

TO: THE EXECUTIVE
DATE: 11 FEBRUARY 2014

**PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATION ON THE BUDGET SAVINGS FROM
AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN
Director of Children, Young People and Learning**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the planned timescale for achieving the Aiming High savings and the consultation process including full EIA to be undertaken.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **For the Executive to note the proposed timescale for achieving the Aiming High savings; and**
- 2.2 **For the Executive to approve the proposed consultation and associated timetable.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The recommendation sets out the consultation and timetable for budget savings to Aiming High.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The proposed consultation exercise is expected to develop a range of savings options for the Executive to consider.
- 4.2 The budget saving could not be taken from April 2014 as this would not have allowed sufficient time for a full consultation process.

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Aiming High is part of a range of services provided for disabled children within Bracknell Forest. The Aiming High budget totals £375,000 in the current financial year. It supports a range of activities including targeted holiday schemes and weekend clubs, specialist and crisis support to families, grants to carers and a range of universal services.
- 5.2 Savings are to be proposed, which total £120,000. This would result in an on-going budget of £255,000.
- 5.3 Proposals to make savings on any budgets are difficult, but where there are high levels of need from some of the most vulnerable children and their families, this becomes a very sensitive matter and one which requires due diligence and full consideration. The Executive will want to allow sufficient time to do this important work.
- 5.4 The Financial Plan requires us to make savings within the Aiming High budget in the region of £120,000. This is equally an opportunity to consult on and consider a new framework for short break services that will also fit with the new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) legislation for Health, Education and Care Plans for children and young people who receive a personal budget

It is an opportunity to ensure we maximise efficiencies, deliver value for money and improve outcomes for Children with Disabilities and their families.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED TIMESCALE FOR MAKING THE BUDGET SAVINGS TO AIMING HIGH

- 5.5 The amount of savings that can be made in 2014/15 is dependent on the completion of the consultation exercise, EIA assessment, and consideration of how the available resources are best allocated, with final decisions of the Executive expected to take place at the end of September 2014. Once outcomes are known, changes to the programme will be put into place as soon as practical with the expectation of savings in 2014/15 and that full savings of £120,000 will be achieved for 2015/16.

PROPOSAL FOR PARENT/CARERS/YOUNG PERSON’S CONSULTATION

- 5.6 Any changes to the Aiming High service will require a thorough consultation with parent/carers, young people, voluntary organisations and providers. One of the main groups representing parents/carers is the Aiming High Steering group. It is important that they help to develop the consultation process. Alongside this we plan to use the services of QA Research.
- 5.7 As any proposal to the Aiming High budget has the potential to be highly controversial, it is very important that the Council ensures that the consultation and full EIA are robust and follow best practice. It is therefore proposed that The Consultation Institute are commissioned to conduct a compliance assessment in order to quality assure the consultation process. This also provides an opportunity for council-wide learning in regards to approaching a consultation of this type.
- 5.8 The following timetable is proposed as a starting point.

A DETAILED PARENTS CONSULTATION AND FULL EQUALITIES AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) WILL UNDERPIN ANY CHANGES TO THE FUNDING FOR AIMING HIGH SERVICES

PROPOSED TIMELINE AND CONSULTATION PLANS

DATE	ACTIVITY	BY WHOM
21.01.14	PRG Comments for Executive	PRG
By 31.01.14	Any changes / reduction to the contracts (Kids & Konnections) must be notified. Note if a decision was taken to terminate these contracts 6 months notice has to be given)	Sonia Johnson
11.02.14	Executive Decision on the budget and	Executive

Unrestricted

	recommendation to Full Council	
Between 21.01.14 & 21.02.14	<p>Consultation, scoping and planning work with the Consultation Institute and QA Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation mandate and plan to be completed • Agree methodology with QA Research • Produce a communication plan 	Sonia Johnson / Abby Thomas
Between 21.01.14 & 21.02.14	Testing consultation surveys	Sonia Johnson Abby Thomas QA Research
Late Feb14 & early March14	Meetings with Aiming High Steering Group to include the Chair of PRG and Executive Member for CYPL	Sonia Johnson QA Research
Between March 4 and June 14	<p>12 week consultation period.</p> <p>Consult with parents / young people / professionals and providers</p> <p>To include questionnaire and face-to-face focus groups.</p>	QA research
By end of July 14	Final report and recommendations	QA/ SJ
19.08.14	For consideration at DMT	Sonia Johnson
27.08.14	For consideration at CMT	Sonia Johnson
02.09.14	For consideration at PRG	Sonia Johnson
09.09.14	For consideration at Executive Briefing	Sonia Johnson
23.09.14	Executive for decisions	Sonia Johnson
Sept / Oct 14	Feedback to participants	Sonia Johnson

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 At this point in time, the savings proposed in this paper can only be identified as possible potential savings pending a full EIA and consultation process which complies with the Gunning and Coughlan principles on consultation and the equality duties under the Equality Act.
- 6.2 The services subject to potential savings are statutory services and in addition to the process of complying with the requirements set out above any savings would have to ensure that "sufficient provision" were still available

after the savings take effect. As it is close to agreeing the budget the consultation should be robust and the savings may only be confirmed (if that is the decision) after the process has been completed. That will mean that they are not finalised by 1st April, but by some time in the new municipal year. Confirming these savings without the above would leave the Council open to a challenge which it would be unlikely to be able to successfully resist.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.3 A commitment to deliver annual savings of £120,000 from the Aiming High budget has been made and that these should be implemented as soon as practicable. It is accepted, however, that full year savings may not be achieved in 2014/15 due to the need to complete a full and thorough consultation and the need for a lead in time to implement the final proposals.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 A full and detailed EIA will be needed.

7. CONTACTS

For further information -

Lorna Hunt Chief Officer Children's Social Care
01344 351528 lorna.hunt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Sonia Johnson Head of Specialist Support
01344 353132 sonia.johnson@bracknell-forest.gov.uk