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Report of: *Jayne Ludlam*

Report to: *Cabinet*

Date of Decision: *19 October 2016*

Subject: Consultation on proposals relating to Children's Centres

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000		<input type="checkbox"/>		
- Affects 2 or more Wards		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>CYPF</i>				
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? The Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee				
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>896</i>				
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>				

Purpose of Report:

This report requests permission to consult on a proposal to re-organise children's centres into an integrated locality model across 7 areas. The report sets out in principle, proposals to redesign children's centres; developing a new delivery model based on family centres for 0 -19 year olds (0-25 years old if the young person has a disability) located in the 20% most deprived areas of the City within 7 locality areas, with services being available across Sheffield from link and outreach sites including community venues and in the home.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet approve permission to consult on the proposal outlined in the paper to redesign Children's Centres; developing a new delivery model based on 0-19 Family Centres (0-25 years old if the young person has a disability) located in the 20% most deprived areas of the City within 7 locality areas, with services being available across Sheffield from link and outreach sites including community venues and in the home.

Background Papers:

Early Help Strategy, Map outlining proposals, Best Start Strategy and outcomes, Draft consultation document, Draft new model proposals.

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>Andrew Bray</i>
	Legal: <i>Louise Bate</i>
	Equalities: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission: <i>Jayne Ludlam</i>
3	Cabinet Member consulted: <i>Cllr Jackie Drayton</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Jackie Robinson</i> Job Title: <i>Service Manager West MAST</i>
	Date: <i>7/10/2016</i>

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This report, sets out in principle, proposals to redesign children's centres; developing a new delivery model based on 0-19 family centres (0-25 years old if the young person has a disability) located in the 20% most deprived areas of the City within 7 locality areas, with services being available across Sheffield from link and outreach sites including community venues and in the home.

CYPF's vision for the delivery of services is that families will be able to obtain timely responses to their needs through flexible, locally based and co-located, multi-agency services. This means that services, staff and resources will be matched, as far as possible, to local demand and that staff will operate from a variety of locations within locality areas, embracing the full range of both SCC and partner accommodation for example using existing accommodation in Schools/GP Surgeries/Children's Centres/Early Years Providers etc. The emphasis will be on providing services where the families are already rather than making the families come to us.

The proposal supports the development of a more integrated approach with a greater focus on early help with a broader range of services provided across a network either delivered on site, in the family home, in a link site or other suitable community venues responding to a breadth of family needs such as health and wellbeing, housing, education, and employment. It is underpinned by information sharing protocols and builds on the premise that the safeguarding of children and young people and outcomes for families will be improved.

The proposal recognises the journey that early intervention prevention services and early years have been on, in improving services for families. However it recognises that further improvements need to be made

The model will :

- Provide a range of early help services for families with children pre-birth to 19 years (pre-birth to 25 years if the young person has a disability) either in the lead centre, link site or outreach venue using different channels to include face to face in the home, centre, drop ins, group work, internet access, online advice guides, email, text, telephone and social media.
- Provide services to include support with physical and emotional health, practical advice on keeping children safe, support with education and learning, support with parenting, home, money, work, training and volunteering.
- Be located in 20% areas of highest need based on the IDACI index of deprivation, with outreach services for all families delivered jointly with universal services.

- Be developed with families, partners and stakeholders within communities building on the current children's centre governance model in relation to community partnerships and stakeholder forums.
- Align to the seven localities with families being able to access services where it meets their needs.
- Be open during core hours offering ad hoc drop in basis, with opportunity to extend this.

Any proposed change to Children's Centre services is subject to statutory consultation and if approved consultation will take place between November 2016 and January 2017.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

2.1 What does this mean for Sheffield People?

The new proposed 0-19 Family Centre delivery model and way of working builds on the principle of early help and focuses on making interventions at an early stage once problems have begun but before they escalate.

The family centre proposal is to build on existing strengths, expertise and current infrastructure in children's centres and will join together and coordinate services around children and families with an extended remit from pre-birth to 19 years old (pre-birth to 25 years if the young person has a disability). It recognises the critical role that Children's Centres have played in prevention and early intervention services and will join together and coordinate services offering community universal, targeted and specialist services.

