

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan

Report of the Executive Director  
(People)  
to Cabinet  
(9<sup>th</sup> September 2015)

### CHILDREN'S CENTRES: DEVELOPING A MODEL OF EARLY HELP FOR FAMILIES

#### 1.0. Purpose of the Report

To inform Cabinet of the results of the statutory consultation in relation to Children's Centres and developing a model of early help for families April 2016.

To seek Cabinet's approval to implement a new service delivery model based on Family Centre main, linked and outreach sites, which will fulfil statutory requirements and support the delivery of Early Help to families.

#### 2.0. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet agree to:

- a new service delivery model based on Family Centre main, linked and outreach sites in line with the recommended Option 2
- an extended age range of pre-birth to 19 years old (25 years old if the young person has a disability)
- designate Family Centre main sites as 'Children's Centres' in order to meet the statutory duty to ensure sufficient Children's Centres and as a result they will be regulated and inspected by Ofsted under the current inspection framework for Children's Centres. This relates to services for children pre-birth to 5 years old.
- continue to offer services for families on a borough wide basis including on site and outreach in communities and within the home
- the council ceasing to directly deliver childcare in areas where demand is and/or can be met by the private, voluntary and maintained sector, in line with statutory guidance that the council should be the provider of last resort.
- the council directly delivering early education and care for two, three and four years olds on a sessional, term time only basis in areas where there is a need to do so due to sufficiency
- the council de-commissioning the current (two) external providers in order to ensure compliance with legal requirements and achieve required savings and review the agreements with the two providers from the maintained sector

### **3.0. Introduction (or Background to the Report)**

The Early Start and Families Service within the Education, Early Start and Prevention Business Unit 1 was given a £2.5 million savings target in April 2014 as part of the Future Council programme to be achieved by 1 April 2016. This required a fundamental review of the service and in order to manage this effectively it was agreed that changes would be managed over a 2 year period. £500,000 of savings was achieved as part of 2015/16 budget setting, through an organisational restructure of services relating to the Childcare Services team, Early Years Consultant team and the Families Information Service. The remaining £2 million saving relates to the restructure of the Children's Centre Programme and will be implemented by 1 April 2016 with the full year effect being realised as part of 2016/17 financial year.

Any proposed change to Children's Centre services is subject to full statutory consultation. The council has therefore undertaken full statutory consultation with the public, partners, current commissioned providers, stakeholders and staff in two distinct phases. Phase one of the consultation focused on the broad principles on which to base any change in the service delivery model. The first phase of the formal public consultation commenced Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January until Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The feedback from the consultation was analysed and formed the basis of the more detailed proposals set out in the second phase of the consultation which commenced on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May until Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The proposals set out in the recommended option 2 take account of feedback from phase 2 of the consultation. Details of the consultations can be found at Appendix 1.

The council has responsibility for a range of statutory duties as set out in the Childcare Act 2006 relating to:

- providing sufficient Children's Centres
- undertaking statutory consultation in relation to any proposed change to Children's Centres
- the quality of early years and childcare provision as judged by Ofsted across the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sector
- improved outcomes for children in the early years and a duty to narrow the gap between the lowest achieving children and the rest
- the provision of information, advice, guidance and training to the early years and childcare sector
- the sufficiency of early years and childcare to enable parents to return to or retain employment and training
- the provision of information, advice and guidance to families through the Families Information Service

Councils should also 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; and
- helping families to access appropriate wider and specialist support to meet their needs.

The proposals ensure that the council continues to meet its statutory duties in full and fulfil the duty to improve outcomes for all children whilst reducing inequalities between them.

