



CABINET

14 FEBRUARY 2017

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION: LESLEY HAGGER

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES:
COUNCILLOR MATTHEW GOLBY**

Subject:	CHANGES TO THE TARGETED EARLY HELP OFFER FOR CHILDRENS CENTRES WITHIN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Cabinet notes the rationale for the new service design and accepts the recommendations regarding the proposed changes to the current offer for Targeted Early Help Children Centre activities; 2. That Cabinet in considering the recommendations set out in this report takes careful account of the results of the consultation process referred to in this report in paragraph 6 and available in detail in Appendix 2 of this same report. 3. That Cabinet agrees that delegated authority be given to the Director of Children Families and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education to implement the new delivery model for Targeted Early Help Children Centre programme activity and further report to Cabinet where this is considered necessary.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report outlines a revised delivery model for the Targeted Early Help Children’s Centre programme within Northamptonshire and seeks approval for such changes. It seeks approval to implement the changes detailed within in order to meet the associated Medium Financial Term Plan expenditure profile for this area of work.

2. How this decision contributes to the Council Plan

The Council’s vision is to make Northamptonshire a great place to live and work. This is achieved through increasing the wellbeing of your county’s communities and/or safeguarding the county’s communities.

<p>This initiative specifically delivers increased wellbeing and/or safeguarding by ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of all ages are safe, protected from harm and able to live happy, healthy and independent lives in our communities. • People have the information and support they need to make healthy choices and achieve wellbeing. • Resources are utilised effectively and efficiently, in coordination with partners and providers.

3. Background

3.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to deliver Children's Centre services. This dates from the 2006 Childcare Act and subsequent guidance of 2013.

The legislation requires the Local Authority to:

- Improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between them;
- Make sure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated manner;
- Ensure that partners work together to commission early childhood services;
- Make arrangements for sufficient Children's Centres, so far as reasonably practical to meet local need;
- Ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to Children's Centre provision in the area; and
- Consider whether early childhood services should be provided through Children's Centres in the area; and that this legislation is currently under review.

3.2 In December 2016, Cabinet received and approved a report proposing changes to the current Targeted Early Help Children's Centre programme in order to support budget plans proposed within the Medium Financial Term Plan for the Council. This report highlighted that this budget change would result in the current service provision being brought back in house in order to realise efficiencies and support the strategic direction of the Council regarding the Children's Trust.

3.3 The December paper outlined proposed reductions of £4.5m from the current Targeted Early Help programme delivered through Children's Centres. This action would reduce the budget from £7.2m to £2.7m.

3.4 Since this time, a number of focused activities have taken place within Children, Families and Education in order to inform the future service design for the programme, this has involved:

- A full Public Consultation regarding these changes;
- A detailed review of current activity and outcomes realised by the current programme;
- Receiving and reviewing service information from the current providers for this programme regarding the current staffing structures and other associated expenditure;
- Consideration of the current work underway within the Department regarding the future Target Operating Model (TOM) for the proposed Children's Trust in order to best inform the future proposal; and
- Ensuring that the transition plan continues to support vulnerable families and that where necessary efficiencies are realised to reduce duplication and ensure that the programme is delivered within the revised budget envelope.

3.5 The current provision is delivered by 3 parties namely; Action for Children who have 6 lots, Spurgeons who have 3 lots and Corby Community Interest Company (CIC) who have 1 lot;

3.6 The current programme has the key areas as agreed by Cabinet in May – 2016. These were:

- Leading support for step down of families from Children’s Social Care where there is a child under 5 evident
- Lead support, as required for Level 3 need identified through referrals from other agencies e.g. Health Visitors / voluntary sector organisations
- Domestic abuse support activity
- Supporting families where the lead is Children’s Social Care though in relation to Looked After
- Children, Children In Need and Child Protection
- Maintaining continuity of support to any families where the youngest sibling is rising 5 to the point at which this support is no longer required.