It moves away from a single centre delivery model to a networked locality model based on the achievement of common outcomes. The proposal is that in the seven localities there will be a lead centre acting as a base for a full range of integrated services. To ensure compliance with statutory duty the lead centre will remain a designated children's centre with a cluster approach in some areas of the City and will be inspected under the current Children's Centre Ofsted Inspection framework in relation to services for children and families pre-birth to five years old.

Outreach sites and community venues will offer clinics, group and drop in services on a timetabled basis; however families will be able to access support outside these times through a main family centre, or one to one support in the home.

Information, advice and guidance would be available for all parents locally with different channels offered for example, face to face, drop ins, internet access, online advice guides, email, text, telephone and social media.

2.2 **Outcomes and sustainability**

The proposal, if approved, will provide families with accessible locally based services offering information, advice and guidance, with a focus on early help identifying need when it first appears offering a holistic support service. This would mean that whatever point of access for parents they would be able to find a service or range of services to meet their needs and those of their children.

The proposal ensures that the council continues to meet its statutory duty as set out in the Childcare Act (2006) and fulfils its duty to improve outcomes for all children whilst reducing inequalities between them.

It builds on the importance of identifying children and families who would benefit from early help as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2016).

The Joint Needs Assessment (2013) for the City recognised the necessity to 'find new ways of responding to need which places a premium on prevention and early intervention, integrated working and care in the community'.

The proposal builds upon the current arrangement of integrated services with health, education, social care, employment services but offers opportunities for further co-location and joint delivery of integrated services for the 'whole family'.

3. **HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

As yet there has been no consultation as the decision recommended at this stage is 'permission to consult'.

There is a statutory requirement for consultation which is proposed to take place between November 2016 and January 2017.

There will be a questionnaire to gather opinions on our proposals and views from the consultation will be considered and taken into account in further developing the proposed model. The final proposals will then be presented to Sheffield City Council Members in Spring 2017 for their consideration.

It is the intention to publicise the consultation widely through the Partnerships Boards, community groups and forums, through children's centre partners, schools and stakeholder forums and to use social media in order to engage a good cross section of the public.

The consultation will seek views on:

- The change of focus of services from under 5s only to 0-19 age group (0-25 years if the young person has a disability).
- the change from a generally centre based delivery model to delivery at outreach venues in the community where the families

are

- on the launch of Family Centres in the most deprived areas of each of the seven localities, to co-ordinate and provide early help services for families with children pre-birth to 19 years (pre-birth to 25 years if the young person has a disability)
- The types of services that families would like to see offered
- How services are delivered

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

4.1.1 Decisions need to take into account the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- To help evidence meeting the requirements of the duty, we have carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and which is attached as Annex 2.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The EIA highlights that the consultation will be promoted through a range of general methods as well as specific methods to ensure that we reach specific target audiences including those who are hard to reach or hard to engage. We are mindful of the variance of voice and influence across different characteristics within our user profile and the EIA identified the groups that require specific or bespoke work to ensure that their voice is effectively heard.

The consultation will take access considerations for disabled people into account and make information available in alternative and accessible

formats, reach pregnant women through clinics held at children's centres and briefing partner organisations to engage with them, BME groups will include specific and focussed activity with hard to reach communities, for example the Roma / Slovak and Pakistani community, we are not anticipating a faith impact but are mindful of days/times to avoid for consultation events, we are mindful of the difficulties in engaging with fathers and male carers and we will look at how we can widen our reach to include men, we will use take all practical steps to ensure that we reach carers, use a wide range of approaches to ensure that we reach the voluntary/community and third sector, for example via the Equality Hub Network, Stakeholder Forums, by electronic communications etc.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 This paper seeks approval to consult on the proposals. If approved, and following consultation, a further paper will be produced in Spring 2017 which will outline the proposed model and at that stage the full financial implications will be detailed. The present assumption is that these proposals will be no worse than cost neutral.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 Duties to arrange services / provide Children's Centres:

Section 3(2) of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on the local authority to make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner which is calculated to—
(a) facilitate access to those services, and
(b) maximise the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children.