There are currently 19 (and one satellite) Children's Centres in Barnsley. The council is responsible for either directly delivering Children's Centre services or commissioning services through an external body. The majority of Children's Centres deliver early help, and a small proportion of the total childcare places in the borough (3% approximately). However a minority deliver early help services only. In Barnsley the current management and governance arrangements are as follows:

**Table 1: Current Children’s Centre Management and Governance**

<b>Council Managed Children’s Centres</b>	<b>Area Council</b>	<b>Services</b>
Sunnybank	Central	Early help and childcare
Buddies	Central	Early help and childcare*
Hunni-Bee	Central	Early help and childcare*
Dodworth and Gilroyd	Central	Early help
Secret Garden	North	Early help and childcare
Darton	North	Early help
Wilthorpe (de-commissioned at request of provider 01.04.15)	North	Early help and childcare*
Milefield	North East	Early help and childcare
Lundwood and Monk Bretton	North East	Early help
Buttercup	North East	Early help and childcare*
Royston Meadstead (de-commissioned at request of provider 01.09.15)	North East	Early help and childcare*
Darfield	South	Early help and childcare
Hoyland Common (de-commissioned at request of provider 01.08.15)	South	Early help and childcare*
Penistone	Penistone	Early help
Embankment	Dearne	Early help and childcare
<b>Council commissioned Children’s Centres: maintained sector</b>	<b>Area Council</b>	<b>Services</b>
Rising Stars: Worsborough Common Primary School governing body	Central	Early help and childcare*
Kings Oak: Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre governing body	South	Early help and childcare*
<b>Council externally commissioned Children’s Centres: voluntary sector</b>	<b>Area Council</b>	<b>Services</b>
Jump: Forge Community Partnership	South	Early help and childcare*
Dearne Community: Action for Children	Dearne	Early help and childcare

\*Under the proposal the council would cease to directly deliver childcare on the sites identified.

#### **4.0. Consideration of Alternative Approaches**

The alternative approach would be for the council to continue to deliver Children’s Centre services from the existing 19 (plus 1 satellite) Children’s Centres including the direct delivery of early education and childcare. This approach is not viable in that it would be at a significant cost to the council and would not deliver the required savings. The model would not support the efficiency gains through a reduction in overhead costs and would not ensure that resources and services were targeted in areas of greatest need.

The alternative approach to extending the age range of services would be to continue to only offer services to families with children pre birth to five years old. This would not support the provision of integrated early help for families and would not realise the gains of taking a whole

family approach. Furthermore this approach would not align with the Targeted Youth Support Service leading to a continued gap in additional early help services for children aged five to 11 years old and would not produce holistic and seamless support throughout childhood both for children and families.

The alternative approach to commissioning arrangements would be to continue to commission current providers. This would not support the efficiency gains generated through organising early help services through Family Centre main, linked and outreach sites aligned to Area Councils. It would dis-joint service delivery and resources resulting in a more costly model due to additional management costs and fees which relate to the management and supervision of the wider early help family support services. In addition there are potential adverse legal implications relating to procurement.

## **5.0. Proposal and Justification**

The proposal is to build on the existing strengths, expertise and current infrastructure to re-shape Children's Centres into Family Centres with an extended remit to support children and families pre-birth to 19 years old (25 years if the young person has a disability). This recognises the critical role that Children's Centres have played in prevention and early intervention services. The outcome of the first and second phase of statutory consultation demonstrated support for:

- Family Centres providing a range of early help services for families with children pre birth to 19 years (25 years old if the young person has a disability)
- Services to include support with physical and emotional health, practical advice on keeping children safe, developing social networks through groups, support with education and learning, parenting behaviours, positive family routines, home and money, work, training and volunteering
- Family Centres being based in areas where there is a high level of need with the continuation of some services for all families delivered in partnership with health and education
- The proposed location of Family Centres (main, linked and outreach sites) to take into account the current level of community assets and buildings in an area
- Families to continue to be able to access services where it meets their needs
- Family Centres to be aligned to Area Councils

Whilst the phase 1 consultation feedback broadly supported the principle that the council should only directly deliver childcare where there is a need to do so and the proposed service delivery model reflected this, the outcome of the phase 2 consultation demonstrates that 69% of respondents do not agree that the council should cease direct delivery of childcare within centres where there is sufficient provision within the maintained, private and voluntary sector. 21% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal and 10% neither agree nor disagreed.

