and financial plan in parallel to ensure consistency between them.

8 RISK ANALYSIS

- 8.1 The Corporate Risk Register records those risks that present the greatest threat to Cafcass delivering its objectives. While there is a consistency of objectives in the Business Plan for 10/11 with those of the current year, the risk register will be reviewed again when the Business Plan 10/11 has been finalized to ensure those risks being managed are the most relevant.

9. DIVERSITY ANALYSIS

- 9.1 Ensuring Equality and Diversity are central to all our work remains a vital and central operational priority for 2010/11. In much the same way as ensuring the objectives of benefits for children are met through business planning and management, so the setting of objectives in relation to improving our performance in Equality and Diversity will help ensure equality of access to services, and to improve sensitivity to the unique set of circumstances facing individual children and young people.

Anthony Douglas CBE, Chief Executive
Julie Brown, Director of Finance
January 2010