



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
5 MARCH 2018**

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED EARLY HELP REVIEW

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed changes to the Early Help Service which includes integration of the four current services into a single Family Wellbeing Service for 0-19 year olds and the reduction of the number of service delivery buildings from 40 to 15.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. At its meeting on 6 May 2014, the cabinet approved the County Council's Transformation Programme. As part of this, the County Council's Early Help Services underwent a major review and remodelling to deliver £3.59million 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.
3. The Supporting Leicestershire Families Team (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.
4. Initial work on possible savings from the Children's Centre Service was undertaken in 2016 following recommendations from consultants, People Too. The 'People's Too' 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.
5. At its meeting on 9 January 2018, the Cabinet approved the request to consult on a revised delivery model for the Early Help Service including reducing the number of service delivery buildings from 40 to 15 in order to deliver £3.8million savings in 2019-20.

Background

6. Following an increase in the demand for services, the Children and Families Service budget is projecting an overspend in the current year. The current MTFs includes a saving of £1.5million in 2019/20 for a review of early help services. In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) 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 £2.3million. The proposals in the report should be seen in this context.

7. The four services which are planned to be reviewed as part of these proposals are as follows:-
- Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF)
 - Children’s Centres
 - Youth Offending Service (YOS)
 - Early Help Information, Support and Assessment (EHISA).

(Full detail of the services is detailed in Appendix 1)

Current Financial Position

8. The 2017/18 budget for Children and Family Early Help services is £12.4million, 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

9. 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.
10. The Government has indicated that the funding for the MHCLG Troubled Families Programme will not continue beyond 2020 which could put partner funding for the service at risk. Children and Family Services SLF reserves will also be fully utilised by that date; therefore it is assumed that the £2.3million external contributions will cease from 2019/20, significantly reducing the Council’s Early Help offer further.

Financial Model

11. 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 (£1million); and
 - b. CF12 - Review of Early Help Services (£500,000).
12. As part of this review officers have considered the changes that need to be made to the Early Help Service in order to achieve this £1.5million MTFs saving alongside the MHCLG reduction in SLF funding of £2.3million.
 13. MTFs savings of £1.5million can be achieved through combining the four services into an integrated offer for 0-19 year-olds. This includes reducing 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.
 14. The further budget reduction linked to the loss of £2.3million SLF funding will unfortunately need to be found by reducing the number of frontline staff. It is considered that in order to achieve the £2.3million saving there will need to be a reduction in frontline staff of 29% - from 197 to 140 (in addition to the 4% above).
 15. The savings model below is based on the £3.8m savings proposal from a £12.4million budget (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

16. The modelling indicates that the reduction in frontline staff will equate to 290 fewer families receiving support at any one time.

Proposals/Options

17. It was clear that to achieve the £3.8million 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.
18. 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).

19. 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. The new offer would continue to be run on a targeted basis.
20. 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.
21. 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. Families will be assessed to identify need and multi-skilled Early Help Workers will deliver group and one-to-one intervention proportionate to need.
22. 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. An important focus of this new service will be to help families to function effectively, ensuring that children are safe, and preventing escalation to statutory services which are already under significant pressure from rising demand.
23. Families will be triaged and an assessment undertaken and then families will be directed 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 and coordination of multi-agency responses; this all being dependent on the identified needs.
24. Support would be offered through:-
 - Group Work (user pathways)
 - Individual support (1 worker per family)
 - Drop-in clinics.

Proposed Service Delivery Locations

25. 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 now underway and feedback from the consultation process will form part of this thinking. The preferred scenario is that current service buildings – Children's Centres and SLF centres – will be rebranded to deliver the new service offer.
26. Five Family 'Hub' buildings are proposed at the following locations (see Appendix 2) with preferred buildings 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)
27. 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.
28. Ten supporting Family 'spoke' buildings are proposed at the following locations (see Appendix 2) with preferred buildings 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)
29. 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 (as named above, Coalville, Market Harborough and Hinckley) 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.
30. The 25 buildings it is proposed will no longer be used by the service will, if possible, be re-designated. Landlords and schools are being 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 re-designated 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.
31. An overview of how the Early Help buildings are currently used, who uses them and whether the buildings are leased or owned by the County Council is being prepared

and will be collated and circulated to members as soon as possible. This is listed as Appendix 3.

