



CABINET – 9TH JANUARY 2018

EARLY HELP REVIEW

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to consult on proposed changes to the Early Help Service and the further investigation of options for redesigning the Service to support children and their families more holistically through a 0-19 years offer. It is proposed that the new offer will incorporate a revised delivery model operating from 15 Family Wellbeing Centres across the County.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended:
 - a) That consultation on a revised delivery model for the Early Help Service including reducing the number of service delivery buildings from 40 to 15 be approved;
 - b) That the Director be requested to undertake further work to:
 - (i) develop the detail of the new delivery model and ascertain the potential effect of the proposed service changes on users;
 - (ii) investigate alternative uses for the re-designation of 25 of the 40 Early Help Service delivery buildings including 24 of the existing Children's Centres;
 - c) That a further report on the outcome of consultation and setting out final proposals for a new Early Help Service delivery model be submitted to the Cabinet in Summer 2018.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) requires a saving of £1.5m in 2019/20 through a service review of Early Help. Part of the current Early Help offer, Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF), has received funding from the Department for Communities and Families and Local Government (DCLG) via the

Troubled Families Programme. This will cease after 2019/20, reducing SLF funding by £2.3m. Combining the four existing elements of Early Help in a redesigned service offer would enable the £3.8m saving to be made.

4. It is a statutory requirement to consult on proposals in respect of the opening, change of use, or other major changes to the provision of Children's Centres. The views of service users and stakeholders will inform the outcome of the review and how Early Help is best delivered in the future.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. It is intended to hold a 12-week public consultation exercise from January to April 2018. A report will be provided to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee within this consultation period.
6. A further report on the results of the consultation will be submitted to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet in the summer of 2018.
7. If the decision is taken to apply the changes to the Service the new delivery model is expected to be operational in the spring of 2019.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. Sure Start Children's Centres were a Government-led initiative introduced in 2003 which committed to delivering 3,500 Children's Centres across the country by 2010.
9. As part of the County Council's Transformation Programme approved by the Cabinet in May 2014, the County Council's Early Help Services underwent a major review and remodelling to deliver £3.59m savings (28% of the Early Help budget) through the review of the Children's Centre Programme and Youth Services. This removed the majority of universal services leading to a targeted Early Help offer with a focus on vulnerable families. The proposed changes set out in this report continue to be based on a targeted approach.
10. SLF was restructured in 2015, delivering further savings of £800,000. The Youth Offending Service (YOS) was remodelled in 2014, delivering a further £500,000 savings.
11. Initial work on possible savings from the Children's Centre Service was undertaken in 2016 following recommendations from consultants, People Too. This report was commissioned as part of the Early Help and Prevention (EHAP) Implementation review, and the strategy arising from this was approved by the Cabinet in June 2016.

Resource Implications

12. Failure to achieve the agreed £1.5m savings will affect the deliverability of the MTFS. Services must be reduced accordingly in order for the Children and Family Services budget to be balanced.
13. The £3.8m savings represent 31% of the current Early Help budget of £12.4m per annum.
14. Children's Centre buildings were initially funded through capital grants awarded mainly by the Department for Education (DfE). If use of the Centres is changed within 25 years of the award, the grant may be subject to clawback, but if buildings are re-designated to Early Years provision that risk will be mitigated.
15. More detail on the current financial position and financial model is given in paragraphs 35 to 43 in Part B of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

16. As this is a matter which will affect most areas of the County, a copy of the report is being circulated to all members via the Members News in Brief Service.

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PART B

Background

Financial Context

17. The County Council has achieved significant savings over recent years but the Autumn Budget confirmed that austerity is to continue. This is likely to translate into further funding reductions for the County Council at a time of increasing demand on services arising from an ageing population and a large increase in school age children requiring services. Put simply this means that the Council's income will not keep pace with demands, a position exacerbated by being one of the lowest funded Councils. The Children and Families Service budget is projecting an overspend in the current year reflecting an increase in demand for services. The current MTFs includes a saving of £1.5million in 2019/20 for a review of early help services. In addition, the DCLG has recently indicated that its funding for Supporting Leicestershire Families will cease in 2019/20, which together with the loss of partner funding will leave a financial gap of £2.3m. The proposals in the report should be seen in this context.
18. Initial work on possible savings from the Children's Centre Service was undertaken in 2016, as described above, as part of the Early Help and Prevention (EHAP) Implementation review. The report by People Too was commissioned as part of this work and the strategy arising from this was approved by the Cabinet in June 2016. The EHAP project was then expanded in May 2017 to take a more strategic approach and to extend the review across all four Early Help Services, namely:-
- Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF)
 - Children's Centres
 - Youth Offending Service (YOS)
 - Early Help Information, Support and Assessment (EHISA).

