



**CABINET – 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018**

**EARLY HELP REVIEW – FAMILY WELLBEING SERVICE (0-19)**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**PART A**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to reduce the number of Children's Centres from 36 to 18 and to redesign the various elements of the Council's Early Help Services for children and young people into an integrated family and wellbeing service<sup>1</sup> (for 0-19 years).
2. The Cabinet, on 9 January 2018, agreed to consult on proposed changes to the Early Help offer. This report sets out the response to that consultation and the consideration that has led to the proposed revised delivery model.

**Recommendations**

3. It is recommended:
  - a) That the results of the public consultation be noted;
  - b) That the number of Children's Centres is reduced from 36 to 18 as detailed in paragraph 40 of this report;
  - c) That the Director of Children and Family Services following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Families and the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to develop and implement the new family and wellbeing service on the basis outlined in this report, noting that this will include:
    - (i) A remodelling of the staff structure to reflect the new integrated service and achieve staffing efficiencies,
    - (ii) Delivering a buildings model based on the 18 Children's Centres and 3 Supporting Leicestershire Families centres, and finding suitable alternative uses for the redesignated buildings wherever possible, including updating the impact analysis as the model is developed.

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<sup>1</sup> Service name still to be confirmed.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

4. The new delivery model will provide targeted intervention to those families most in need via a better integrated service that makes best use of the staff and resources available.
5. The proposals have been informed by feedback from the consultation exercise and further work carried out since January, including the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA). The new delivery model would enable the service to make the required savings of £1.5m up to 2020.
6. The Director of Children and Family Services will need to develop and implement the new model over several months, as this will include for example, the re-designation of buildings and relocation of services.

### **Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

7. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on 5 March 2018 and an extract of the minutes for this meeting are attached as Appendix K. This Committee will receive a further report on 4 July 2018 and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.
8. The development of a new staffing structure to deliver the integrated service would commence from July 2018 with implementation of new roles from April 2019.
9. Implementation of the new buildings model would also be underway from April 2019.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

10. Sure Start Children's Centres were a Government-led initiative introduced in 2003 which committed to delivering 3,500 Children's Centres across the country by 2010. This led to the delivery of 36 Children's Centres across Leicestershire.
11. Children's Centres are defined in the Childcare Act 2006. There is a requirement for them to make available universal and targeted early childhood services either at the centres or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers and fathers) and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere. Early childhood services are defined in the Act as:-
  - early years provision (early education and childcare);
  - social services functions of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
  - health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
  - training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents; and
  - information and advice services for parents and prospective parents.

12. Only facilities that fulfil the statutory definition of a Children's Centre may be termed as such. All Children's Centres are subject to an Ofsted inspection framework.
13. The Cabinet at its meeting on 9th January 2018 considered a report on proposed changes to Early Help services of around £3.8m which represented nearly a third of its current budget (£12.4m per annum).
14. The County Council, at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 agreed the current MTFS, which included a revised savings target of £1.5m for the Early Help service.

### **Resource Implications**

15. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19-2021/22 (MTFS) requires a saving of £1.5m in 2019/20 through a service review of Early Help.
16. Part of the current Early Help offer, Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF), has been part-funded by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) and partner contributions, but this is expected to cease after 2019/20, reducing SLF funding by £2.3m. In January 2018, it was agreed that the County Council would provide an additional £2m to support frontline services, through an increase in Council Tax. This, alongside improved Payment By Results income, postpones the requirement for the Department to meet the £2.3m shortfall until November 2020 and means that implementation of the new delivery model will have significantly less impact on frontline staff and services.
17. In 2020, the County Council will have a better understanding of its medium term financial position, when the results of the Fair Funding review and the Comprehensive Spending Review will be available. It is also likely that by this date local authorities will be advised if there is to be a successor scheme to the Government's Troubled Families programme. With this, and taking into account income generated by the Corporate Asset Investment Fund, the Council will be able to assess the affordability of bridging the £2.3m annual funding gap for the SLF programme.
18. Children's Centre buildings were initially funded through capital grants awarded mainly by the Department for Education (DfE). The terms and conditions of the grant included a clause allowing a graduated clawback if a building does not remain operational for 25 years. The risk can be mitigated, for example, if 0-5 years services continue to be provided from the premises. This clawback risk is assessed as low, but it will be actively managed through negotiations on the future use of properties and, where necessary, through dialogue with the DfE.

### **Legal Implications**

19. The Childcare Act 2006 places a general duty on the Council to improve the well-being of young children in the areas to reduce inequalities between young children. To this end, the Council is required to secure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated manner with the aim of facilitating access and maximising the benefit of the services to young children and their parents.

The Council has to ensure a sufficiency of children's centres, so far as it is reasonably practicable, to meet local need.

**Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

20. As this is a matter which will affect most areas of the County, a copy of the report is being circulated to all members via the Members News in Brief Service.

