

CABINET MEETING – 5 SEPTEMBER 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Sure Start Review and an Integrated Early Intervention Service – Implementation Update

Author(s):

Executive Director Children’s Services

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to update members on the current position in relation to the development of an early intervention service which includes services delivered as part of the former Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant (SSEYCG). The report summarises all of the changes which have been implemented which have been considered by Cabinet in previous reports or have been subject to consultation and delegated decisions.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to

- (i) Note the contents of the report.
- (ii) Recommend Council to approve the proposal at 6.1 and 6.2 of the report to invite the five members appointed to chair locality People Boards to join the membership of the Local Children’s Area Board for their locality;
- (iii) Receive a further report to the November meeting of Cabinet in relation to the commissioning of Children’s Centre services from April 2013.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes/No

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

In addition to the need to achieve financial savings the review was undertaken to ensure the integration of children’s centres with the wider early intervention offer and to provide a more targeted model which better engages with parents and improves outcomes. The recommendation to invite the Chairs of People Boards to join the Local Area Children’s Centre Boards will provide a formal link into the Council’s community leadership arrangements and ensure that the People Boards are able to shape and influence future service delivery arrangements.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

Maintaining current arrangements was considered and rejected as to do this would not have supported the development of an early intervention model or engaged with the families who most require support to improve outcomes for children. Furthermore the efficiency of £1.77 million would not have been achieved.

Impacts analysed:

Equality **Privacy** **Sustainability** **Crime and Disorder**

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution?

Yes/No

Is it included in the Forward Plan?

Yes/No

Scrutiny Committee

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SURE START REVIEW AND AN INTEGRATED EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE – IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members on the current position in relation to the development of an early intervention service which includes services delivered as part of the former Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant (SSEYCG). The report summarises all of the changes which have been implemented which have been considered by Cabinet in previous reports or have been subject to consultation and delegated decisions.

2. Description of Decision

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to
- (i) Note the contents of the report.
 - (ii) Recommend Council to approve the proposal at 6.1 and 6.2 of the report to invite the five members appointed to chair locality People Boards to join the membership of the Local Children's Area Board for their locality;
 - (iii) Receive a further report to the November meeting of Cabinet in relation to the commissioning of Children's Centre services from April 2013.

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Cabinet have received a number of previous reports and information as the review of services and delivering required efficiencies from the former Sure Start and Early Years and Childcare Grant has been progressed. The most recent of these was 15th February 2012.
- 3.2 At the start of 2010/11 the value of the Sure Start and early Years and Childcare funding totalled £13.227m. An overall efficiency of £1.77m of permanent savings was required to reflect decisions approved as part of the Budget Planning Framework. This saving has been achieved as a result of the review conducted in 2011/12 and this report sets out the measures that have been taken in order to realise this. However, whilst the financial saving has clearly been an important consideration, the imperative to improve services through the children's centre offer has also been a key driver.

3.3 A Project Board was established to oversee and drive the review for which the following principles/considerations were agreed:

- To deliver the required financial savings whilst providing a service which gives children the best start in life, is better targeted to reach the most vulnerable families, offers support and interventions across the whole family and is responsive to differing needs at a local level.
- To recognise the importance of Children's Centres to our children, families and communities
- To ensure that families with the greatest need for support are given priority for services and delivering those services which improve outcomes;
- To influence the provision and delivery of childcare places in areas which might not otherwise be sustainable, supporting childcare professional development and training and improving the outcomes from free childcare places;
- To increase community involvement and influence through the development of Local Children's Centre Area Boards ;
- To increase the use of Children's Centre buildings to meet a wider range of needs identified through community involvement and governance

3.4 Consultation

3.4.1 Between November 2011 and January 2012 parents and stakeholders were consulted on 3 issues:

- The number of designated Children's Centres - 69% of the respondents agreed that the council should reduce costs by keeping the 17 main buildings to deliver activities and sessions but only have five (one in each area) formally designated as a Children's Centre.
- Increasing community influence for service delivery - 86% of the respondents agreed that parents and community members from the local area should have more influence in determining what services are required locally for families living in the area
- Greater targeting of services for those in greatest need - 45% of the respondents said that the council should do more work with families who would benefit from extra help but that Children's Centre services should continue to be available for everyone.