Under the re-shaped model services will continue to be available across Barnsley and be accessible through Family Centre main, linked and outreach sites including community venues and in the home. Services will be based on working in a whole family way and will continue to be targeted according to need with a focus on early intervention and prevention. The philosophy underpinning service delivery will be strengths based approach building family resilience and aspirations.

Family Centres will be a non-stigmatised gateway to services for all families in their local community recognising that targeted interventions and outreach services are vital in supporting families who need it most in order to narrow the gap in outcomes between those experiencing the most disadvantage and the rest. The proposal builds upon the strong foundation of integrated universal and targeted provision available through the current network of Children's Centres.

Early help services delivered through Family Centres will be developed with families, partners and stakeholders to ensure they are firmly rooted within the community, building resilience and self efficacy. The proposed model will provide continuity of support for families across age

phases ensuring accessible, non stigmatised, personalised and seamless services from pre-birth to 19 years old (25 years if the young person has a disability) recognising the vital nature of early help services in relation to children's future development and life chances.

The council is required as a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient Children's Centres. In light of this it is proposed that Family Centre main sites are designated as Children's Centres in order to comply with the statutory duty and as a result they will be inspected under the Children's Centres Ofsted inspection framework, in particular, relating to services for children and families pre-birth to five years old.

It is essential that the new model of early help for families through Family Centres builds upon the current arrangement of integrated services with health, education, social care and Job Centre Plus. There are opportunities presented by the proposal for further co-location and joint delivery of integrated service across the age range in order to provide local holistic family services. Integrated working is underpinned by information sharing protocols and Children's Centres currently benefit from the knowledge and expertise through the provision of named professionals which include midwife, health visitor, social worker, family nurse and infant feeding link worker. Family Centres will grow the network of professionals to better support families by building knowledge, confidence and trust between a wider group of professionals to facilitate integrated working and where appropriate referrals in line with thresholds of need.

This will build on the premise that the safeguarding of children and young people and outcomes for families will be improved, when providers work effectively together with families, guided by shared principles, quality performance indicators and information sharing protocols. The information sharing protocols currently in place will be extended to accommodate the expanded age range.

The further alignment of services will be based upon meeting gaps in service and avoiding duplication in order to maximise resources, target investment and ensure ongoing value for money. In particular this will include alignment with provision delivered by the Targeted Youth Support Service and in partnership with schools.

### **Family Centre Network**

It is proposed that across the borough families will continue to have access to the full range of early help services either delivered on site or through outreach in the family home or in other suitable community venues. Families who are resident in the borough will be able to access services at the centre which makes most sense to them and their circumstances. Family Centre sites are proposed to be organised as main, linked and outreach. Main and linked sites will be open during core hours (this may vary depending on the needs of the community) and families will be able to access these centres on a drop in, ad hoc basis during opening hours. Outreach sites and community venues will offer groups and services on a planned and timetabled basis however families will be able to access support outside of these times through main or linked sites and the Families Information Service. Moreover one to one family support will be available flexibly on site and in the home and will be responsive to family needs. Families will continue to be able to access a broad range of services such as:

- Antenatal clinics and parenting support via the *Having a Baby* Programme, and Now I am programmes for various ages and stages in early childhood
- Infant feeding support; cook and eat, adult and family learning sessions
- Play activities and sessions
- Targeted sessions to support particular groups e.g. teenage parents, lone parents
- Trips and outings/visits
- Support in accessing early years education funding and entitlements
- Employment, training and benefits advice

In considering the location of Family Centre sites a number of factor have been taken into consideration:

- Statutory consultation feedback (Appendix 1)
- Levels of disadvantage and deprivation (Appendix 2)
- Sufficiency of early education and childcare (Appendix 3)
- Community buildings and delivery (Appendix 4)
- Access to services
- Savings requirement and capital claw back implications
- Mitigating the negative impact on children and families (Appendix 6 Equality Impact Assessment)

A second option for the service delivery model has been developed following further analysis of data and the second phase of the statutory consultation.