Supporting Leicestershire Families

19. The Family Intervention Project began in 2011 (as support for Families with Complex Needs). Following the announcement of the Government's Troubled Families Programme in 2012, a pooled partnership budget was established to fund the supporting Leicestershire Families Programme. The Supporting Leicestershire Families pooled budget was made up of two elements: partnership contributions (two Clinical Commissioning Groups, seven District Councils, Leicestershire County Council, the Police and Public Health); and the Troubled Families Unit (TFU) attachment fees and Payment by Results (PBR) funding. The pooled budget is now supported by District Councils (total contribution £191k) and the Police and Crime Commissioner (total contribution £100K). The CCG funding was withdrawn fully in 2017/18
20. In 2012 research used to develop the SLF programme identified 3300 families who would require support. These families were identified on the basis that they

had a number of vulnerability or risk factors that required intervention but did not meet the thresholds to receive support from Social Care. SLF identifies families through a cluster of six headline issues; to be eligible each family must have at least two of the following :-

- i. Parents or children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- ii. Children who have not been attending school regularly
- iii. Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- iv. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness
- v. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- vi. Parents or children with a range of health problems.

21. The SLF programme has led to new ways of intervening and supporting families through a whole-family approach (i.e. taking account of every member of the household), supported by a dedicated single worker who is able to give 'hands on' practical support and be persistent, assertive and challenging in their approach. In 2016/17 SLF assisted 70% of families in the programme to make positive progress and reduced the need for further, more costly interventions. Proposals will therefore look to continue this highly successful whole-family approach. As at April 2017 SLF is in the top 5% of Local Authorities for being able to evidence outcomes for families either with sustained and significant improvement or gaining employment.
22. SLF services are delivered from 4 buildings across Leicestershire (as well as direct support to individuals in their homes) and in addition to these, SLF staff are co-located in district council buildings across the County. This co-location has allowed for improved problem solving, better information sharing, and has supported all partners working with those families in the programme to respond in more innovative ways to those normally prescribed, for example, holding off on eviction, dealing with rent arrears.
23. One element of the SLF work is the Listening Support Service (LSS), where Youth Workers engage with children and young people who have gone missing from home for a period. In 2016/17 the LSS held 456 return interviews, in collaboration with the multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Team (fulfilling the Ofsted requirement for the Council to do this within 72 hours of the young person's return home). Young people who need extra support are then referred to the appropriate services or are supported by a Youth Worker or Intensive Family Support Worker.
24. Data for 2016/17 shows that SLF had 4294 service users with 71% of those receiving the longer-term Intensive Family Support for approximately a year (3227 individuals), 17% receiving a youth work intervention (768 individuals), and 12% receiving a shorter period of family work (544 individuals). 40% of the families supported by SLF have children with Special Educational Needs and Disability issues.
25. SLF uses an assessment called the Family Star to measure outcomes. This focuses on ten areas such as emotional wellbeing, effective parenting,

progressing to work, and ensuring the safety of their children. The SLF Annual Report for 2015/2016 shows that in nine out of the ten assessed criteria, over 60% of families worked with have made positive progress. The programme accepts that not all issues can be eliminated, but rather require mitigation and better management so that families no longer need formal intervention.

Children's Centres

26. Introduced in 2003 under the Government led 'Sure Start' initiative, the County Council delivers targeted support and care to young children aged 0-5 and their families, with a particular focus on closing the achievement gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This support is undertaken via 36 Children's Centres across Leicestershire and complementary outreach services.

27. Children's Centre locality programmes are developed in line with the needs of the local community so no one programme is the same. In Leicestershire, services are delivered by:

- i. casework for families referred for one-to-one support in the home – this can be to support families with routines or behaviour, or to improve parenting;
- ii. through an extensive range of group work;
- iii. the 0-2yrs Pathway - intensive support for parents-to-be with additional support needs, right from the beginning of their parental journey (the antenatal stage) and through the first two years of the child's life.