The Local authority has consulted on focusing on the following areas of activity in the future – Domestic Abuse support, Parenting Programmes and 121 Parenting Support.

3.7 The Local Authority has decided to bring these services back in house in order support its future strategic direction, however, the decision has been made that Corby CIC will, for the immediate future remain outside of this arrangement;

3.8 Discussions with Action for Children and Spurgeons following formal notice being served on Action for Children and Spurgeons of the Local Authority’s intention. This has included reaching an agreement that TUPE applies to the full workforce contained within the two, the planned transfer date is 31st March 2017;

3.9 It is not anticipated that we reduce the number of designated Children’s Centre buildings from the current 42, although it is likely to be necessary to move the designation of Daventry East from its current location to the nearby library because the lease arrangement for the existing premises is held by Action for Children. In the case of the remaining 16 buildings which are not part of the Library Service estate, work is underway to explore how their use can be shared with other community organisations in order to make their retention viable and to support locality working.

3.10 A recent review of current successful engagement and outcomes for families within current provision through Action for Children and Spurgeons has taken place analysing the last six months data. This review has established that around 531 families successfully engage with this programme each year. Therefore, this volume has been used to design future requirements.

4. Proposed Changes to Targeted Early Help Children’s Centre Programme

4.1 In January a review of the current programme against the key delivery areas and similar activity within the Local Authority was carried out. This identified duplication in current service provision between this contract and internally delivered services. This is detailed below.

4.2 **Parenting Programme provision** – there is potentially duplication between the current Children Centre Targeted Early Help Service and the offer currently delivered

within Early Help and Prevention Services within the Local Authority (EHP). It is therefore recommended that the future delivery of parenting programmes will be delivered through the existing NCC EHP team. This means that this requirement does *not* need to be a feature of the new Targeted Early Help offer via Children's Centres;

- 4.3 **Domestic Abuse Support** – again, there is potentially duplication between this contract and the focused Domestic Abuse Support contract in Northamptonshire. Therefore, this requirement will no longer be a feature of the Targeted Early Help offer via Children's Centres;*
- 4.4 **121 Parenting Support** – this offer is unique to this 0-5 cohort and is not currently met through existing service provision. Therefore this will become the *unique focus for the future delivery of the remaining spend for this programme*.
- 4.5 Having reviewed the above, the proposal and the feedback received as a result of the public consultation, the recommendation for the future integrated Targeted Early Help Children's Centre programme will be to focus uniquely on delivering targeted 121 support within localities. This means that families will be able to access parenting provision and Domestic Abuse Support through existing NCC contracts with the unique element of the Children's Centre programme for children and families at the age range of 0-5 being protected. It should be noted that this will require a reduced number of staff as the service will be sized to meet the current successful activity within each locality.
- 4.6 Furthermore, the findings from the Consultation exercise (see Section 6) has informed us that community members wish to see the current Children's Centre buildings protected and used for activities and services supporting families, this will become a feature of the revised service.

5. Proposed Model

The following section outlines the recommendations for the future Targeted Early Help Children's Centre programme.

- 5.1 That there will be a change of focus on the activity of the programme and despite all associated staff from the current providers TUPE'd into the organisation, the future requirement of this programme will only be for 121 targeted parenting support. This will result in a number of redundancies and an immediate restructuring of the current workforce, due to TUPE regulations this may mean that some NCC staff will come into scope of this arrangement. This is to be determined and informed by HR working alongside colleagues in Children, Families and Education.
- 5.2 That the decision to focus entirely upon 121 targeted parenting support provides the opportunity to reduce the cost of this programme and will be tailored to meet the available budget therefore meeting the MTFP proposal regarding the £4.5m reduction. It is envisaged that remaining staff will be subsumed within existing teams across the

Council and this will therefore also reduce the management overhead that this programme currently incurs.