Option 1: that there will be 5 Family Centre main sites, 4 linked sites and 9 outreach venues

Option 2: that there will be 5 Family Centre main sites, 5 linked sites and 8 outreach venues.

Under both options there will continue to be services delivered in other community venues and for families most in need of one to one support services will be delivered in the home.

### **Childcare within Family Centres**

Whilst the phase 1 consultation feedback broadly supported the principle that the council should only directly deliver childcare where there is a need to do so and the proposed service delivery model reflected this, the outcome of the phase 2 consultation demonstrates that the majority of respondents do not agree that the council should cease direct delivery of childcare within centres where there is sufficient provision within the maintained, private and voluntary sector.

The effect of the proposals will be a reduction in the number of centres where the council directly delivers early education and childcare which will equate to 3.6% of childcare places across the borough. The council must ensure that there is sufficient high quality childcare across the borough and it provides support to the private, voluntary and maintained sector to start up childcare businesses or expand in areas where there is not enough provision to meet demand. This supports the local economy whilst meeting statutory guidance that council's should only provide childcare where the private and voluntary sector fails to do so.

The council, as part of its statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare provides support and incentives to the private, voluntary and maintained sector to start up childcare businesses or expand in areas of the borough that have insufficient provision to meet future demand. This supports the local economy whilst meeting statutory guidance that the council should only deliver childcare where the private, voluntary and maintained sector fails to do so.

In relation to the current childcare provision within Children's Centres there is a mixed offer to families. Some Children's Centres offer full daycare, others offer sessional care for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and those Children's Centres developed in a later phase have no childcare on site but support families to access provision in the private, voluntary and maintained sector.

The outcome of the statutory consultation demonstrates that the majority of respondents do not agree with the proposal that the council should cease to directly deliver childcare however due to financial constraints and level of savings required from the service the current model of childcare delivery operates at a significant cost to the council and is therefore unsustainable.

Whilst the council, under the proposal, will not directly deliver childcare in some areas it will continue to support other childcare providers to ensure access to the highest quality early years education and childcare. Where it is proposed that the council will continue to directly deliver childcare this will be targeted at children accessing their two, three and four year old early education entitlement on a sessional and term time only basis where there is a need to do so.

(See section 3 Table 1: Current Children's Centre Management and Governance and below Table 2: Proposed Family Centre Main, Linked and Outreach Sites).

## Commissioning Arrangements

It is proposed that the current two external providers of Children's Centre services be decommissioned and that Family Centres will be delivered and provided by the council due to the scale and scope of the service re-modelling required. This would allow the council to undertake the necessary reconfiguration, savings and far reaching service re-design required whilst meeting legal and financial obligations. In addition to the two external commissioned providers there are two providers which are within the maintained sector and therefore the employing body is the council. It is proposed that arrangements are reviewed with the maintained sector providers to establish if the current agreements cease or are reconfigured. The implications of the new staffing model will need to be considered following the approval of the service delivery model from April 2016.

Due to the level of savings, and the need to ensure an ongoing high quality and safe service resources will be organised on a wider area basis with staff deployed across an area to meet need. This will provide for greater flexibility of deployment of resources in areas of need over a wider geographic area and reduce the costs associated with the management of early help family support services. Moreover, due to the remit of Family Centres being expanded to include pre-birth to 19 year olds (25 years if the young person has a disability) this will require a full remodelling of the evidence based, outcome focused service offer/programme and a comprehensive scheme of workforce development. Services will continue to be integrated and delivered in partnership with a range of private, voluntary, maintained and statutory agencies and by establishing a holistic delivery model this will facilitate further opportunities for co-production.

### Proposed Family Centre Location

The table below outlines two options for consideration. Option 1 outlines the service delivery model developed following phase 1 of the statutory consultation. Option 2 outlines a service delivery model developed following phase 2 of the statutory consultation.