Section 5A of the Childcare Act (2006) places a specific duty on the local authority to, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of Children's Centres to meet local need.

Duty to consult:

Section 5D of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on the local authority to:

(1) secure that such consultation as they think appropriate is carried out—
(a) before making arrangements under section 3(2) for the provision of a children's centre;
(b) before any significant change is made in the services provided through a relevant children's centre; and
(c) before anything is done that would result in a relevant children's centre ceasing to be a children's centre.

(2) have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary

of State.

The Act defines a change of services as ‘a change in the manner in which, or the location at which, services are provided’.

The DfE has issued statutory guidance, to which the local authority must have regard, entitled ‘Sure Start children’s centres statutory guidance - April 2013’.

The guidance states that the local authority should consult everyone who could be affected by the proposed changes; for example, local families, those who use the centres, children’s centres staff, advisory board members and service providers. Particular attention should be given to ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in consultations.

Consultation should explain how the local authority will continue to meet the needs of families with children under five as part of any reorganisation of services. It should also be clear how respondents’ views can be made known and adequate time should be allowed for those wishing to respond. Decisions following consultation should be announced publicly. This should explain why decisions were taken.

The guidance goes on to state that the local authority should not close an existing children’s centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children’s centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children’s centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against closures.

There are no statutory time limits for consultation, but sufficient time should be allowed for those wishing to respond to do so.

4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no other implications at this time the paper seeks permission to consult on proposed changes; a further cabinet paper will be developed following the consultation detailing the findings and any implications.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The alternative approach would be for the council to continue to deliver Children’s Centre Services from 16 standalone centres, this approach does not align to the principles set out in the early help model, the Best

Start 'A Great Start in Life' strategy, the SEND reform and Working Together to Safeguard Children which are underpinned by delivery of services based in localities where services work together to achieve improved outcomes for families as close to their homes and communities as possible.

Fundamental to the proposal is a whole household approach, by not extending the age range of services and developing Family Centres with link and outreach sites, the alternative would be to continue to deliver services to families pre-birth to five years old. This would not support the provision of integrated early help for families, would not align to the early help services for families aged five to eleven years or to the targeted youth support service leading to more negative outcomes for both children and families.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 There is a statutory duty on the local authority to provide early childhood services and children's centres, and a statutory duty to consult in relation to changes affecting those children's centres as detailed in 4.3.1.

The Munro review of child protection calls for local authorities to take a greater focus on preventative services, providing Early Help to children and families and summarises three key messages:

- Preventative services will do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services
- Coordination of services is important to maximise efficiency and with preventative services
- There needs to be good mechanisms for helping people identify those children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm from abuse or neglect and who need a referral to children's social care

Munro, (2011), The Munro Review of Child Protection: final report, DFE

The All party Parliamentary Group on Sure Start Children's Centres 2015 pre-election report states that 'One of the greatest strengths of Children's Centres has always been their capacity to join up a wide range of services around a child to provide a true "holistic" model of support'.

The report continues to state that 'the ultimate aim should be to position children's centres at the heart of service provision in their communities , to enable them to provide the sort of holistic offer we know to be valued and effective'.

The Centre for Social Justice argued that 'children's centres should become " Family Hubs" which enable parents to access all family related support including universal support and specialist help to meet their most pressing needs'.

Councils should ensure that Children's Centres form part of their wider

early help strategy and provide differentiated support to children and families according to their needs by:

- Offering access to integrated information and support to all prospective parents, new parents and parents of children.
- Encouraging and providing access to early help and targeted support for children and families who experience factors which place them at risk of poor outcomes
- Helping families to access appropriate wider and specialist support to meet their needs.

There is a need to align to the early help model when re designing children's centres. Family centres, will be a gateway to services for all families in their local community recognising that targeted interventions and outreach services are vital in supporting the families who need it the most.