



**CABINET**

**13 DECEMBER 2016**

**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION: LESLEY HAGGER**

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

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of Targeted Early Help and Children’s Centres</b>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>That Cabinet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agrees to commence a consultation exercise with relevant stakeholders on the proposals contained in this report; and</li> <li>• Receive a further report at its meeting in February 2017 which will present the outcome of the consultation which will form part of any decision making process when cabinet considers the next steps for the provision Targeted Children’s Centre Services</li> </ul>

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 This paper sets out a number of items to note and one recommendation. The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform the Cabinet about the natural ending of the current contracts for the delivery of targeted early help Childrens Centre services delivered by Action for Children and Spurgeons;
- Inform the Cabinet about the proposals for the future direction of targeted early help Children’s Centre services;
- Provide Cabinet with the assurance regarding the continued delivery of Universal Children’s Centre services and the County Council’s statutory role;
- Ensure that Cabinet is aware of the impact of the proposed change and
- Seek the agreement of Cabinet to commence a consultation exercise with relevant stakeholders.

**2. How this decision contributes to the Council Plan**

2.1 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 safeguarding ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of all ages are safe, protected from harm and able to live happy, healthy and independent lives in our communities.</li> <li>• People have the information and support they need to make healthy choices and achieve wellbeing.</li> </ul>
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- Communities thrive in a pleasant and resilient environment, with robust transport and communications infrastructure.
- 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. (Appendix 1). 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;
- 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 Northamptonshire the children's centre offer currently consists of a number of components. This includes;

- A Universal Offer which is delivered through Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Services, First for Wellbeing; (Appendix 2).
- Early Years Childcare which is delivered through the private, voluntary independent and maintained sector as well as accredited Child minders;
- Health and Employment services delivered by a range of partner organisations; and
- A targeted early help offer delivered by 3 organisations.

3.3 This paper is focused entirely on changes to the delivery of the targeted early help offer for Children's Centres.

### 4. Current Offer for Targeted Early Help Children's Centre Services

4.1 This is currently delivered in 10 localities by the following providers.

Locality Area	Provider
Corby	Community Interest Company
Daventry	Action For Children
East Northamptonshire	Spurgeons

Locality Area	Provider
Kettering	Action For Children
Northampton Central	Action For Children
Northampton East	Action For Children
Northampton North	Spurgeons
Northampton West	Spurgeons
South Northamptonshire	Action For Children
Wellingborough	Action For Children

4.2 The budget for 2016/17 was reduced by £3m leaving a total budget of £7,179,111. Children Families and Education Commissioners have been reviewing the current activity and outcomes of the targeted programme including the reach, impact and outcome data for each of the locality areas over the last 6 months. At the time of writing the following information was available.

<b>Targeted Children's Centre Services Activity Volumes / Engagement 010416-300916</b>			
Provider /Locality	Overall Access No – 3+ interventions* (Includes support provided to Children's Social Care)	Families with 3+ interventions at Level 3	Families with sustained and completed interventions at Level 3
Community Interest Company (CIC) / Corby			
Action For Children / Daventry	121	68	25
Spurgeons / East Northamptonshire	70	37	33
Action For Children / Kettering	158	108	32
Action For Children / Northampton Central	110	70	37
Action For Children / Northampton East	217	61	2
Spurgeons / Northampton North	62	9	6
Spurgeons / Northampton West	114	49	12
Action For Children / South Northamptonshire	119	49	35
Action For Children / Wellingborough	112	80	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1083</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>208</b>

4.3 Analysis of this data demonstrates that:

- The 1083 families accessing 3 or more interventions are also cases held by Children's Social Care (29% of families accessing services);
- Of the 531 families engaging in Tier 3 activities led by the external provider 208 sustained or completed their engagement with the service (39%).

## 5. Future Arrangements

5.1 The current contracts for targeted early help children's centre services reach a natural end on 31st March 2017. There is an option to extend the contract period by up to 2 years.