**Officers to Contact**

Paul Meredith, Director of Children and Family Services

Tel. 0116 305 7441

Email: [paul.meredith@leics.gov.uk](mailto:paul.meredith@leics.gov.uk)

Jane Moore, Assistant Director, Education and Early Help  
Children and Family Services

Tel. 0116 305 2649

Email: [jane.moore@leics.gov.uk](mailto:jane.moore@leics.gov.uk)

## **PART B**

### **Background**

21. The Early Help service is currently delivered through the following 4 services:-

- Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF)
- Children's Centres
- Youth Offending Service (YOS)
- Early Help Information, Support and Assessment (EHISA).

22. Targeted interventions are delivered by the service via:-

- 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.
- 40 different buildings, of which 36 are Children's Centres and 4 are SLF Family Centres (formerly Youth Centres).

23. As indicated in Part A above, £1.5m MTFs savings are now required. It is planned to achieve this through:-

- A remodelled family wellbeing service
- A reduction in Early Help delivery buildings from 40 to 21 (reducing the Children's Centres from 36 to 18 and the SLF Family Centres from 4 to 3).

### **Consultation**

24. In January 2018 the Cabinet agreed to consult on proposals to integrate the four Early Help Services into a combined family wellbeing service to support children, young people and their families through an integrated holistic service. At this time it was proposed to reduce the number of Early Help delivery buildings (including Children's Centres) from 40 to 15, as summarised in the table below (overleaf):-

<b>Original proposals</b>	
<b><u>Centres to remain open</u></b>	<b><u>Centres to be redesignated</u></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Melton Venture House (SLF Centre)</li> <li>2. Thurmaston</li> <li>3. Wigston Magna</li> <li>4. Shepshed</li> <li>5. Loughborough West</li> <li>6. Loughborough Mountfields (SLF Centre)</li> <li>7. Earl Shilton</li> <li>8. Hinckley East</li> <li>9. Lutterworth</li> <li>10. Market Harborough</li> <li>11. Coalville</li> <li>12. Northern Parishes</li> <li>13. Measham</li> <li>14. Coalville Greenhills (SLF Centre)</li> <li>15. Huncote</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Loughborough - Cobden</li> <li>2. Loughborough - Shelthorpe</li> <li>3. Coalville - Warren Hills</li> <li>4. Mountsorrel</li> <li>5. Barwell</li> <li>6. Desford</li> <li>7. Hinckley Westfield</li> <li>8. Hinckley West</li> <li>9. Melton - The Cove</li> <li>10. Melton - The Edge</li> <li>11. Ashby de la Zouch</li> <li>12. Ibstock</li> <li>13. Moira</li> <li>14. Thringstone</li> <li>15. Braunstone Town</li> <li>16. Countesthorpe</li> <li>17. South Wigston</li> <li>18. Anstey</li> <li>19. Broughton Astley</li> <li>20. Fleckney</li> <li>21. Bushby</li> <li>22. Bagworth</li> <li>23. Vale of Belvoir</li> <li>24. Melton - Fairmead</li> <li>25. Market Harborough Satellite (SLF Centre)</li> </ol>

25. The consultation exercise took place from 22 January to 22 April 2018.

26. The prime target audience for this consultation were current service users and their families/carers. Also important were key partners, including:

- District Councils and adjoining local authorities
- NHS / Health service providers
- Schools and Colleges
- Early Years providers
- Police
- Landlords of County Council Early Help venues
- Organisations co-delivering services from County Council Early Help venues.

27. Other stakeholders which were directly or indirectly affected included:

- Parish Councils

- Internal services, i.e. Adults and Communities, Environment and Transport, Public Health Departments
- Transport and crèche providers
- Voluntary services, such as Homestart which deliver their services from Children's Centres.

28. The consultation process included the following:-

- Survey to public/service users – online and hard copies available within centres/district council offices (including Easyread version) - Appendices 5 to 7
- 40 service user drop in sessions (one in each Children's Centre/SLF centres)
- 7 consultation information events (one in each district) which were open to all members of the public (Summary of events in Appendix J)
- 2 key stakeholder events
- 36 site visits to engage with landlords/schools on the buildings proposals
- One-to-one partner meetings with the District Councils and key Health partners.

29. Early Help Staff were encouraged to complete the consultation survey and were also included from an operational perspective to support the development of the detailed service model via 4 staff workshops and a number of staff focus groups.

### **Consultation Responses**

30. Of the 794 responses to the survey, over half were from Early Help service users, with the remainder including partner organisations, members, and the public.

31. A breakdown of survey user respondents is as follows:-

- 89% Children's Centre users.
- 22% SLF users.
- 3% YOS users.
- 9% EHISA users.