**Main and linked sites:** open during core hours (this may vary depending on the needs of the community) and service users will be able to access on a drop-in, ad-hoc basis during opening hours

**Outreach sites and community venues:** will operate groups and services on a planned and timetable basis. Families seeking information, advice and guidance and support outside these times will be able to access alternative main or linked Family Centre sites, telephone consultation or if appropriate their allocated Family Support Worker. The Families Information Service is also available to support and assist.

**Table 2: Proposed Family Centre Main, Linked and Outreach Sites**

Central Area Council			
		Option 1	Option 2 (preferred option)
Sunnybank Centre	Children's	<p>Main Site</p> <p>Delivering early help services for families including nursery provision for two, three and four year olds due to a high level of need in the area, low levels of early education and childcare in the area and a purpose built site offering greater flexibility of use.</p>	Main Site: See Option 1

Buddies Children's Centre	<p>Linked Site</p> <p>Delivering early help services for families.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>	<p>Outreach Venue</p> <p>Due to the outcome of the second phase of the consultation and further analysis of deprivation levels for the 0 to 19 year old population specifically in the 0-10% level of disadvantage on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).</p>
Hunni Bee Children's Centre	<p>Outreach Venue</p> <p>It is proposed that space occupied by Hunni Bee Children's Centre is transferred back to the school with an agreement to use the building to deliver early help services for families on site on an outreach basis.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>	<p>Outreach Venue: See Option 1</p>
Rising Stars Children's Centre	<p>Outreach Venue</p> <p>It is proposed that space occupied by Rising Stars Children's Centre is transferred back to the school with an agreement to use the building to deliver early help services for families on site on an outreach basis.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>	<p>Linked Site</p> <p>Due to the outcome of the second phase of the consultation and further analysis of deprivation levels for the 0 to 19 year old population specifically in the 0-10% level of disadvantage on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) it is proposed that Rising Stars becomes the linked site for this area.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>
Dodworth and Gilroyd Children's Centre	<p>It is proposed the site of Dodworth and Gilroyd Children's Centre is closed and services delivered within other community venues within the area on an outreach basis.</p>	<p>See Option 1.</p>



<b>North Area Council</b>		
	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>
Secret Garden Children's Centre	<p>Main Site</p> <p>Delivering early help services for families including nursery provision for two, three and four year olds due to a high level of need in the area, low levels of education and childcare in the area and a purpose- built site offering greater flexibility of use.</p>	Main Site: see Option 1
Darton Children's Centre	<p>Outreach Venue</p> <p>It is proposed the Darton site continues to be used as an outreach venue for the delivery of early help services for families.</p>	Outreach Venue: see Option 1
Wilthorpe Children's Centre	<p>Outreach Venue</p> <p>It is proposed that the building occupied by the Wilthorpe Children's Centre is transferred back to the school with an agreement to use the buildings to deliver early help services for families on site on an outreach basis.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>	Outreach Venue: See Option 1

<b>North East Area Council</b>		
	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>
Milefield Children's Centre	<p>Main Site</p> <p>Delivering early help services for families including nursery provision for two, three and four year olds due to a high level of need in the area, low levels of education and childcare in the area.</p>	Main Site: see Option 1
Lundwood and Monk Bretton Children's Centre	<p>Linked Site</p> <p>Delivering early help services for families.</p>	Linked Site: see Option 1
Royston Children's Centre	<p>Outreach Venue</p> <p>It is proposed that some space within Royston Children's Centre is kept</p>	Outreach Venue: See Option 1

		<p>with an agreement to use the building to deliver early help services for families on site on an outreach basis.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>	
Buttercup Centre	Children's	<p><b>Outreach Venue</b></p> <p>It is proposed the space occupied by Buttercup Children's Centre is transferred back to the school with an agreement to use the building to deliver early help services for families' onsite on an outreach basis.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>	Outreach Venue: See Option 1

