



Derby City Council

**Council Cabinet
3 August 2016**

Report of the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding
and Children and Young People

ITEM 8

Reconfiguration of Children Centre Services

SUMMARY

- 1.1 As a result of the Government continuing to cut local government funding, the Council has to make substantial changes to its budget. The Council has already delivered £116m of savings between 2010 and 2015, with a further £45m to deliver between 2016 and 2019.
- 1.2 This report sets out proposals to save £300,000 by re-configuring seven of the seventeen children's centres. (£151,285 building costs and £150,000 related staffing costs). It is important to note that there is no intention in reducing the delivery of Children's Centre services and the city will still be able to ensure that the Children's Centre core offer is maintained and its statutory duty is met. Front line staff will continue in the Council's employment to ensure delivery to the most vulnerable children and their families.
- 1.3 The seven centres contained in the report for re-configuration have been identified because they are centres built in later phases of the children's centre programme, and six of these are in less deprived areas of the city than the ten centres it is proposed are not affected. In addition, all of the seven centres are on or near schools sites, and it is proposed that schools take over the management responsibility and all running costs of the seven buildings. There is a strong appetite from head teachers in all seven areas to this proposal.
- 1.4 This proposal would result in the Children's Centre portfolio retaining responsibility for ten centres, with the following children's centres reconfigured:
 - Mickleover/Littleover
 - Chellaston
 - Meadow Lane
 - Oakwood
 - Westend
 - Babbington
 - Spondon

- 1.5 Public Consultation took place from Monday 6th March 2016 until Friday 27th May in line with both Children's Centre Statutory Guidance and Local Authority Consultation Guidance. The consultation was completed through a variety of mediums including on line, paper format and focus groups with both service users and partners.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the completion of and responses to the public consultation on re-configuring seven of the Children Centres in the city.
- 2.2 To agree the proposal to reconfigure seven of the 17 Children's Centre buildings and continue to operate a children's centre service across the city from the remaining ten centres.
- 2.3 To progress formal negotiations with schools on the process for handover of management, running costs and responsibility of seven Children's Centre buildings to the relevant schools.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Children's Centre budget has already taken a 67% reduction over the past three years. This has included:
- A complete re-structure of the service from individual children centre teams into a locality model
 - A reduction of opening hours in half of the centres across the localities
 - The tendering out or closure of childcare delivered by the local authority in the Centres
 - A reduction in evidence based parenting programmes delivered to families
 - A reduction in the number of PEEP programmes delivered
 - Maintenance of essential spend only for the last three years which has prohibited any new developments taking place.
- 3.2 The severe financial pressure the council is under means that all options have to be explored to make further savings.



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Consultation commenced on the 6th March 2016 in the form of an online survey, questionnaires in all 17 children's centres, locality offices and public buildings. The survey consisted of 26 questions, translated into 4 different languages in addition to English (Urdu, Polish, Punjabi and Slovak).
- 4.2 The questions ranged from determining whether a centre had been visited within the last 12 months, which were the preferred centres and the preferred activities to the more specific questions around how the proposed reconfiguration would impact on the attendance at the identified centres and whether transfer of management responsibility was acceptable.
- 4.3 A total number of 477 respondents have completed the survey the majority (61%) on paper. Of all the respondents:-
- 82% had visited a centre within the last 12 months.
 - 81% used the centre closest to home.
 - 48% because they preferred the services on offer.
 - Stay and Play sessions and health sessions were the most popular with 41% and 17% respectively.
- 4.4 In terms of outcomes, 63% of respondents reject or strongly reject the proposal to reconfigure against 21% who support or strongly supported the proposals. 60% of respondents say it would be more difficult to attend centres and 40% say they may stop attending; 55% say they would use another centre.
- 4.5 Just over half the responses agreed children's centres should be targeted at those most in need: 18% strongly agreed; 41% disagreed; and 40% support the proposal to transfer responsibility of the buildings. 68% of respondents use one of the centres; the remainder of respondents are CC staff/ school, council tax payers, and partner organisations.
- 4.6 Dialogue has been maintained with schools in the areas with children's centres identified for reconfiguration. Currently 6 of the 7 schools have made a firm in principle commitment to taking on the buildings these are:

4.6.1 Westend Children's Centre (in the grounds of Central Community Nursery School)

The building is an integral part of the Central Community Nursery school. They intend to deliver 2 year old Flying Start and have agreed to continue to offer space to two citywide children's centre groups; one for teen parents and one for hearing impaired parents and children. In addition, they are offering use of an alternative building to carry on delivering health services and PEEP. The school are due to federate with Ashgate Nursery School imminently and frontline services and group work are offered by children's centre workers. This is clearly maintenance of a service for under 5's and will justify to the DfE that we are not reducing services and we are maintaining frontline outreach services to those most vulnerable.

4.6.2 Spondon Children's Centre (on the site of Asterdale Primary School)

The children's centre building is attached to the schools foundation stage unit and their intention is to deliver the 2 year old flying start; this will support their numbers within the Foundation Stage Unit. In addition they are keen to pilot the 30 hour offer for 3&4 year olds due to be in place by September 2017. Currently their breakfast club runs from the school hall and this could be moved into the centre. The school are keen to remain involved with children's centre activity such as PEEP.

4.6.3 Oakwood Children's Centre (on the site of Parkview Primary School)

The centre sits adjacent to the foundation stage unit and close to the community building which delivers before and after school care by a third party provider. The school are keen to enter into an agreement with their current provider to deliver 2 year old flying start and the 30 hour offer for 3&4 year olds. This would support maintaining the number of 3&4 years olds accessing places.