There is also a variety of advice and signposting available through outreach support, plus an open group offer delivered by parents and volunteers.

28. The Children's Centre programme in Leicestershire has been successful, achieving 7 'Good' Ofsted judgements through its targeted offer, clear outcomes, and a successful 0-2yrs Pathway.

29. Partner organisations also deliver services from the Children's Centre buildings. Health visiting and midwifery services in particular are delivered in partnership with Children's Centre Services as part of the statutory 'Sure Start' offer.

30. In 2016/2017, 714 families were provided with intensive support. The two main issues that triggered parenting support related to domestic abuse or mental health within the family, 1326 children were supported on the 0-2yrs Pathway – relating to some of the most vulnerable very young children living in Leicestershire. This year (Q2 year to date), 224 of those children have had developmental tracking through the Pathway and of those, 88.6% are meeting or exceeding their developmental milestones. Last year 714 children received targeted one-to-one support from Family Outreach Workers and 86% of those children and families made positive progress (captured in Family Star assessments). In 2016/17 a total of 360 families attended parenting groups and overall 98% of parents reported a positive difference in their family's lives following intervention and support from the Children's Centre programme.

Youth Offending Service

31. The YOS current delivery model is focused on undertaking statutory work, managing pre-court outcomes (Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Caution) as well as post-court outcomes (Referral Orders, Youth Rehabilitation Orders and Detention and Training Orders and Section 90/91 custodial sentences). In addition, the YOS preventative offer, whilst not having a statutory requirement, supports the YOS Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on reducing First Time Entrants to the criminal justice system (FTE). The SLF has provided important support in reducing FTE through early intervention work with families and has enabled the YOS to provide a much more focused prevention offer in recent years.
32. The new Early Help model will seek to amalgamate the YOS preventative offer and retain a clearly focused delivery of YOS statutory work, thereby minimising the risk to the performance of the YOS in the future.
33. The YOS is viewed nationally as a high performing service and has been in that position for many years. The number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system has decreased by 13% over the last year. Reoffending by young people has reduced by 3% over the last year and the number of young people in custody has reduced by 0.05 per 1000 of the 10-17 population.

Early Help Information, Support and Assessment

34. EHISA works with First Response Children's Duty to process incoming referrals or requests for support. The service processes on average 400 Early Help referrals per month, matching needs to services which may include onward referral to non-County Council services. Since 2013 early help and social care have been providing seamless transition across the statutory threshold to ensure those families not needing formal social care involvement are given the support required to enable them to keep their families safe and thriving.
35. The service also provides brief intervention in parenting and behaviour management, and short-term evidence-based intervention through the national IAPT (Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies) programme for children and young people with low-level mental health difficulties. The SEND team within EHISA provide family support services, information and guidance assessment for early help short breaks, education advice services for SEND families, and activities such as supporting the Parent Carer Forum (a forum which is a parent-led formally constituted organisation and which supports co-production activities between the authority and communication with parents and carers etc. as required by the 2014 Children and Families Act).
36. In addition, the service undertakes some service wide activities such as coordination of Voice Work which is one of various quality assurance activities in the Department and provides a platform for ensuring services meet the expressed needs of those who use them.

Current Financial Position

37. The 2017/18 budget for Children and Family Early Help services is £12.4m, consisting of:

Budget Contributor		Value	% of total budget
Leicestershire County Council	Ongoing budget	£9.1m	76%
	17/18 one off contribution to SLF	£0.3m*	
Government grant aid funding	DCLG	£0.9m*	12%
	Other grants	£0.6m	
Partnership contributions (Districts and Boroughs, Police)	SLF	£0.5m*	6%
	Youth Offending Service	£0.3m	
County Council Children and Family Services reserves	SLF	£0.6m*	6%
	Youth Offending Service	£0.1m	
TOTAL BUDGET		£12.4m	100%

*Temporary SLF funding contributions = £2.3m

38. The Early Help costs identified above are operational delivery costs only. Business support costs have been removed from the above and are currently being reviewed separately as part of a wider departmental Business Support Review.

39. The Government has indicated that the DCLG Troubled Families Funding will not continue beyond 2020 which also puts partner funding for the programme at risk. Children and Family Services SLF reserves will also be fully utilised by that date; therefore it is assumed that the £2.3m external contributions will cease from 2019/20, significantly reducing the Council's Children's Early Help offer further.

