

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT OF:** Executive Director (Children's Services)

**TITLE:** Proposed re-location of Wombwell and Cudworth Family Centre sites following public consultations

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>23 March 2022</b>
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	<b>Children's Services</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Public or Private</b>	<b>Public</b>

### **Purpose of report**

To share the results of the public consultation and seek approval to re-locate two Family Centre sites

### **Council Plan priority**

Learning Barnsley – People have access to Early Help & support

### **Recommendations**

#### **That Cabinet:-**

- 1. Notes the contents of the public consultation**
- 2. Agree to the proposals to re-locate two family centre sites in the Cudworth and Wombwell Wards as soon as practicable, with suitable alternative arrangements being made to ensure that the most vulnerable families continue to be able to access early help services within their locality**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The Early Start and Families Service operate a network of Family Centres across the borough of Barnsley. This includes 5 main sites, 5 linked sites and 8 outreach and community venues.
- 1.2** During the initial wave of the COVID 19 Pandemic a number of linked and

outreach family centres venues which are located on school premises were made available for schools to utilise and enable them to operate safely by providing more space for the schools to deliver education to school age children. During this time period during government restrictions some group provision had to cease or was delivered either virtually or on a reduced number basis. In the main from September 2021 the majority of sites ceased to be utilised by schools as government guidance enabled them to recommence delivery of services within COVID restrictions.

### 1.3 Wombwell Family Centre

1.3.1 In September 2021 further discussions were held with the school and with agreement from the service Wombwell Family Centre continued to be utilised by Kings Oak Primary School to support educational recovery and the Local Authority agreed on an informal basis that the school could continue to utilise the space pending recovery and re-instigation of the full service offer.

1.3.2 Kings Oak Primary school have subsequently enquired as to whether this could be made a permanent arrangement with the space currently occupied by the family centre being leased/or a license being granted to use the space on a long-term basis to the school.

1.3.3 There have been ongoing access issues for families and some service providers due to the amount of congestion, traffic relating to housing development adjacent to the site and parking restrictions/road safety concerns in the immediate vicinity which had resulted in some services withdrawing their delivery from this site prior to the Pandemic due to the impact on accessibility (e.g. midwifery clinic withdrawn due to impact on delivery of community based health services from this site).

1.3.4 This presents an opportunity to review whether the services delivered by the linked Family Centre could be delivered more effectively on an alternative site. Discussions took place with colleagues from Assets, Early Start and Youth Services with a view to better utilising space in the Wombwell I Know I Can (IKIC) building, as a new permanent base for Wombwell Family Centre. This would allow joined up service delivery and ensure building use is increased and at the same time free up space within the school for educational recovery.

1.3.5 A consultation survey was undertaken to obtain the views of current Family Centre users, local members and the wider Wombwell Community in relation to moving the facility from Kings Oak Primary to the Wombwell IKIC building. The results are outlined below and can be seen in detail at Appendix 1.

### 1.4 Cudworth Family Centre

1.4.1 Following a 2015/16 review of Family Centre provision in Barnsley, childcare provision was withdrawn from the Cudworth Family centre site and instead the centre changed to deliver an activity only facility on a timetabled basis. This continued until the Pandemic temporarily closed the facility in March 2020 as part of the national Covid lockdown where services at Cudworth were either cancelled or delivered through virtual means.

- 1.4.2 As Government guidance and our response to the Pandemic permitted our service to expand our delivery of face-to-face activities a health and safety assessment was undertaken at Cudworth Family Centre located at Birkwood Primary School, which identified the need for some remedial work to be undertaken at the family centre site before service delivery could be resumed.
- 1.4.3 In addition, the Council is developing plans to expand Birkwood Primary School to provide an additional 140 primary school places in Cudworth through expansion of the PAN from 40 to 60. This is needed to meet the projected demand for school places following updated birth data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and local housing developments.
- 1.4.4 This assessment coincided with the early feasibility study undertaken by the Council's Property Team, where it was suggested that the simplest and most cost-effective way to provide the additional classroom spaces in Foundation Stage would be to utilise existing spaces within the existing school building, including the Family Centre.
- 1.4.5 Discussions took place with colleagues from Assets, Early Start and Youth Services with a view to utilising unused space in the Cudworth I Know I Can (IKIC) building, adjacent to Dorothy Hyman Sports Centre, as a new permanent base for the Family Centre. This would allow joined up service delivery and ensure building use is increased and at the same time free up space within the school building for expansion.
- 1.4.6 A consultation survey was undertaken to obtain the views of current Family Centre users, local members and the wider Cudworth Community in relation to moving the facility from Birkwood Primary to the IKIC building. The results are outlined below in Section 4 and can be seen in detail at Appendix 2.
- 1.5 Outcomes of the Public consultations for Cudworth and Wombwell
- 1.5.1 The consultations took place between Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The consultation was open to residents within Cudworth and Wombwell Wards.
- 1.5.2 The consultation was promoted throughout December and January on the Family Information Service website and through Family centre and Families Information Service social media channels. Family centre outreach staff visited various community groups and venues within Wombwell and Cudworth where families attend with paper copies to increase uptake. This was to ensure that geographical areas of the Wombwell and Cudworth Wards were covered. Local businesses and all primary schools were also asked to promote the consultation and were given paper copies and electronic links, as were larger supermarkets. Additionally, libraries, 0 to 19 Public Health Nursing Service and housing champions also promoted the consultation and were provided with paper copies and electronic links.
- 1.5.3 Wombwell - 149 residents completed consultations of which 22 were completed online and 127 were paper copies inputted online by Outreach Staff.

