

Committee: Children and Young People Policy & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 1 October 2009

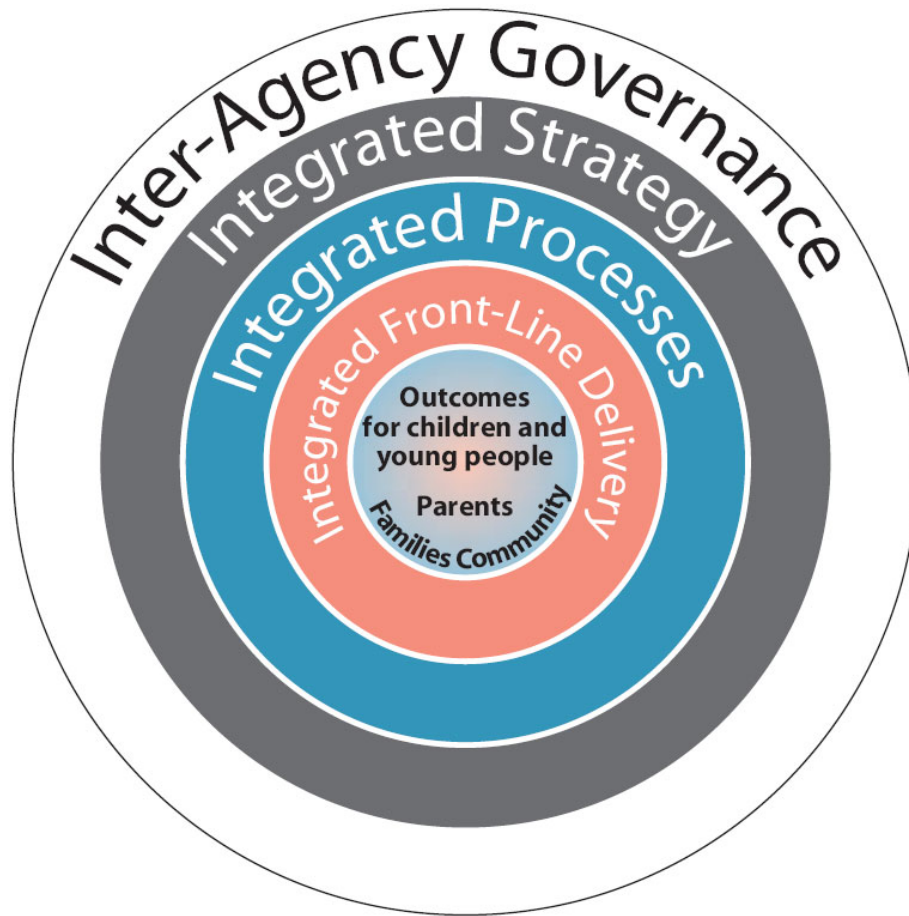
CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS IN ESSEX

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Progress Report to Scrutiny Committee

Background

Children's Trusts bring together all services for children and young people in an area, underpinned by the Children Act 2004 duty to cooperate and as amended by The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill, to focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. The following diagram describes the essential features of a Children's Trust: ⁱ



The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill is due to be enacted in April 2010 and places Children's Trust Boards on a statutory footing. Statutory guidance relating to the roles and responsibilities of the Boards has, in part, required the Children's Trust partnership in Essex to review its' commissioning and governance arrangements.