- 5.3 It is noted that feedback from the consultation noted concerns about the impact on the Social Care Service of Children's Centre service providers no longer working alongside them with Level 4 families. This is an area that will be carefully managed and monitored as Children's Services moves towards the TOM.
- 5.4 Feedback from Consultation has also told us that community members value the buildings and wish to see the continued use of these as community settings, furthermore, the work to date on the new Target Operating Model (TOM) for the Children's Trust has highlighted the need for local community settings for children and families to access services and for staff to be based from in order to realise efficiencies. It is therefore recommended that a number of these buildings will be retained for community and service use.
- 5.5 The proposed model includes a continuation of the existing targeted Children's Centre targeted offer in Corby. This is delivered through Corby Community Interest Company.

6. Consultation and Scrutiny

- 6.1 The consultation was open for 7 weeks and consisted of an online survey (Appendix 1), together with the opportunity to submit comments by post or email. The consultation was listed on the Council's consultation register and details sent to all registered interested parties which includes Councillors. It was advertised several times through the Council's social media channels and was promoted to users of targeted services across the county via the service providers. It was also advertised through the Library Service and Health Visitors and Midwives were asked to promote it. Service providers were also asked to discuss the consultation with partners through their governance arrangements. A meeting was held with Healthwatch to support them in preparing a written submission.
- 6.2 495 responses were received and the results used to inform this paper. A full report on the consultation feedback is appended, but the summary of the findings from the consultation are as follows:
- a) 52% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the criteria being proposed for referrals, and 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The concerns raised in the free text by those that disagreed were related to the need to ensure that universal provision continues to be secured. This consultation is not about universal provision, and previous Cabinet papers have given assurance that this provision is not impacted by this consultation. Therefore, it has been concluded that consultees are in agreement with the referral process being proposed.
 - b) 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the three areas of activity that were identified as the focus of future services, and therefore it has been concluded that there is broad support for the changes proposed. A range of other services were named in the free text as important services to continue, the majority of which are included in the universal services provision, which is unaffected by this consultation. The services named are set out in section 2.3 of the appendix.

- c) There was overwhelming support for the continued use of Children's Centre buildings for the delivery of multi-agency services and this has been incorporated into the new proposed model. However, there were also suggestions that some services might be better located in libraries or via nursery schools and these suggestions will be explored further. The findings are detailed in sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 of the appendix.
- d) 68% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the ideas and proposal contained in the consultation document were appropriate within the proposed budget.

6.3 From a Scrutiny perspective, the Director for Children, Families and Education attended two focused Scrutiny sessions in January where the proposals for changes within the MTFP and specifically the Targeted Early Help Children's Centre programme was discussed.

6.4 Overall, from the public consultation and the budget Scrutiny meetings that have taken place, it can be concluded that there is broad support for the proposal. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the comments that have been made about the need to protect universal services, the constant changes that have been made in past years, and the potential impact on services from reduced budgets.

7. Equality Screening

7.1 **Impact assessment and Associated Risks** - The Impact Assessment highlighted that this proposal has the potential to reduce the confusion a family, who has a child under 5, may face when a number of lead professionals engaged with them. The Impact Assessment identified some potential negative impacts. The age profile of those responding to the Children Centre Services consultation launched in December 2016 has confirmed, due to the nature of the service offered, that impact will be skewed towards those aged between 20 and 49 and those below 5. This will be mitigated by greater engagement and involvement of early years providers in Early Help support and the roll out of 30 hours free childcare for eligible 3 and 4 year olds in September 2017.

7.2 The relationship profile of those responding to the Children Centre Services consultation in December 2016 has confirmed that families where marriage or a partnership is evident are more likely to have children under 5 than the general population and due to the nature of the service that is offered will be impacted more than the general population. Families where pregnancy and maternity is evident perceive they will have reduced access to services that have been supported by the contracted targeted Children's Centre service providers. Children Centre Services Consultation in December 2016 demonstrated strong support for the development of community hubs on historic Children's Centre building where activity delivered could encompass aspects of a health offer. This will be pursued and delivery of this nature developed via engagement with First for Wellbeing and commissioners within the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Risk	Mitigation
There is the potential for community concern if the proposal is implemented.	Engagement of stakeholders via consultation and proactive marketing and communications campaign will be important to address concerns.
Uncertainty of partners including those organisations where contracts are held with either NCC or via subcontracts through the current providers.	Proactive marketing and communications campaign required to ensure the facts are known.
Proposals, developed from the consultation are likely to impact on teams within Children, Families and Education	Services are involved in actions identified in either the project plan or as a result of appropriate associated actions being identified