4.6.4 Chellaston Children's Centre (on the Junior school site some distance from the main school building.)

Currently the school use the centre building for before and after school clubs and five mornings per week for extended school activities. They wish to move to full-time use continuing to run school activities but are happy for the Stay and Weigh Health Clinic to be maintained on an identified session. The school currently are benefitting from capital works to expand their hall to the tune of £300,000. Unlike the rest of the Centres, Chellaston Children's Centre was funded from Extended Schools funding not Sure Start Grant meaning there is less pressure or risk of capital claw back by the Government.

4.6.5 **Babbington Children's Centre (attached to Stonehill Nursery School)**

The Nursery School is federated with Dale Primary School from the Autumn term. There is a sufficiency issue for 2 year olds in the locality and the centre would be used by the school to offer 2 year old provision. The Head Teacher has a plan to deliver additional family learning and PEEP which the children's centre will support. This would ensure that services for under 5's remain part of their offer and justify to the DFE there is no reduction of frontline services for under 5's and their families.

4.6.6 **Meadow Lane (on the site of Meadow Farm Primary School)**

We are continuing to negotiate with the Head and Chair of governors as well as with potential other partners in the area

4.6.7 **Mickleover/Littleover (adjacent to Brookfield Primary School.)**

The Head is keen to continue negotiations with us to move things forward and has in principle committed to further negotiations to use the building in the future.

4.6.8 The above 6 schools are keen to continue the development and reconfiguration of the children's centre buildings. They are keen to take on responsibility for the buildings, the timeline for the remaining centre which is **Meadow Lane** requires more negotiation and work which will become part of the timeline to move all centres forward.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Retain all of the centres with a reduced offer of services and opening times with a hope that this would reduce costs.
- 5.2 There has been some interest from Public Health and Voluntary organisations to use the buildings and this could be explored further should not all of the schools move forward with the reconfiguration proposals. It is important to stress that this would require any other third party to be able to cover the costs of their usage. Offering the buildings out to other organisations to deliver services would be a lengthy process and more of a challenge to ensure that services for under 5's can be delivered thereby reducing the risk of capital clawback.
- 5.3 Do nothing and make no savings.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s)	Olu Idowu Head of Legal Services Janice Hadfield Liz Moore Maureen Darbon, Director Early Help and Children's Safeguarding
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Other(s)	Fiona Colton, Head of Service, Early Help, Locality 2
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Fiona Colton 01332 641164 Fiona.colton@derby.gov.uk Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance (April 2013) Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Appendix 3-

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 Reduction in responsibility for the running costs of seventeen centres to ten would save £151, 285 in premises costs

Should the Council only have responsibility for ten centres, there would be additional staffing savings as structures would need to be remodelled to be fit for purpose. A proposal to restructure management and reception roles would need to be developed. No reduction in front line staff would be proposed as the reach of under 5's will not reduce.

A restructure of staffing following reconfiguration would result in further savings in the region of £150,000. However, if this proposal were accepted, more work would need to be completed on the potential staffing structures and this would have to go out to consultation in line with Council policy.

It must be highlighted that there is a risk of capital claw back. This would be in the region of:

- £3,220,000 for 7 centres. There is less chance that there will be capital claw back at Chellaston Children's Centre as a majority of the project was funded by the extended schools capital programme.

It is important to note that this can be mitigated by ensuring delivery of services for under 5's which will be part of the agreements with schools.

For more detail see the attached table – Appendix 4

Legal

- 2.1 The Council has followed the provisions of the Childcare Act 2006 and the associated Statutory Guidance for Children Centres published in 2013 before any significant changes to services provided through a relevant children's centre can be made. Statutory consultation has taken place as prescribed by the DfE Statutory Guidance.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Statutory Guidance, the Council has consulted everyone who could be affected by the proposed changes, for example, local families, those who use the centres, children's centres staff, advisory board members and service providers. Particular attention has been given to ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in consultations.

- 2.3 The attached consultation questionnaire covers how the local authority will continue to meet the needs of families with children under five as part of any reorganisation of services. It should also be clear how respondents' views can be made known and adequate time should be allowed for those wishing to respond. Decisions following consultation will be announced publically. This should explain why decisions were taken.
- 2.4 The Council must also have due regard to its equality responsibilities in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010. There is a need to undertake a detailed equality impact assessment (EIA) to identify any impacts on those with protected characteristics and to keep the same under constant revision both before and throughout the consultation process, and also prior to any firm decision being made, so that it can be taken into account as part of the decision making process. To that end an Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out, details of which accompany this report at Appendix 2
- 2.5 Any other legal issues or implications which become apparent during the consultation process and following its conclusion will be considered accordingly as and when they arise.

Personnel

- 3.1 The proposal, if implemented, would see the line management of Children's Centre staff retained by the Council.
- 3.1 Subject to the decision of Cabinet, consultation with staff and the Trade Unions would need to take place with regard to a proposed organisational staffing restructure in line with Council policy. Should the proposal be implemented, there potentially could be redundancy implications and costs.

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- 4.1 None directly arising from this comment

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Families would be required to travel further at some points to access Children's Centre services.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 There would be less responsibility for the operational coordinator who manages the health and safety and risk assessment during Children's Centre activity.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None directly arising from this report

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 A detailed piece of work and decisions around the process and responsibility of handing over the buildings would need to be undertaken with both CYP and Corporate Asset Management. There may be some risk of capital claw back.

Risk Management

- 9.1 None directly arising from this report

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 None directly arising from this report