Financial Model

40. In taking a strategic approach to the delivery of the current MTFS savings across the Early Help Service, the savings proposed now combine the following two savings lines within the 2017/18 – 2020/21 MTFS:-

- a. CF4 - Review of Children's Centres (£1m); and
- b. CF12 - Review of Early Help Services (£500k).

41. As part of this review the Service has modelled the impact of the current MTFS savings requirement alongside the reduction in SLF funding.

42. MTFS savings of £1.5m can be achieved through combining the four services into an integrated offer for 0-19 year-olds, reducing management costs and reducing the number of buildings from which the Council delivers services. Duplication across the four services would be significantly reduced, including minimising management costs and rationalising running costs by reducing the number of buildings from 40 to 15. This will have a minimal impact on frontline workers with an estimated reduction of 4% or approximately 8 FTE posts.
43. The further budget reduction linked to the loss of £2.3m SLF funding will unfortunately need to be found by reducing the number of frontline staff. It is considered that in order to achieve the £2.3m saving there will need to be a reduction in frontline staff of 29% - from 197 to 140 (in addition to the 4% above).
44. The savings model below is based on the £3.8m savings proposal:-

Budget reduction total = 31%

Savings overview - current budget £12.4m

	Staffing	Running Costs	Total
MTFS Saving £m	£0.8	£0.7	£1.5
SLF income/reserve £m	£2.3	£0	£2.3
Total Saving £m	£3.1	£0.7	£3.8

45. The modelling indicates that the reduction in frontline staff will equate to 290 fewer families receiving support at any one time. The implications of the changes for service delivery and associated risks are detailed in paragraphs xx to xx below.

Options Scoping

46. The aim of the options scoping exercise was to consider how the four Early Help service areas could be aligned to deliver a more strategic offer which was more cost-effective and would continue to target support to the most vulnerable families, thereby reducing the pressure on Social Care services. Several target operating models have been considered which demonstrated differing levels of integration:-
- 1) A proportional reduction of services across each service area - less integration with the four services operating separately on a lesser scale; it is considered that this would be the least efficient way of delivery with a higher potential for duplication across services.
 - 2) Part integration – this would include some separation of services to continue operating largely as they do at present with integration of other services. Whilst this was felt to be a good option to preserve the operating procedures and good practice in some areas it would not allow for fully holistic processes and whole-family working.
 - 3) Full integration –with all four services integrated and delivered under one operating model. This is the preferred option, as it would allow whole-family

working and integrated delivery on a more strategic basis with the least possible duplication across the service. The service user would gain appropriate support as would their family network around them providing a more holistic 'Family Wellbeing Service'.

47. It was clear that to achieve the £3.8m savings, changes to the building and staffing numbers associated with the service were needed. Building running costs are a far lower proportion of the overall budget than staffing, the total building running costs for 40 centres making up approximately 6% of the current total Early Help budget. However, removing buildings and associated running costs in turn reduces the number of frontline staff that will need to be removed.

Proposed New Model

48. The current Early Help model delivers targeted services as follows:-

- four separate services, each with its own management structure.
- three services (Children's Centres, YOS, and SLF) on a locality basis, but across different geographical areas throughout the County.
- provision from 40 different buildings; 36 Children's Centres and 4 SLF Family Centres (old Youth Centres).

49. The new proposed model would integrate the four existing areas together into a single 0-19 Family Wellbeing Service, providing a core age-related offer targeted at vulnerable children and their families, via whole-family working.