3.4.2 Stakeholders and partners were consulted on other proposed changes through stakeholder groups and the sub groups of the Early Years and Childcare Strategic Partnership.

4. Summary of changes implemented

- 4.1 In terms of staffing, as part of the overall review of Children's Services structure, the number of management posts within the former children's centres and early years structures was reduced. Alongside this, a key development from the review is the introduction of a generic Early Intervention Family Team to cover each of the five areas, bringing together a range of roles and activities that were delivered through Children's Centres by different agencies through contracts or by the Council. The purpose of the teams is to offer consistent and coordinated support to families with additional needs and to promote and enable family access to universal and targeted services across learning, health and social care services. This includes support with specific areas such as parenting skills, attachment and breastfeeding. On average, each team is made up of 8 fte staff and will carry out 1-1 outreach interventions and work in small groups. Each team will work across the whole age range from 0-19 rather than the former early years age range.
- 4.1.1 As part of the review an opportunity to introduce 10 modern apprentice posts has been considered and approved. This will support the priority of providing opportunities for young people to fulfil Level 2 (Intermediate Apprenticeship) qualification in Early Learning and Childcare whilst also gaining experience of the Early Intervention Family Team work within Children's Centres. It is anticipated that there will be new job opportunities in the day care sector due to the expansion of the disadvantaged 2 year old entitlement therefore this would support young people to develop appropriate skills to apply for these opportunities. Work to recruit to the 10 modern apprenticeships is now underway within the Council.

4.2 Children's Centres

- 4.2.1 Cabinet previously agreed to reduce the number of designated children's centres from 17 to 5, with the remaining 12 centres remaining open as service delivery centres. In line with the previous Cabinet recommendations, criteria was agreed and applied to determine which centres should be the designated sites. This was followed by discussion with Area Committees in July 2012 with Dubmire Primary School in Coalfields, Hudson Rd Primary School in the East, Bunnyhill in the North, Rainbow Centre in Washington and Thorney Close Action and Enterprise Centre in the West agreed as the designated sites.
- 4.2.2 A number of Children's Centre activities are delivered through schools and a formula is in place to fund this arrangement. The formula has been reviewed and reduced, in consultation with schools, reflecting the required use and designation of these centres.
- 4.2.3 A new 'stepping stones' approach to service delivery has been developed to differentiate between a universal offer for all families and a targeted offer for families that require more support.

- 4.2.4 In the **universal** offer, all children have access to group activities for 12 weeks of the year from birth to 3 years. This will include play and learn activities, messy play, time to rhyme as well as parenting skills courses and support. 'Playspaces', which are new to the activity timetable, are open sessions where families can meet while children play together using children's centre buildings and equipment. Supervision is provided by parents themselves rather than by Children's Centre staff.
- 4.2.5 In the **targeted** offer, all children and their families will have access to the above universal offer but will have an enhanced and extended package of support, in response to their identified additional needs. Outreach support in the home will also be provided as part of the targeted offer. From September 2012 parents will book a place on their chosen group activity which will enable the centres to better tailor services to individual needs. Improved systems of data collection and analysis will also enable the service to measure the impact on outcomes of the new offer linked to the common assessment framework (CAF) and the wider early intervention services, including the wider Strengthening Families approach.