<b>South and Penistone Area Council</b>			
	<b>Option 1</b>		<b>Option 2</b>
Darfield Children's Centre	<p><b>Main Site</b></p> <p>Delivering early help services for families including nursery provision for two, three and four year olds due to low levels of education and childcare in the area and a purpose built, standalone site offering greater flexibility of use.</p>		Main Site: see Option 1
Jump Children's Centre	<p><b>Linked site</b></p> <p>Delivering early help services for families.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>		Linked Site: see Option 1
Kings Oak Children's Centre	<p><b>Outreach Site</b></p> <p>It is proposed the space occupied by the Kings Oak Children's Centre is transferred back to the school with an agreement to use the building to deliver early help services for families on site on an outreach basis.</p>		<p><b>Linked Site</b></p> <p>Due to the outcome of the second phase of the consultation and further analysis of deprivation levels for the 0 to 19 year old population specifically in the 0-10% level of disadvantage on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) it is proposed that Kings Oak becomes a second linked site for this area.</p>

	The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.	The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.
Hoyland Common Children's Centre	<p>Outreach Venue</p> <p>It is proposed the building occupied by the current Hoyland Common Children's Centre is kept to deliver early help services for families on site on an outreach basis.</p> <p>The council will stop delivering nursery provision due to access to other provision in the area, run by the private and voluntary sector.</p>	Outreach Venue: see Option 1
Penistone Children's Centre	<p>Outreach Venue</p> <p>It is proposed the Penistone site continues to be used with an agreement to use the building to deliver early help services for families, on an outreach basis.</p>	Outreach Venue: see Option 1

<b>Dearne Area Council</b>		
	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>
Embankment	<p>Main Site</p> <p>Delivering early help services for families including nursery provision for two, three and four year olds due to a high level of need in the area, low levels of education and childcare in the area and a purpose- built site offering greater flexibility of use.</p>	Main Site: see Option 1
Dearne	<p>Linked Site</p> <p>Delivering early help services for families including nursery provision for two, three and four year olds due to a high level of need in the area, low levels of education and childcare in the area and a purpose built site offering greater flexibility of use.</p>	Linked Site: see Option 1

## **6.0. Implications for Local People and Service Users**

Current users of Children's Centres will continue to be able access services based on assessed need in the community in a Family Centre main, linked or outreach site or in a community venue and in the home where appropriate under the proposed model.

Families, children and young people will continue to be able to have a voice and influence on service priorities and delivery as part of the proposed model. Children's Centres are statutorily required to establish governance arrangements through the provision of local Advisory Boards. It is proposed that in order to recognise the wider age range of Family Centres these will be extended to include relevant stakeholders whilst ensuring that families continue to be empowered to take an active part in the decision making process and shape local family services in their area.

Where the council changes the early education and childcare service which it provides or if it ceases to directly deliver childcare families will be supported to find alternative provision which meets their needs. Centre staff will work closely with the Families Information Services to provide a personalised service to ensure that any transition is smooth for children and the families. The council is committed to ensuring that all children have the best start in life and have access to high quality early education and care and currently the rate of good and outstanding provision in Barnsley is above national (85%) averages at 88%.

## **7.0. Financial Implications**

The current service delivery model is not sustainable in the current financial climate and the childcare provision currently delivered by the council through Children's Centres operates at a loss. The scale of the saving will inevitably have a significant impact on the number of staff in the new staffing structures and it may result in a reduction of up to 100 posts. Currently there are an increasing number of vacant posts and the affect on staff will be mitigated as far as is possible.

As part of Future Council requirements the Early Start and Families service has been tasked with making KLOE savings of £2.5 million to be effective from 1 April 2016 over a 2 year phased basis. Savings of £500,000 have been achieved through the reconfiguration of services relating to early years and childcare and the Families Information Service effective from April 2015. The direct financial implications arising from this report will be subject to consultation with staff and unions and will be dependent on the preferred model approved. Associated financial costs arising from the development of an action plan which builds on the strengths and progress made so far will be addressed within a further report.