- 1.5.4 Cudworth – 63 residents completed consultations, of which 33 were completed online and 30 were paper copies inputted online by Outreach staff.
- 1.5.6 Out of the 212 consultations completed across both areas 13 respondents did not support the proposed moves to the IKIC centres (6%) whilst 94% supported the proposal. Wombwell received 11 objections equating to 7% of respondents, however of these 5 respondents fed back that they would be happy to access Family Centre Services in other community venues within the Wombwell area. Cudworth received 1 objection equating to 1.59% of respondents. 2 respondents stated that they would not access services at the Cudworth IKIC building but one of these did state that they are able to access services across the borough at other sites as they have access to personal transport.
- 1.5.7 The main reasons in relation to objections related to:
- lack of outdoor space
  - older children should be left to have their own space
  - too far from where they currently live
  - the potential impact on parking
- 1.5.8 Other community venues highlighted within the consultation for future or ongoing delivery of services included community centres, churches, libraries, doctors surgeries, and schools.
- 1.5.9 Whilst there was a mixed response to the question relating to whether respondents had previously used the services there was overwhelming support from respondents who had previously not accessed services for the move to the IKIC sites. For Wombwell 96% of respondents and for Cudworth 94% stated that the new site would be more accessible.
- 1.5.10 Key themes included in the feedback from families regarding the proposed moves and services are as follows:
- Support for delivery of services through Family Centres within both communities
  - Majority of respondents supportive of more centralized locations
  - Majority of respondents felt parking and transport would be easier at the new sites
  - Overall support for a full 0-19 offer for families in the communities
  - Positive feedback about the efforts of Family Centre Staff during the pandemic to meet needs of families despite restrictions
  - Some support for the service to not be linked to a particular school site
- 1.5.11 Factors to consider moving forward include:
- Planning services in buildings and locations with access to outside areas which are fit for purpose
  - Ensuring that the services continue to be delivered in a variety of venues across the communities to maximize accessibility for all residents

- Requests for improving access to contact with health professions in person from some respondents

1.5.12 In summary there is overwhelming support for the move to the new IKIC Centre from residents; however, the service will ensure that other suitable venues in Cudworth and Wombwell continue to be used for service delivery. Careful consideration also needs to be given to layout within the IKIC centre to ensure it meets younger family's needs and if the outside area can be developed or better use of local parks and open spaces can be maximized. The service will also continue to work closely with health professionals and other key partners to promote access to services, particularly in response to the new family hub framework government guidance.

## **2. PROPOSAL**

2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approve the proposal for Kings Oak Primary School to continue to utilise the current Family Centre space on the school site for educational purposes and to re-locate Wombwell Family Centre into the existing I Know I Can Targeted Youth Support Site at the Wombwell Centre, Barnsley Road, Wombwell, Barnsley, with appropriate license/lease or Service Level agreements being put into place with the school.

2.2 It is proposed to re-locate Cudworth Family Centre in the existing I Know I Can Targeted Youth Support Site adjacent to Dorothy Hyman Sport Centre at Snydale Road, Cudworth, Barnsley. In doing this, the vacated space would be remodelled to provide the Nursery provision for Birkwood Primary on a permanent basis as part of the council's future expansion plans for the school.

## **3.0 IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **3.1 Financial and Risk**

3.1.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director Finance (S151 Officer) and the following summarises the financial implications of the proposals outlined in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 above.

3.1.2 The cost of relocating Wombwell Family Centre will be minimal, with new signage, communication and marketing and removal costs being the major expense. The service will utilise the existing layout and space and provision within the building. An indicative budget of £8K has been identified for this purpose and will be funded from existing early start & family centres revenue budgets. It should be noted that as Kings Oak is a PFI school by taking on this extra space there may be a need to process a contract variation with the PFI contractor to undertake Soft & Hard FM duties on the revised space which will increase the cost of the unitary charge to the authority. However as in previous agreements this will be a cost pass through to the school and is broadly in line with current agreements regarding charging the school for extra utility usage for their current extra occupation of space. A figure cannot be calculated on this currently as it would need to be provided and agreed with the contractor.