4.3 Childcare

- 4.3.1 Childcare sufficiency funding has been in place for some considerable time to support individual settings to remain financially viable where demand for places is low. The intention was always to work with settings to become sustainable without additional financial support (i.e. by reviewing staffing models) and the criteria for allocation of sufficiency funding was reviewed to reflect this. It is proposed for 2012/13 that sufficiency funding is only used to support settings where there is an identified lack of sufficient places across whole locality areas..
- 4.3.2 Funded childcare places exist to support children identifies as in need via social care. These places support the child and family to maintain relationships and improve parenting and are considered an effective early intervention with recognised improvement in outcomes. Through the review additional funding has been identified to increase the number of places from 75.5 whole time equivalent places to 90 places. Alongside this increase the "offer" of a funded place has been linked to a requirement for engagement from parents to address needs and thereby further improve outcomes for the child and family.
- 4.3.3 Historically substantial funding has been allocated to support private and voluntary sector childcare settings to improve the quality of their provision linked to the development of staff in Early Years specific training. This was under the umbrella of the Graduate Leader Fund and has achieved a significant improvement in the level of staff qualification. Changes to the levels and term of funding have been introduced and this has meant that in addition to delivering the efficiencies, the scheme has been extended to all settings.

- 4.3.4 Whilst elements of the training programme for Early Years providers have been retained, efficiencies have been achieved by removing supply cover and other supporting costs.
- 4.3.5 The Council manages two day care settings at Thorney Close and Concord. These are the remaining two provisions which were former Social Care Nurseries and were historically the main provider for children in need (CIN). Children in need are now included in all local nurseries as part of locality arrangements and there are fewer in Thorney Close and Concord. This has enabled a review of staffing at both settings to recognise that these settings were more comparable with mainstream nurseries which has led to efficiencies being realised.

4.4 Commissioned Services

- 4.4.1 As part of the review all commissioned services were reviewed and where appropriate new contracts were offered for tender. These contracts are all 12 month contracts to April 2013 pending the introduction of Local Area Children's Centre Boards who will review arrangements against local need and influence future commissioning decisions.
- 4.4.2 The Community Involvement Contract has been retendered focused on Parental Involvement and Transition to Employment. The service will increase local involvement in Children's Centre services, empowering individuals and promoting the active participation of communities. It will support parents to access training and employment opportunities, ensuring parents are shaping and driving Children's Centre services as customers, participants and partners
- 4.4.3 The Mobile Crèche contract has been retendered with no change to the specification. The crèche service is required to support the parenting programme.
- 4.4.4 The Portage service (providing support for very young disabled children and their families within their homes) has been reconfigured so that Sunningdale School who previously provided only one element of the service now provide the whole service. This will provide a more consistent service to families and earlier contact with children, many of whom subsequently attend Sunningdale School.
- 4.4.5 The Enhanced Safety Equipment Contract has been retendered and eligibility redefined to families most in need of support. This ensures a better targeted service and means that appropriate referrals are responded to more quickly.
- 4.4.6 The Early Years Mental Health Service contract has been reviewed and now requires the service to be delivered by mental health nurse specialists rather than including a clinical psychology role. The new service specification has moved the focus from delivering training to front line workers to delivering more face to face work with children and families

- 4.4.7 Significant efficiencies have also been achieved in relation to the Health Visiting Service's Child Health Development programme which supports Children's Centres aims. Previously the Council contracted health visiting services directly to the Children's Centres. However, the Child Health Development programme requires Health Visiting Services to be delivered through Children's Centres with a health visitor on every Children's Centre Board. The health visiting service has started to deliver Pregnancy, birth and beyond courses and has continued to deliver baby days/clinics in and through Children's Centres. The local authority will continue to commission 3 health co-ordinator posts who will broker health activities and support the new Early Intervention Family Team.
- 4.4.8 The Extended Maternity Services budget has been maintained at previous levels to support 5 Health Care Assistant posts to support the early engagement of pregnant women and the promotion of breastfeeding which is a key indicator of life chances and against which we currently perform below regional and national averages.
- 4.4.9 The Community Paediatric service, which previously consisted of one post dealing with all referrals has been decommissioned as it is considered more appropriate to ensure that children were referred direct to the Paediatric Service from which there is greater capacity to draw upon.
- 4.4.10 The Council's Service Level Agreement (SLA) with schools with early years settings to develop staff has been withdrawn as this was only partially bought back. The offer has been incorporated into other services provided to these schools thereby offering further efficiencies.
- 4.4.11 Every setting providing education for 3 and 4 year olds was given a grant to deliver the Talk Talk project. This was for bags and equipment which are loaned to children attending their setting. All the settings now have the bags and equipment and have been able to mainstream the delivery of this service, therefore creating efficiency opportunities.