## **8.0. Employee Implications**

Employees have been consulted and briefed on the proposals from October 2014 to date. There has been ongoing engagement with trade unions throughout the development of the proposed model and the period of public statutory consultation. In addition weekly opportunities have been established for staff to raise concerns and questions which are then addressed by senior managers within the service in conjunction with Human Resources and Legal. This has resulted in a weekly Frequently Asked Questions document which is updated and circulated to ensure that staff have the most up to date and comprehensive information in a timely way. This has also been provided to trade unions in order to facilitate support to their members.

A reconfiguration of this size will inevitably have implications for staff employed within the affected services. The review of staff structures will be undertaken in full consultation with staff and trade unions and will be in accordance with recognised council policies and procedures for Managing Change. This will include employees affected by any proposed transfer of services to the council and this would be undertaken in accordance with Human Resources and Legal requirements. Subject to council decision on the proposals set out in this report, consultation on any staffing review will commence in October 2015, with changes implemented fully in April 2016. The number of posts and staff affected can only be accurately determined once specific

staffing structure proposals are developed which will be the subject of a further report regarding the impact of the reconfiguration which will detail the numbers of staff affected, by role.

## **9.0. Communications Implications**

A Communications and Consultation Plan was developed to address the communication implications of the proposals, launch and implementation of the statutory consultation to ensure key stakeholders were provided with information and given opportunities to respond. This included key stakeholder groups including parents, expectant parents and carers, employees, advisory boards, statutory partners, early year's providers, partners who share current centre sites, local communities, local elected members, local MPs and trade unions.

## **10.0. Consultations**

The council has completed a full statutory consultation in relation to the proposed changes to the Children's Centre programme under Section 5D of the Childcare Act 2006. A full analysis of the findings from the consultation is at Appendix 1. The consultation was widely publicised through the local press, posters in community buildings and Children's Centres, through the council's website, intranet, Facebook, Twitter, Open Door magazine, the Families Information Service and through In Brief.

In addition families have been supported and given the opportunity to shape the proposals through an offer of one to one meetings and through groups. Public petitions have also been submitted to the council and meetings with the public have been facilitated on request with the Cabinet Spokesperson and Executive Director for the People directorate.

The council received 830 responses to phase 1 of the consultation and 1520 responses were received in phase 2 giving a total of 2350 responses in total. One petition has been formally received and submitted to council from Rising Stars Children's Centre with approximately 1700 signatures along with a submission from Unison providing feedback from their own survey which had 70 responses. The overall conclusion from the statutory consultation can be summarised as follows

- Support for the proposal that Family Centres provide a range of early help services for families with children pre birth to 19 years (25 years old if the young person has a disability)
- Services to include support with physical and emotional health, practical advice on keeping children safe, developing social networks through groups, support with education and learning, parenting behaviours, positive family routines, home and money, work, training and volunteering
- Support for the proposal that Family Centres are based in areas where there is a high level of need with the continuation of some services for all families delivered in partnership with health and education
- Support for the proposed location of Family Centres (main, linked and outreach sites) to take into account the current level of community assets and buildings in an area
- Families to continue to be able to access services where it meets their needs across communities in a range of buildings and areas so that families can access services in a place that makes sense to them
- There was not a clear majority supporting the proposal to have one main Family Centre in each of the Area Councils with Penistone served by a main site in the South
- The majority did not support the proposal for the council to cease direct delivery of childcare provision
- The majority supported the council's proposal to continue to work in partnership with the

maintained, private and voluntary sector to continue to develop or create childcare places in areas where the council will no longer provide them

- Respondents have stated that they are likely to access services in all Area Councils with some respondents likely to access in more than one area

#### 11.0. **Key Policy Considerations**

During the second phase of the statutory consultation the government announced the intention to introduce legislation through a Childcare Bill to increase funded childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours per week. In addition, the government has committed to increasing the average childcare funding rates paid to providers (the hourly rate currently paid with a Department for Education review to commence in the summer 2015 including a proposed consultation of Children's Centre services in the Autumn 2015).