Children, Families & Education:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/equalities/Pages/CYP-EIA.aspx>

[http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/equalities/Documents/PDF%20Documents/Budget%20EqIAs%202017-18/16-002-01%20Targeted%20Early%20Help%20Service%20Contract%20\(Children%27s%20Centres\)%20EqIA.pdf](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/equalities/Documents/PDF%20Documents/Budget%20EqIAs%202017-18/16-002-01%20Targeted%20Early%20Help%20Service%20Contract%20(Children%27s%20Centres)%20EqIA.pdf)

8. Alternative Options Considered

8.1 This was the only viable option which allowed for the MTFP targeted to be realised in year, all other options were outside of the financial envelope for this service area and were therefore unviable.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The proposed delivery model which incorporates changes to the Council's existing Targeted Early Help provision will reduce on-going annual revenue costs by £4.5m from 2017/18 financial year, and will therefore reduce the annual cost of service provision from £7.2m to £2.7m. Assumptions are set out in the directorate's Business Plan, which is included elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda.

10. Risk and Business Continuity Management

a) Risk(s) associated with the proposal

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
The ability to restructure the workforce in a timely manner order to realise the new service profile and deliver within the identified budget. Timeline is compounded by Cabinet call in procedure meaning that nothing can be actioned until 24 th February,	Working closely with HR to create a focused action plan. Beginning informal discussions with Action for Children and Spurgeons to share future profile and consequences for the workforce.	Amber
Stakeholders being unaware of changes to programme and a	A focused communication plan will be created post Cabinet decision	Green

drop in referrals or support for families.	and this will be widely shared with all stakeholders. This be both internal to NCC and to wider partners across Northamptonshire.	
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Risk	Risk Rating
That the Medium Financial Term Planning budget for Children, Families and Education will not be met.	Red

11. List of Appendices

Appendix 1a – Consultation Document and

Appendix 1b - Consultation Full Report

Author:	Name: Sharon Muldoon Team: Quality and Performance, Children, Families and Education
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Background Papers:	December Cabinet Report https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273768/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april_2013.pdf
Does the report propose a key decision is taken?	YES
If yes, is the decision in the Forward Plan?	YES
Will further decisions be required? If so, please outline the timetable here	NO
Does the report include delegated decisions? If so, please outline the timetable here	Yes – this needs to happen with immediate effect as there are a number of critical actions which must take place during February and March 2017.
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy framework?	YES – changes to the budget to support MTFP requirements.
Have the financial implications been cleared by the Strategic Finance Manager (SFM)? Have any capital spend implications been cleared by the Capital Investment Board (CIB)	YES Name of SFM: James Smith n/a
Has the report been cleared by the relevant Director?	YES Name of Director: Lesley Hagger
Has the relevant Cabinet Member been consulted?	YES Cabinet Member: Cllr Matthew Golby
Has the relevant scrutiny committee been consulted?	YES Scrutiny Committee: MTFP Review in January

Has the report been cleared by Legal Services?	YES Name of solicitor: Laurie Gould Solicitor's comments:
Have any communications issues been cleared by Communications and Marketing?	YES Name of officer: Joni Ager
Have any property issues been cleared by Property and Asset Management?	YES Name of officer: James Wheeler
Are there any community safety implications?	No
Are there any environmental implications:	No
Are there any Health & Safety Implications:	NO
Are there any Human Resources Implications:	YES
Are there any human rights implications:	NO
Constituency Interest:	None specific