- 5.2 At the Cabinet meeting of the 14th October 2016, Cabinet agreed the outline business case for a new Children's delivery vehicle (Children's Trust). The paper outlined our intention to "do things differently" in Northamptonshire by redesigning the service to focus on supporting vulnerable children and their families. This paper described the requirement for the Local Authority to make the best use of its available resources by reducing the number of commissioned services and increasing direct service delivery. It is envisaged that this will reduce the expenditure on associated management overheads and streamline services tackling duplication where evident.
- 5.3 The paper detailed: "The proposed new operating model is predicated on the ability to maximize resource, minimize overhead costs, and reduce bureaucracy. For these reasons it is proposed that those services currently contracted from external agencies are informed of the intention to review and to potentially in-source current services".
- 5.4 Therefore, notice to terminate contracts have been given to Action for Children and to Spurgeons. The arrangement for Corby is a CIC with representation from four centres and will stay in place during the period of the review as there are aspects of their current delivery model that may have a good fit with the Local Authority's proposed future intentions.

## **6. The Proposal**

- 6.1 The new Children's delivery vehicle (Children's Trust) provides an opportunity to radically overhaul and innovate the way in which services for vulnerable children including targeted early help services are planned and delivered.
- 6.2 The natural end of the current Children's Centre contracts provides an opportunity to begin this change.
- 6.3 Ensuring that there continues to be enough financial resource to support targeted early help services, including those for children aged 0-5 and their families (e.g. targeted early help Children Centre services), is an important part of managing the demand on costly statutory services. However, the budgets available are reducing and this makes it even more important to ensure that there is no duplication and that the right services are provided to the right children and families at the right time.
- 6.4 In preparing for the future children's delivery vehicle (Children's Trust) we have mapped the above families in the table at Paragraph 4.2 and traced their involvement in other services across Children's Services within the Local Authority. This analysis tells us that c.30% of families currently supported by targeted Children's Centre services are also known to and being supported by Social Care (Tier 4) with another c.40% being known to the Local Authority through its internal "Early Help Families" Programmes\* (Tiers 4, 3 and 2). Whilst we recognise that the current agreement is not necessarily duplication, it remains the case that families have a number of professionals offering support. Through our service redesign we wish to streamline activity that is currently happening in order to maximise the Council's resources and reduce the confusion that this may cause a family with a number of professionals engaged with them.

- 6.5 There is an opportunity to rationalise services at the same time as needing to make budget savings. The proposed saving is £4.5m. It should be noted that all other existing Children's Centre arrangements will remain unchanged.
- 6.6 The development of a new targeted early help Children's Centre offer requires time to be developed to ensure full engagement of families and other delivery partners. A range of next steps are outlined below. In the meantime discussions have started with Action for Children and Spurgeons to consider implications for their current workforce, the activities that they deliver, the families they are currently working with, caseloads held and arrangements for a smooth transfer. Whilst the agencies have been informed that the end date for their contracts is 31st March 2017, it may be necessary to extend the period of time required for this smooth transfer by a maximum of up to 3 months and this is being proposed to both agencies.

## **7. Consultation and Scrutiny**

- 7.1 There is a duty on Local Authorities to ensure that there is consultation before any significant changes are made to Children's Centre provision in their area. It is therefore proposed that a public consultation is scheduled to take place during December 2016 and January 2017.
- 7.2 It is proposed that the consultation will take the form of a widely advertised online survey over a seven week period running concurrently to the Budget consultation. There will also be an address provided for people to respond without using the online form and a dedicated email address for queries. We will also consult with partners in each local area through the Children's Centre governance arrangements (Advisory Boards).
- 7.3 In previous consultations public events and focus groups have generally been poorly attended and so this consultation will be survey based.
- 7.4 A paper will be presented to the Children Families and Education Scrutiny Committee on the 26th January 2017.
- 7.5 A further report will be presented to the Cabinet meeting in February 2017. This will present the outcome of consultation and the arrangements that will be put in place for the transfer of services from Action for Children and Spurgeons into the Local Authority.

## **8. Equality Screening**

- 8.1 An initial impact assessment has been undertaken and is detailed in Appendix 3.