5. Further Changes

- 5.1 The review has allowed consideration of services previously outside of the scope of the Early Years and Childcare Grant. For example, the Parenting Programme has been reviewed and has been focused on delivering a smaller number of parenting programmes which have an evidenced impact on outcomes. In future key programmes will be offered ranging from universal and targeted to specialist programmes which will be offered on a locality basis. The Universal Offer includes parenting information sessions on topics such as breastfeeding, establishing routines, sleep management, toilet training and behaviour management. Opportunities to extend the programme with partners are currently being progressed. The targeted offer includes the Nurture Programme, Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities, Group Triple P and Teen Triple P. This combined package covers the age range from birth to 19 years. These programmes cover all aspects of parenting needs in relation to behaviour management, emotional wellbeing and empowerment. The specialist programmes will include the Incredible Years programme for parents of children who are at risk of developing a disruptive behaviour disorder and aims to support parents to develop their own strategies to manage their children's behaviour, and the Pathways Triple P (as recommended in the Allen Report 2011) which is a comprehensive parenting intervention for parents with a child subject to a care plan or at risk of maltreating their child.

6. Governance Arrangements

- 6.1 Five Local Children's Centres Area Boards are being developed from the existing Children's Centre Local Advisory Boards. Representation on these boards will include parents from the local area, health and social care representatives, local headteachers, childcare providers, community and voluntary sector groups and local members. It is proposed that the five councillors who chair the newly established locality People Boards are invited to become members of these boards which are to be established from September 2012. This will establish and support a formal link between arrangements for the children's centres and the People Boards. Nominations from parents and other representatives are currently being sought. An initial budget of £10,000 has been established to support the development of these arrangements. This new governance model in many ways reflects the strengths of the former Sure Start model in terms of local representation, particularly through the community leadership role of Members.
- 6.2 The members who will be invited to join Local Area Children's Centre Boards are as follows:

Councillor K Rolph (Coalfields)
Councillor A Emmerson (East)
Councillor S Forster (North)
Councillor L Williams (Washington)
Councillor S Porterhouse (West)

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The revenue budget for 2011/12 included for £1.77 m of efficiencies delivered from the review. 'quick win' savings implemented during the financial year secured part of this saving, with the implementation of changes described in this report delivering the required £1.77m on a permanent basis.

8. Reasons for Decision

- 8.1 In addition to the need to achieve financial savings the review was undertaken to ensure the integration of children's centres with the wider early intervention offer and to provide a more targeted model which better engages with parents and improves outcomes. The recommendation to invite the Chairs of People Boards to join the Local Area Children's Centre Boards will provide a formal link into the Council's community leadership arrangements and ensure that the People Boards are able to shape and influence future service delivery arrangements and help advise on new contract specifications based on an assessment of local area needs.

9. Alternative options

- 9.1 Maintaining current arrangements was considered and rejected as to do this would not have supported the development of an early intervention model or engaged with the families who most require support to improve outcomes for children. Furthermore the efficiency of £1.77 million would not have been achieved.

10. Equality Assessment

- 10.1 An equality assessment has been completed with identified impacts and mitigating actions.

11. Relevant Consultations

- 11.1 Details of the consultation process and outcomes are outlined at section 3 of this report.

12. Background Papers

Cabinet reports: November 2011 and February 2012
Consultation document