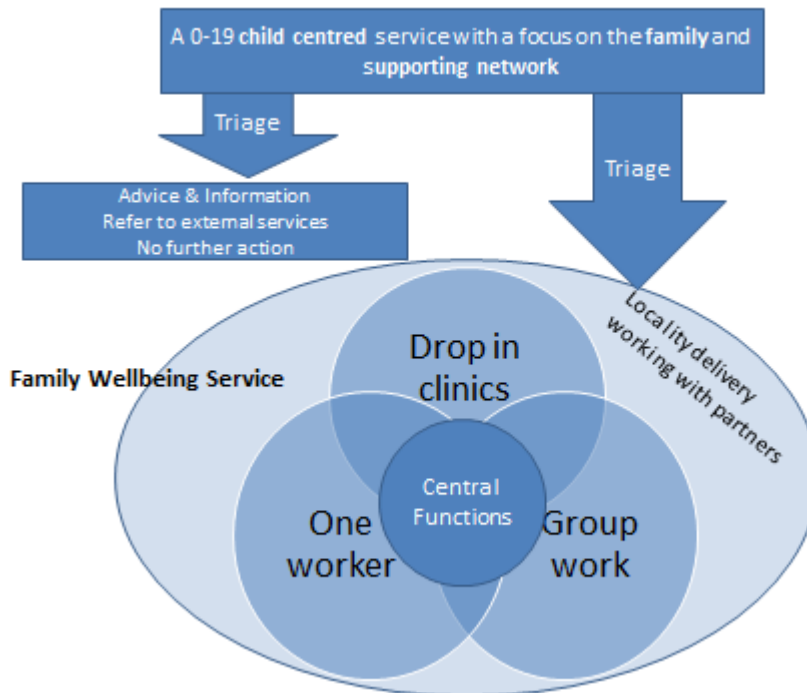
50. The new offer would continue to be run on a targeted basis. Moreover, a number of families (estimated to be around 290) who are currently receiving support would no longer qualify or would be referred to a waiting list.

51. The new model would be delivered across two operational locality areas in the County. The details are to be confirmed, but it would be based on demand for services, deprivation, anticipated caseloads, and alignment with key partners such as health services. These two areas would be used for internal operational purposes and would not affect service users.

52. The 0-19 Family Wellbeing Service would deliver a core and targeted offer from locality based teams operating from the 15 service buildings, but also incorporating flexible delivery in people's homes and from Community Centres etc. The locations of the proposed hubs are detailed in paragraphs 57 and 58. Families will be assessed to identify need and multi-skilled Early Help Workers will deliver group and one-to-one intervention proportionate to need.

53. The focus of this new service will be on support to the most vulnerable families with the aim of helping families to function effectively, ensuring that children are safe, and preventing escalation to statutory services which are already under significant pressure from rising demand.

Proposed 'Family Wellbeing Service' model



54. The proposed model will deliver a whole family service aimed at supporting families with significant needs and their family networks around them. Learning from four years of operating the SLF model has highlighted the benefits of supporting families holistically with their problems.

55. Families will be triaged and an assessment undertaken which will include analysis of family history, likely trajectory and then direct families to the most appropriate level of support, matching needs to services. This may include referral to external partners, the Family Wellbeing Service, other County Council services, provision of information and advice, coordination of multi-agency responses, this all being dependent on the identified needs.

56. Support would be offered through:-

- Group Work (user pathways)
- Individual support (1 worker per family)
- Drop-in clinics.

57. Criteria for receipt of Early Help services will need to be refined further to target only the most vulnerable families where issues are most likely to lead to poor outcomes for children if intervention is not put in place in a timely way. Critical scoping work highlights the key areas requiring support including domestic violence and mental health.

Proposed Service Delivery Locations

58. It is proposed that the new Family Wellbeing Service will be delivered by locality based teams through a 'hub and spoke' model, with 5 key public-facing Family Hub Buildings which will be located strategically across Leicestershire. These will be supported by 10 'spoke' buildings for service delivery. The remaining 25 buildings would be re-designated into alternative uses. Further work to verify the proposed locations is planned for the next phase of the project, for which permission is being sought. The preferred scenario is that current service buildings – Children's Centres and SLF centres – will be rebranded to deliver the new service offer.

59. Five Family 'Hub' buildings are proposed at the following locations, with preferred buildings for further consultation in brackets:-

- Loughborough: - (Preferred - Mountfields SLF Centre – Loughborough)
- Hinckley: - (Preferred - Hinckley East Children's/Contact Centre)
- Wigston:- (Preferred - Wigston Magna Children's Centre)
- Melton:- (Preferred - Venture House SLF Centre)
- Coalville:- (Preferred - Greenhills SLF centre)

Hub buildings will be key delivery points; it is proposed that they will have delivery space for group work and clinic sessions and will be locality team bases for staff.