The current timetable of the council's proposals will continue as planned for implementation from April 2016. The increase to 30 hours of childcare for working parents is compatible with the council's duty to ensure sufficient childcare is available through the private, voluntary and maintained sector. The position will be closely monitored and providers supported to expand or create new provision to meet any additional demand. The current average vacancy rate as at June 2015 is 38% and this will be considered as part of any future developments to ensure that resources are targeted appropriately.

The council will take a full part in the government's planned review and consultation for the autumn and will actively encourage stakeholders, partners and families to take part. The outcome of this consultation will be considered and may shape future delivery however the savings targets remain in place to be achieved by April 2016 and therefore the council needs to ensure that the model is sufficiently flexible in order to respond to future priorities as required. It remains important to ensure services continue to be accessible for families across Barnsley. Whilst the network of buildings may change the council will ensure that services are able to be flexed and shaped according to need.

#### 12.0. **Tackling Health Inequalities**

The proposals actively address health inequalities through integrated early help services delivered in partnership with health.

#### 13.0. **Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act (2006)**

There are no direct implications as result of this report.

#### 14.0. **Consideration of Risks**

There has been a full consideration of risks posed by the proposals as set out at Appendix 5.

#### 15.0. **Health and Safety Implications**

There are no direct implications as result of this report.

#### 16.0. **Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights**

The proposal is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

#### 17.0. **Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The proposals actively support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken as set out at Appendix 6.

As part of the assessment it has been established that the group that is most likely to be affected by the proposals are women and working parents with young children that currently use childcare within Children's Centres due to the proposal that the council will cease to directly

childcare in some areas and provide sessional early education and childcare for 2, 3 and 4 year olds on a sessional term time only basis where there is a need to do so. This is mitigated by there being sufficient alternative provision within the private, voluntary and maintained sector with a current borough wide average vacancy rate of 38% and a full assessment of vacancy rates and current sufficiency data has been assessed which demonstrates this.

The council must ensure that there is sufficient high quality childcare across the borough and it provides support to the private, voluntary and maintained sector to start up childcare businesses or expand in areas where there is not enough provision to meet demand. This supports the local economy whilst meeting statutory guidance that council's should only provide childcare where the private and voluntary sector fails to do so.

The council, as part of its statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare provides support and incentives to the private, voluntary and maintained sector to start up childcare businesses or expand in areas of the borough that have insufficient provision to meet future demand. This supports the local economy whilst meeting statutory guidance that the council should only deliver childcare where the private, voluntary and maintained sector fails to do so.

Where the council changes the early education and childcare service which it provides or if it ceases to directly deliver childcare families will be supported to find alternative provision which meets their needs. Centre staff will work closely with the Families Information Services to provide a personalised service to ensure that any transition is smooth for children and the families. The council is committed to ensuring that all children have the best start in life and have access to high quality early education and care and currently the rate of good and outstanding provision in Barnsley is above national (85%) averages at 88%.

The council will monitor the impact of the proposal on a centre level basis and collectively across the borough through the provision of data and intelligence gathered at a community level. This will be scrutinised and analysed by senior managers within the programme on monthly basis but will also respond to individual incidents/impacts as and when required.

The provision of customer feedback including that gathered through the Families Information Service will also be used to monitor and review impact.

## **18.0. Reduction of Crime and Disorder**

The proposed model will further support families and communities through the provision of early help strengthening community cohesion.

## **19.0. Conservation of Biodiversity**

There are no implications as a result of this report.

## **20.0. Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations**

**Main and linked sites:** open during core hours (this may vary depending on the needs of the community) and service users will be able to access on a drop-in, adhoc basis during opening hours

**Outreach sites and community venues:** will operate groups and services on a planned and timetable basis. Families seeking information, advice and guidance and support outside these times will be able to access alternative main or linked Family Centre sites, telephone consultation or if appropriate their allocated Family Support Worker. The Families Information Service is also available to support and assist.

## **21.0. List of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Statutory Consultation

Appendix 2: Deprivation levels

Appendix 3: Quality and Sufficiency of Early Education and Care

Appendix 4: Current use of Community Buildings

Appendix 5: Consideration of Risks

Appendix 6: Equalities Impact Assessment

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