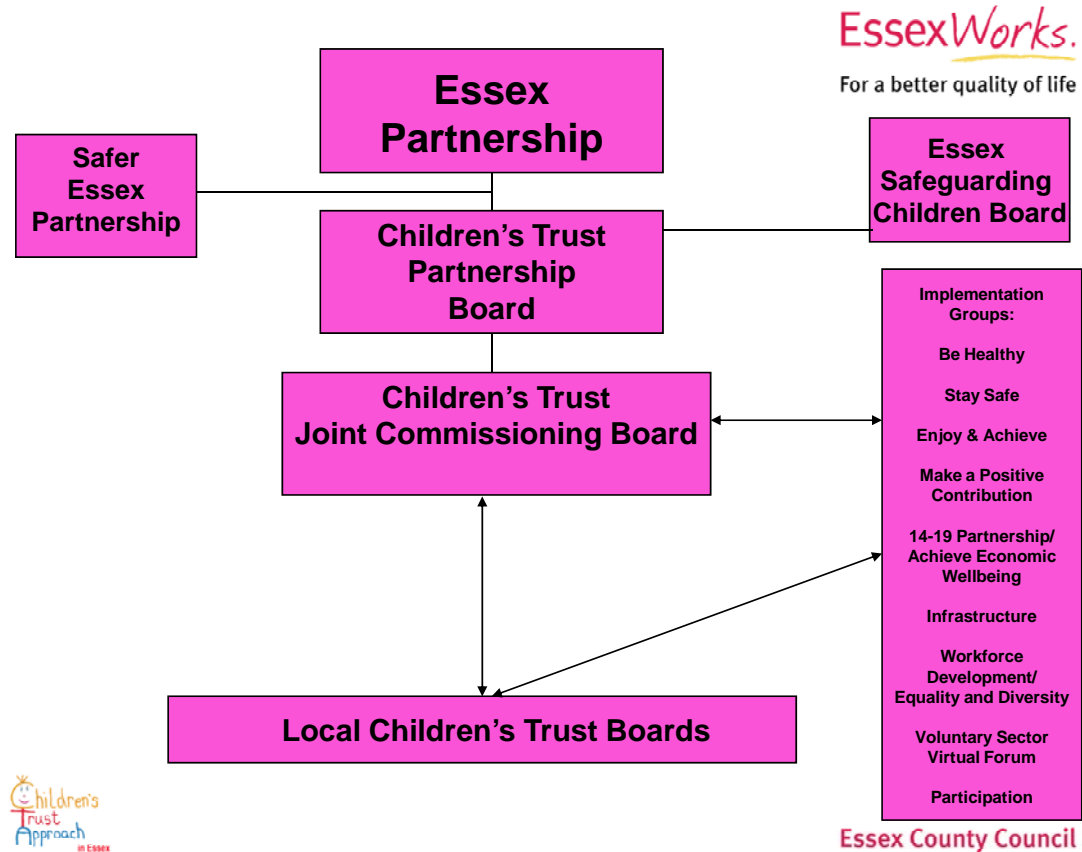
Children, young people, their families and communities need to be placed at the centre of everything we do, generating an outcome-focussed vision that is clearly informed by their views and aspirations. This commitment is at the heart of the Essex 2009 Children and Young People's Plan.

The review of Children's Trust Arrangements in Essex is focussed on enabling us to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people, within the context of a likely increasing pressure on resources.

In order to achieve this, the review has included a detailed examination of governance, commissioning and delivery arrangements in Essex, which is summarised below.

Governance and Commissioning Arrangements

The following is an illustration of the proposed new governance arrangements within the Essex Children's Trust:



The **Children's Trust Partnership Board** will provide the overall leadership, develop an integrated strategy and enable integrated accountability for delivery of improved outcomes for children and young people as described within the Essex Children and Young People's Plan.

The **Joint Commissioning Board** will have lead responsibility for developing integrated approaches to the commissioning of services for children and young people in accordance with the priorities identified within the Children and Young People's Plan.

In doing so, it will have lead responsibility for the analysis of information about needs identified by the local Children's Trust Boards and the Implementation Groups, as well as through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The Joint Commissioning Board will also have lead responsibility for mapping all existing budgets and spending for children's services, reviewing cost effectiveness of spending via benchmarking data and value for money

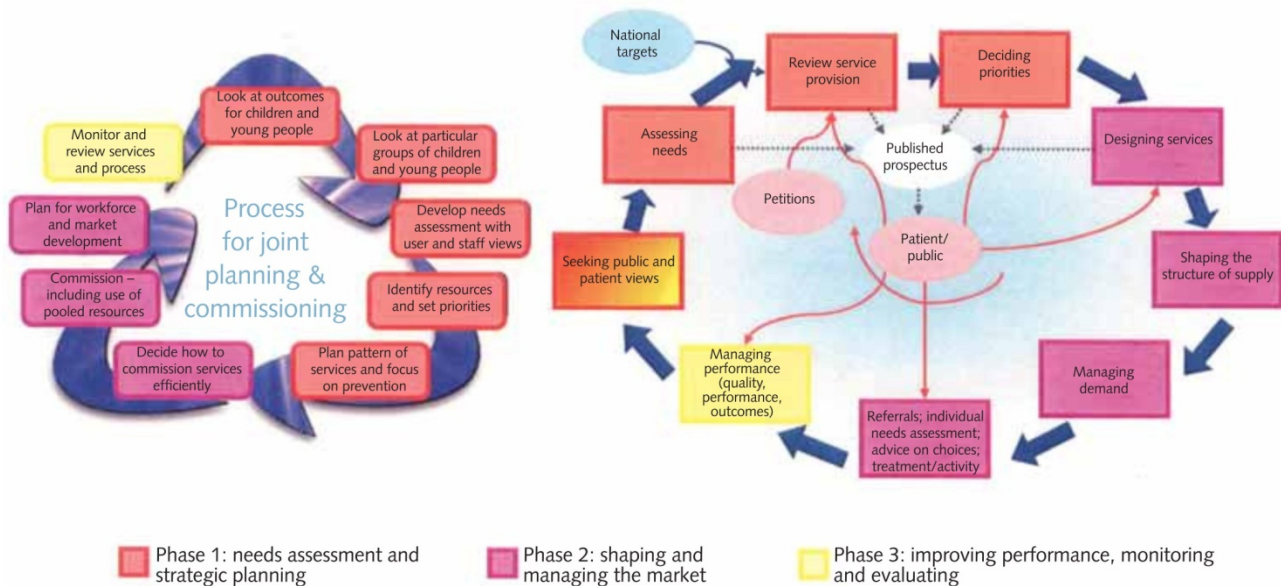
comparators, driving out inefficiency to deliver cashable savings and jointly planning future reinvestments.