60. Ten supporting Family 'spoke' buildings are proposed at the following locations, with preferred buildings for further consultation in brackets:-

- Earl Shilton:- (Preferred - Children's Centre)
- Shepshed:- (Preferred - Children's Centre)
- Thurmaston:- (Preferred - Children's Centre)
- Lutterworth:- (Preferred - Children's Centre)
- Market Harborough:- (Preferred - Children's Centre)
- Huncote:- (Preferred - Children's Centre)
- Castle Donnington:- (Preferred - Northern Parishes Children's Centre)
- Measham:- (Preferred - Children's Centre)
- Loughborough:- (Preferred - Loughborough Children's/Contact Centre)
- Coalville:- (Preferred - Coalville Children's/Contact Centre)

61. Spoke buildings are proposed to support the hubs and enable efficient and effective delivery to the most vulnerable families, and are linked to Social Care services in at least three locations where services are co-located (Children's/Contact centre). Current thinking is that they will provide a range of family services, some of which could be more targeted and specific to local needs. It is proposed that they will also have areas adapted to deliver group work and space for individual support.

62. Appendix A shows the proposed location of the preferred Family Hub and Spoke buildings on a map.
63. The 25 proposed buildings which will no longer be used by the service will, if possible, be re-designated. Landlords and schools will be consulted to consider the best possible uses for the buildings and a plan will be drawn up. It is proposed that where possible Children's Centre Buildings will be used to support Early Years functions for example nursery care and Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) for two and three year olds. This will mitigate the risk of potential clawback for capital costs by the DfE. Where this is not possible, future users may include schools or local community groups.
64. In addition to the locality-based teams it is proposed that there will be a centrally based unit at County Hall which will continue to work closely with First Response Children's Duty to manage the 'front door' to services. This approach supports social care services to offer an alternative to statutory intervention where safeguarding thresholds are not met, and helps to build the single view of the child which is so important in keeping children safe. This team will also support the infrastructure of the locality services, for example through the provision of quality assurance activity, practice development, policy and process.

Key Risks

65. Risk of future increased spending in social care:

- A recent report by the Local Government Association (LGA) highlighted an anticipated national funding gap of £2 billion emerging by 2020 in relation to expenditure on children's services. Research by the LGA highlighted that spending nationally on Early Intervention services had fallen by 40% since 2011, and that this has been a significant contribution to the increase in pressure on Local Authority statutory Children's Social Care services. Over the same 5-year period the LGA reported a 7% increase in local authority spending on Children's Social Care services. The County Council has reduced spending on Early Help Services by £4.4m (26%) over the last 3 years. Further reductions could therefore have a highly detrimental impact on social care spending in future years.
- One of the benefits linked to strong early help services is that support workers engage with vulnerable families as their problems emerge or before they begin to escalate to the point of needing formal intervention. Families frequently recognise the need to change and welcome early support. There has been a 61% reduction in step-ups from SLF to social care in the four years since the SLF programme commenced, and if thresholds are raised a significant proportion of families may require statutory social care intervention, having had no or little previous involvement from early help. Moreover, families are often reluctant to seek help at a later stage; their problems are more entrenched, and it becomes more difficult to reach positive outcomes for the family. National research indicates that late intervention services through social care prove more costly than early intervention services when dealing with individual families.

- There may well be increased numbers requiring support from Children's Social Care and this also poses a significant future risk of increasing financial pressures on the County Council.

Mitigation of risk - There would continue to be a robust initial assessment process to identify the most vulnerable families and ensure that they are prioritised for support, but it will be necessary to raise the threshold for support.

66. Risk of significant reduction in services for vulnerable families

- The SLF and Children's Centre services currently support 882 families (as at Quarter 1 of 2017/18). A 33% reduction in frontline staff could reduce the number of families supported by approximately 290 families at any one time. This may result in families receiving no service, increased waiting times, referral to other partner agencies, or increased workload for staff in Children's Social Care.

Mitigation of risk – The reduction in funding will clearly result in a reduction of services available to vulnerable families. As described above the threshold for eligibility to receive services will increase. This risk will need to be tolerated and managed through monitoring of these families and seeking alternative support from partner agencies or community groups where appropriate.