- 3.1.3 The Council's property team have developed an outline plan for remodelling the Cudworth IKIC building to provide the spaces needed for the Family Centre and therefore facilitate the Nursery provision for Birkwood Primary school. This includes providing a new accessible entrance, partitioning works, additional toilet facilities, replacement windows and new fire doors and utility separation works, to allow the youth facilities and family centre to run independently of each other. These costs are currently estimated at £40k, but this would be offset with the greater flexibility afforded at Birkwood Primary without the Family Centre on site, as the cost to refurbish the family centre space is significantly less than the cost of new build.
- 3.1.4 As the relocation of Cudworth Family Centre facilitates the Birkwood expansion scheme, to provide much needed additional school places, the £40k remodelling cost has been incorporated in the Birkwood primary school expansion scheme – which is been funded through the Basic Need Capital Grant. Current high level estimated costs for the Birkwood expansion are estimated to be around £2.5m. The business case on the expansion scheme has been submitted to the Capital Oversight Board pending detailed report to Cabinet for approval.
- 3.1.5 It is proposed to continue to deliver services across a number of other community venues and resources such as local libraries and community centres. This will reduce any potential risk of a reduction in accessibility to services by the movement of the provision as it will continue to be available across the community. e.g., for instance, delivery of services within the Community centre which would support the families resident in the Crown estate area who are currently closest in proximity to the Birkwood site.

## **3.2 Legal**

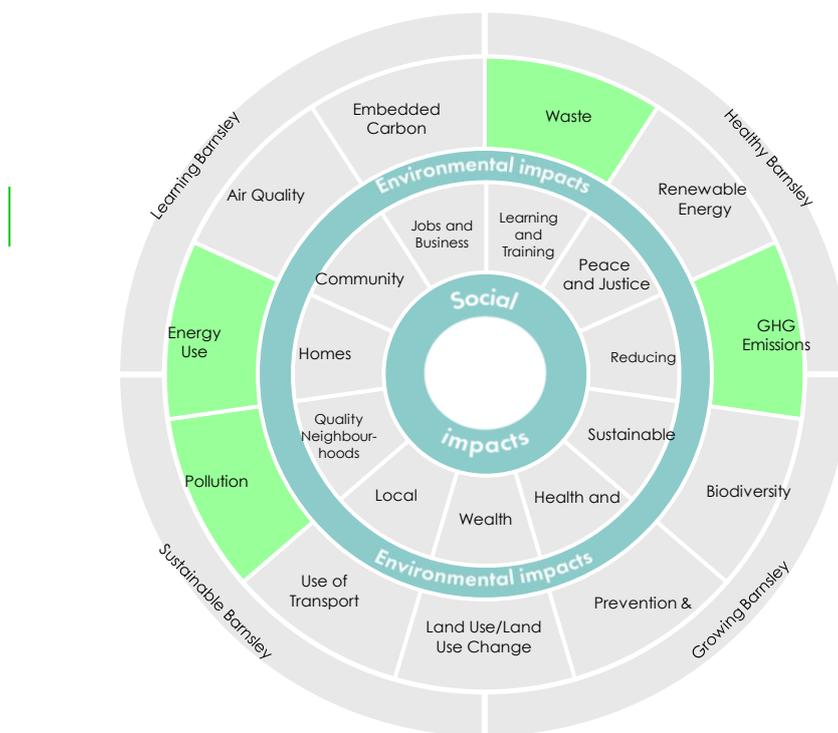
- 3.2.1 As we are not proposing to dispose of the current family centre buildings, and it can be demonstrated that the spaces will be utilised for the benefits of children and young people through delivery of education, there are no envisaged Sure Start Capital Grant clawback issues. In the case of Kings Oak Primary, the service will ensure that appropriate lease/license agreements are in place working with our Estates Service which will protect the council's assets and set out expectations in relation to partnership working to deliver services within the affected communities. Should the site convert to an Academy in future then consideration would be given to utilising a 125 year lease back arrangement to protect the council asset and retain rights to access this space with any Multi Academy Trust. This has been utilised previously where Family Centres are co-located on school sites which have been subject to academisation.
- 3.2.2 In relation to Birkwood the space would be re-purposed permanently to education space and therefore no agreement would be required in this instance as this school is a maintained school and the asset is retained by the Council. The service will continue to work in partnership with the leadership team and governing body of the school to offer services in non-classroom space to families who attend the school where this is deemed appropriate or through other community venues within close proximity.