The Board will commission services where there are benefits to two or more partners commissioning services jointly and will follow the principles described by the DCSF Commissioning Framework and by World Class Commissioning.

Both frameworks are similar in that they emphasise:

- Commissioning against defined outcomes;
- Understanding of needs and how these vary across both communities and groups of service users;
- The efficient use of resources, and the pooling and aligning of these where possible;
- The development of the provider market;
- Robust reviewing of the effectiveness of services against expected outcomes;
- The role of service users at every stage of the commissioning cycle.

The two frameworks are illustrated in the diagram below, with the DCSF framework on the left and the NHS World Commissioning on the right. There is considerable overlap between the two frameworks:



Source: Every Child Matters; DCSF

The Joint Commissioning Board will use these principles in delivering joint planning, commissioning, procurement, evaluation and review of services to children and young people.

The Joint Commissioning Board will also performance manage the **Local Children's Trust Boards**, ensuring that they are delivering required outcomes against transparent value for money criteria.

As Local Children's Trust Boards become established, the Joint Commissioning Board will increasingly delegate commissioning resources and accountability to them, monitoring their performance against the required outcomes using the same principles described by the commissioning framework and world class commissioning.

The Local Children's Trust Boards will be responsible for analysing needs in the areas for which they are responsible, and for ensuring that services to meet those needs are targeted effectively so that outcomes for children and young people continuously improve.

This will require them to undertake comprehensive needs analysis and develop effective participation arrangements for children, young people, their families and communities.

Local Children's Trust Boards will be required to develop their own local comprehensive plans and integrated strategies that support delivery of the outcomes and priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan.

The partners on the boards will need to identify the resources that they have available to support delivery of the priorities within their local plans in a similar way to the Joint Commissioning Board.

The local boards will also be required to evaluate the performance of services that are commissioned and provided to ensure that they are delivering the expected outcomes for the best value for money.

This evaluation function will apply equally to those services that are delivered directly by Essex County Council and other statutory partners as it will to those services that are commissioned from the third sector.

This will lead to significant changes to the ways in which services are delivered and is a consequence of the increasing separation of commissioner and provider functions taking place across children's services.

The local Children's Trust Boards will replace the existing local Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships.

The Number of Local Children's Trust Boards

The Review of Children's Trust arrangements in Essex recommends that we establish five local Children's Trust Boards.

The review acknowledges concerns by a number of partners, particularly in Tendring and in West Essex, about a perceived risk of a loss of local focus by these larger boards.

However, the alternative option of local Children's Trust Boards based on District and Borough boundaries is not recommended because this option would fail to address key challenges and requirements, including:

- **Sustainability and financial cost:** particularly in the context of likely public expenditure reductions over coming years – eleven boards are more resource intensive than four or five;
- **Increased responsibilities** of the boards to undertake **comprehensive assessments of local need**, and create opportunities to identify the more effective use of resources across the partnership to deliver more for less, requiring them to be supported by robust and effective **performance management information** and demonstrate continuous improvement. The support arrangements for 11 boards to enable them to achieve this would not be either an efficient use of resources or be sustainable;
- **Decision Making:** the boards will need to make significant decisions in relation to significant levels of resources, and will therefore need to include officers of the appropriate level of seniority, which is less likely if boards are based on district or borough boundaries;
- **Inconsistencies** between the local CYPSP boards resulting from their current commissioning activities beginning to be identified by some partners as reinforcing difficulties elsewhere arising from differential access to services in different areas;
- The need for **coterminous arrangements** between the key commissioning partners – the County Council and the NHS;
- The need for the boards to be able to take a more **strategic view** of the needs of children, young people and families in Essex, which is more difficult to achieve from a district or borough level perspective.

Despite probable perceptions to the contrary, moving to five local Children's Trust Boards would actually involve a significant delegation towards localities, rather than away from them. This is because most commissioning of Essex County Council children's services is effectively done on a county-wide basis, while most NHS commissioning is done at either PCT level or across the county.

The intention is to establish a structure into which increasing responsibility and accountability for the commissioning and performance management of many of these services can be delegated into the localities.

Timescale and other Considerations

These recommendations are subject to agreement by the Children's Trust Board on October 2nd.

The Joint Commissioning Board and Implementation Groups will be formally established as quickly as possible.

Local Children's Trust Boards will be in place before April 2010.

ⁱ Source: Every Child Matters - DCSF