67. Risks around having fewer buildings:

- Having fewer buildings will mean that service users in many localities will have to travel further to access Early Help and there is a risk that this will be a significant barrier to many. It may also result in higher transport costs to the service of getting many users to their nearest centre.
- A number of partner agencies share space in Children's Centres and this may affect their ability to deliver services locally within communities.
- There is a risk around the potential DfE capital clawback as the Children's Centre buildings were developed largely through capital grants. This grant money could be subject to clawback if the asset created is removed from 0-5 use within 25 years. DfE guidance indicates that to avoid clawback, any centres that are re-designated into other uses must be utilised for 60% of their time to support children under the age of 5, and efforts will be made to consider transfers to other bodies to achieve this. The maximum possible cost to the Authority, if all 21 Children's Centres identified for re-designation were subject to clawback, would be in the region of £5,800,000, but as explained earlier and below that is not expected and can be significantly mitigated.
- Mitigation of risk – if building numbers are reduced this risk will need to be tolerated. Alternative uses for buildings not being used in the future will be

explored, prioritising future uses and working with children and young people in other venues. Future arrangements with partners where possible will also assist with the use of potential alternative venues and support to families who need access to local services.

Consultation

68. This report seeks approval for the Director of Children and Family Services to conduct a formal consultation process on the new service model and delivery buildings. A prime target audience for this consultation will be the current service users and their wider families/carers.

69. A further prime target audience will be service providers, including:

- Schools and Colleges
- Police
- District Councils and adjoining local authorities
- Early Years providers
- NHS / Health service providers
- Organisations co-delivering services from County Council venues
- Landlords of County Council venues

70. Other stakeholders directly or indirectly affected include:

- Parish Councils
- Internal services, i.e. Adults & Communities, Environment & Transport, Public Health
- Transport and creche providers
- Voluntary services, such as Homestart who deliver their services from Children's Centres.

71. As part of the consultation, a report setting out the proposals will be presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its comments will be reported back to the Cabinet.

72. It is expected that the public consultation process will last 12 weeks and be carried out between January and April of 2018 through a range of media including on-line and direct contact with service users.

73. Following the consultation process results will be carefully analysed and a final Full Business Case will be produced to take account of any comments. It is planned that this final version will be submitted to the Cabinet in the summer of 2018.

Conclusion

74. This report outlines the requirement to make savings of £1.5m in order to deliver the Council's MTFs and further savings of £2.3m as a result of the reduction of £2.3m SLF funding. This equates to a total annual budget reduction of £3.8m (31%) from Early Help Services.

75. The £1.5m can be achieved through efficiency savings and a reduction in running costs (mainly from buildings) and will not significantly impact front line workers (4% reduction).
76. The additional £2.3m funding reduction will directly impact front line workers and modelling estimates this to be a 29% reduction in front line staff (in addition to the above 4%). This will reduce the number of families who will receive support by approximately 290 out of the 882 vulnerable families that Early Help Services currently support at any one time.
77. The key risk created by this reduction in budget is around the potential impact on Social Care Services which could arise from less vulnerable families being supported through Early Help Services resulting in their step up to Social Care. It should however be noted that the County Council will continue to spend nearly £9m on Early Help Services
78. In order to operate the service under this budget reduction the following recommendations are made:-
- a) That a public consultation is undertaken on a revised delivery model for the Early Help Service including reducing the number of service delivery buildings from 40 to 15
 - b) That the Director be requested to undertake further work to:
 - (i) develop the detail of the new delivery model
 - (ii) investigate alternative uses for the re-designation of 25 of the 40 Early Help Service delivery buildings
 - c) That a further report on the outcome of consultation and setting out final proposals for a new Early Help Service delivery model be submitted to the Cabinet in Summer 2018.

Background Papers

Sure Start Statutory Guidance 2013

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273768/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april_2013.pdf

Report to the Cabinet, County Council Strategic Plan and Transformation Programme – 6 May 2014 (Minute 142 refers)

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=3990&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet, Early Help and Prevention Review – 17 June 2016 (Minute 438 refers)

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4603&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix A – Map of Early Help Buildings

Appendix B – EHRIA screening document

Equality and Human Rights Implications

79. A copy of the EHRIA screening document (work to date) can be found in Appendix B. The proposed changes will result in a more targeted service focused on those assessed as being in the greatest need. Consequently a number of existing service users will have reduced or no access to services.

80. A full Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) will be undertaken following the public consultation to fully assess the impact of the proposed changes to the service. Legal and equality and diversity advice will be sought as and when necessary throughout this process.

Environmental Implications

81. The project may have environmental implications linked to the proposed service change in terms of the increased travel requirements where centre numbers are reduced. However this will be offset where centres are redesignated as building running costs such as energy use will be reduced overall by the service area.

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