## **9. Alternative Options Considered**

- 9.1 Pause the current Children's Centre targeted service offer until the new organisational design has been completed for the Children's Trust. This option has been discounted as it would result in a gap in service provision for 0-5s as the Local Authority's current internal early help offer focuses on 5 years+.

9.2 To transfer all current services into the Local Authority until the new organisational design has been completed. However this will not deliver the savings required in 2017/18 and so has been discounted.

9.3 To renegotiate the contract price and delivery schedule with current providers. This has been discounted as it would require significant Officer time to renegotiate the contract and would not meet the intended outcomes and ambition for the children's delivery vehicle to increase direct service delivery and reduce expenditure on management and commissioning costs.

## 10. Financial Implications

10.1 The changes proposed in this report deliver an annual cost saving of £4.5m, which would reduce the current budget from £7.1m to £2.6m. The planned financial impact of this proposal forms part of the Directorates draft Medium Term Financial Plan, which is included in the same Cabinet Agenda.

10.2 The Local Authority will continue to deliver its statutory duties and the Universal Children's Centre offer will be unaffected.

<p>What benefits will the proposal deliver?</p>	<p>Please explain and quantify expected benefits arising from proposal. Areas for inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value for money</li> <li>• Cost effectiveness</li> <li>• Efficiency savings (cashable and non-cashable)</li> </ul>
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## 11. Risk and Business Continuity Management

a) Risk(s) associated with the proposal.

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
<p>Current Children Centre support to Level 4 families may be removed</p>	<p>Families will continued to have allocated Children's Social Care services lead professionals.</p>	<p><b>Amber</b></p>
<p>Costs and timeframes associated with TUPE / redundancies by currently contracted providers</p>	<p>LGSS Legal employment and HR have been engaged in the process so far and have assigned dedicated resource to support this process. Detailed engagement with Providers to take place between 13/2 and 24/12.</p>	<p><b>Amber</b></p>
<p>Potential change of use to buildings may result in DfE Capital Claw back</p>	<p>Maintain use of buildings for delivery of services associated with the 0-5 age range both in short and medium term therefore meaning this is not applicable</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p>

b) Risk(s) associated with not undertaking the proposal.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>
17/18 and MTFP budget requirements not met	<b>Red</b>
Development of the model for the Children's Trust stalls	<b>Amber</b>

## 12. List of Appendices

- **Appendix 1 - Link to Statutory Guidance**
- **Appendix 2 - Current Children's Centre Universal Offer**
- **Appendix 3 – link to IIA**

<b>Author:</b>	Lesley Hagger Director for Children, Families and Education
Contact details:	Tel: 01604 366359 e-mail lhagger@northamptonshire.gov.uk
Background Papers:	October Cabinet Paper Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance, April 2013
Does the report propose a key decision is taken?	YES
If yes, is the decision in the Forward Plan?	NO – general exemption agreed by Laurie Gould.
Will further decisions be required? If so, please outline the timetable here	It is anticipated that a report will return to Cabinet providing information following consultation. A decision will be required in February alongside the budget.
Does the report include delegated decisions? If so, please outline the timetable here	Yes, the DCS has delegated authority obtained in the October 2016 Cabinet paper.
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy framework?	YES
Have the financial implications been cleared by the Strategic Finance Manager? Have any capital spend implications been cleared by the Capital Investment Board (CIB)	YES Name of SFM: James Smith Not at this stage, but post consultation we will need to consider any capital implications.
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 Golby
Has the relevant scrutiny committee been consulted?	NO. Scrutiny Committee:
Has the report been cleared by Legal Services?	YES Name of solicitor: Shahin Ismail Laurie Gould
	Solicitor's comments:

Have any communications issues been cleared by Communications and Marketing?	YES Name of officer: Simon Deacon
Have any property issues been cleared by Property and Asset Management?	NO – not at this stage, but will need to occur post consultation and final decision.
N/A	N/A
Are there any environmental implications:	N/A
Are there any Health & Safety Implications:	NO
Are there any Human Resources Implications:	YES - these are set out in the report.
Are there any human rights implications:	NO
Constituency Interest:	N/A