### 3.3 Equality

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken (*Please see Appendix 3*) it has not been determined that there are any negative implications as a result of these proposals as services are not being reduced as a result and consideration has been given to any barriers to accessing services with proactive approaches being adopted to address these.

### 3.4 Sustainability

Decision-making wheel completed:



There are no negative impacts. It is envisaged that this will lead to a reduction in energy used, carbon emissions and the volume of waste produced.

### 3.5 Employee

Six employees from the Early Start and Families Service are contractually based at Wombwell Family Centre, consultation with these staff members will be undertaken in respect of co-locating at the new family centre site. It is envisaged that impact upon staff in respect of travel implications will be minimal as the distance from the current site to the new site is less than one mile and proposed sites are on bus routes.

There are no employee implications for the Cudworth site as staff are not based here

permanently and travel to various community locations to deliver groups which will continue under revised arrangements.

### **3.6 Communications**

We will work with our corporate communication team to develop a communications plan to share the changes with partner agencies and members of the public.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

In addition to the public consultation on the proposals, Finance have been consulted in relation to the implications and capital requirements associated with the Birkwood/Cudworth IKIC Scheme and this has been covered in detail in a separate cabinet report.

Human Resources and Trade Unions have been consulted in relation to the change of contractual base for the small number of staff affected, and no concerns have been raised.

Facilities Management have been consulted in relation to the transfer of running costs/maintenance allocations from the two affected existing Family centre sites to the two IKIC buildings. Consideration has been given to any implications on planned maintenance and running costs for the IKIC buildings and these can be contained within existing planned budgets.

Elected members in both areas were consulted during development of proposals and gave valuable insight into the planning of the public consultations in both Cudworth and Wombwell. Members were supportive of the continuation of a flexible delivery model which will ensure that the most vulnerable families still continue to be offered Early Help services in a location that is accessible and makes sense to them.

Proposals have also been shared with colleagues who are leading on Smart Working developments within the Council to ensure that the proposed changes are considered and factored into the planning around this priority.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

Consideration has been given to continuing to operate from our existing family centre site at Cudworth, however it is felt that this would significantly impact on the ability of the Council to meet its statutory duty in relation to provision of sufficient school places through the proposed expansion of the Birkwood site. The provision of school places in the right areas to meet demand often means there are no alternative approaches, which is the case for schools in Cudworth.

Other school sites are unable to deliver the required number of additional places (120) and therefore this presents the only viable option in order to ensure that school places are delivered and family centre services are not adversely affected and are able to continue. Additionally, the feedback from

the consultation provides resounding support for the proposal to relocate to the IKIC centre.

In relation to Wombwell the Family Centre could continue to operate on the site of Kings Oak Primary, however it is felt that due to the barriers to some families accessing services on this site this would provide a less favourable and less accessible service offer in this area. Additionally, the feedback from the consultation provides significant majority support for the relocation to the IKIC centre.

Other sites were considered as part of consultations with Council Assets and Facilities Management teams and there were no other sites which could easily be adapted at such a low cost and be used for the required purpose on a dedicated basis. The service already delivers activities and groups in a range of community buildings and this will continue to be the case in order to ensure that the right services are delivered in the right place at the right time as part of the Councils 2030 priority to deliver early help.

A further option may have been to close the buildings and continue to deliver the services on a dispersed basis, however there is a strong appetite for retention of dedicated space for Family Centre services and there is a high risk that this would be perceived as a removal of services from these two communities if there was a lack of dedicated space for the Family Centre.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is felt that the recommended approach will enable schools to effectively respond to educational needs and the demands for school places whilst continuing to deal with the impact of the Pandemic on educational outcomes. This proposal also ensures that the Council is maximising the use of community buildings and assets in support of the *Growing Barnsley* objective of the Council Plan and our vision for Barnsley as a *Place of Possibilities*. The approach will also further enhance multi-agency working and early help delivery across the 0-19 (25 years with SEND) age range.

## **7. GLOSSARY**

Not applicable

## **8. LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Financial Implications  
Appendix 1: Wombwell Family Centre Consultation Findings  
Appendix 2: Cudworth Family Centre Consultation Findings  
Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email [governance@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:governance@barnsley.gov.uk) so that appropriate arrangements can be made

**10. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Financial consultation &amp; sign off</b>	<i>Joshua Amahwe (04/03/2022)</i>
<b>Legal consultation &amp; sign off</b>	<i>Jason Field 2/3/22</i>

**Report Author: Claire Gilmore**

**Post: Head of Service – Early Start, Prevention and Sufficiency**