32. The key consideration used to propose which buildings would become a Hub or a spoke was based on the following:-
 - How the buildings are located across the county;
 - How accessible the location and building are from nearby towns and villages – on foot, by car and public transport;
 - Running costs, and whether the building is owned or leased as this has an impact on the flexibility of how the building can be used;
 - How suitable the building is – flexible space to deliver both group and one-to-one work and office space to accommodate staff;
 - How people currently use services at the location/building.

33. 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 Team 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.

34. As the Children’s Centre buildings were developed largely through capital grants, the funding could be subject to clawback by the DfE if the asset created is removed from 0-5 use within 25 years of the grant award. 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.

Consultation

35. This report forms part of this consultation process.

36. The public consultation was launched on the 22 January 2018 and will run for 13 weeks until the 22 April 2018. The purpose of this is to share views about the proposed changes and gain feedback and any suggestions on proposals. The consultation comprises an information document (see Appendix 4) and survey (see Appendix 5) with questions to collate responses. This is available online and by hard copy from Early Help Buildings, District Council Offices and at County Hall.

37. The survey questions focus on how service users currently access and utilise the existing Early Help Services. They also give respondent the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the new Family Wellbeing Service, how changes may affect them and give suggestions on how this could be shaped in the future. This information will be used in the modelling of the new proposed service.

38. The Consultation also covers the proposed changes to Early Help buildings (Children’s Centres and SLF Centres). The document sets out which current

centres are proposed for the new service and which ones may be redesignated to other uses. The Survey asks respondents views on these changes and how they may affect them.

39. Closure or redesignation of any Children's Centre Buildings carries a statutory requirement to consult on these changes. The new proposals suggest closure of 24 Children's Centre buildings across the County.
40. The prime target audiences for the consultation will be service users. Additional target audiences include staff and partner organisations/ service providers. These partners include:-
 - 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
41. 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.
42. A series of events are planned to further support the consultation with service users, staff, partners and other stakeholders - to ask questions about the new service proposals and complete survey responses. The dates for these will be available at the following link:- www.leicestershire.gov.uk/earlyhelp

Timetable for Decisions

43. The views expressed by Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be used to develop plans for the new service. Final proposals for the new service will be taken to the Cabinet in the summer of 2018.

Conclusion

44. This report outlines the requirement to make savings of £1.5million in order to deliver the Council's MTFs and further savings of £2.3million as a result of the reduction of £2.3million SLF funding. This equates to a total annual budget reduction of £3.8million (31%) from Early Help Services.
45. In order to make these savings the following proposals have been taken to full public consultation. This report invites members comment on the following proposals as part of the consultation process:-

- a) A revised delivery model for the Early Help Service which integrates the four existing services (YOS, SLF, Children's Centres and EHISA).
 - b) Reducing the number of service delivery buildings from 40 to 15.
46. The results of this consultation will feed into the service development process and final report to Cabinet in the Summer 2018.

Background papers

47. Sure Start Statutory Guidance 2013
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273768/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april_2013.pdf
48. Report to the Cabinet, 9 January 2018
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ielListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5176&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

49. A copy of this report will be circulated to all members under the Members News in Brief service.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

50. 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.
51. 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.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

52. None.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Current Early Help Services
- Appendix 2 – Buildings Location Map
- Appendix 3 – Centre Usage (*to be issued separately – see paragraph 31*)
- Appendix 4 – Proposals for new 0-19 Family Support Service
- Appendix 5 – Early Help Review 2018 – Survey

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