(Note: some users access more than one service)

32. The survey responses showed that 90% of respondents accessed services at a Children's Centre.

### **Key Themes**

33. The feedback from the consultation is detailed in Appendix I to this report and a summary is given below. In general -

- a. The majority of respondents were in favour of an integrated, whole family service approach, and there was a positive response to the principles of integrated services and integrated working.

- b. Many respondents made it clear that they did not support proposals to close centres and would prefer the Council to make efficiencies elsewhere if possible.
  - c. Respondents were concerned with the future location of some Early Help services and had concerns about accessibility.
  - d. Concerns relating to the impact on mental health and anxiety of users being affected by the changes was a reoccurring theme in response to the proposals.
34. There was some concern (particularly from staff and partner organisations) that a 'Hub and Spoke' model of services would result in less effective delivery in some areas.
35. At the public events feedback included comments on the importance of and increasing the use of volunteers to deliver early intervention. It was noted that volunteer groups currently ran a high percentage of services and would likely be keen to continue to do so, but would need delivery space.

#### Views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 5 March 2018

36. The Committee received a report on the proposals in March 2018, and an extract from the minutes of that meeting is attached to this report as Appendix K. Members recognised the Council's difficult financial position and the need to achieve savings, but concern was expressed about the effect of the proposals on people's ability to access the service, particularly given the reduction in the number of buildings from which services were delivered. The Committee considered the petition regarding the Cobden Surestart Centre which was presented at the meeting.

#### Petitions

37. At the time of writing this report officers were aware of a number of petitions on this matter some of which have been formally lodged. These are listed below. Members will be updated on all petitions lodged with the County Council.

<b>Petition</b>	<b>Link</b>	<b>Signatures</b>
Stop the Proposed Closure of Leicestershire Children's Centres	<a href="https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-leicestershire-s-children-s-centres">https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-leicestershire-s-children-s-centres</a>	4283
Save Cobden & Shelthorpe Sure Start	<a href="https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-cobden-shelthorpe-sure-start">https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-cobden-shelthorpe-sure-start</a>	225
Petition Against Closure of Cobden Surestart	Paper petition - received.	204
Save Our Children's Centres	<a href="https://signme.org.uk/1435">https://signme.org.uk/1435</a>	n/a
Save Barwell Sure Start	<a href="https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/keep-barwell-sure-start-centre-open">https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/keep-barwell-sure-start-centre-open</a>	531



### **Proposed New Service**

38. More detailed work into the availability and cost of alternative community venues to deliver services has now been undertaken since January in order to identify which Early Help buildings should be retained. The original rationale for selecting which buildings should remain is unchanged -

- Their location in the county and within towns and local areas.
- Suitability - for example, giving flexible space to deliver both group and one-to-one work and having office space to accommodate staff.
- Accessibility - on foot, by car, and public transport.
- How people currently use services at the location/building.
- Practicalities - such as running costs and whether the Council owns or leases the building (this often affects how it can be used).

39. Taking account of the consultation responses and further work, the final proposals are as follows:-

- a. An integrated family wellbeing service which offers targeted support to those families in need of intervention to prevent their escalation into social care.
- b. 21 family wellbeing centres (18 Children's Centres and 3 SLF centres) which will provide delivery space for the new service.
  - i. The new buildings model will support the delivery of services to families in areas of high deprivation, particularly to those individuals who benefit from receiving the care they need in familiar safe places.
  - ii. The additional buildings will provide the space needed to run extra programmes and will also support the volunteer workforce to continue to provide early intervention to families and reduce their risk of escalation to the most targeted one-to-one care provision.
  - iii. Each building in the new model will deliver the same range of services, tailored to local need as and when necessary.
- c. Redesignation of 18 Children's Centres into other uses – where possible to support Early Years initiatives so that capital clawback is avoided.

### **Retained Buildings**

40. The Children's Centres and SLF centres to be retained in the new model and those to be redesignated are listed below -

<b>New proposals</b>	
<b>Centres to remain open</b>	<b>Centres to be redesignated</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Melton - Venture House (SLF Centre)</li> <li>2. <i>Melton – The Edge*</i></li> <li>3. Thurmaston</li> <li>4. Wigston Magna</li> <li>5. Loughborough West</li> <li>6. Loughborough Mountfields (SLF Centre)</li> <li>7. Earl Shilton</li> <li>8. Hinckley East</li> <li>9. Lutterworth</li> <li>10. Market Harborough</li> <li>11. Coalville</li> <li>12. Northern Parishes</li> <li>13. Measham</li> <li>14. Coalville Greenhill (SLF Centre)</li> <li>15. Huncote</li> <li>16. <i>Loughborough - Shelthorpe*</i></li> <li>17. <i>Bagworth*</i></li> <li>18. <i>Broughton Astley*</i></li> <li>19. <i>Moira*</i></li> <li>20. <i>Braunstone*</i></li> <li>21. <i>Barwell*</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Loughborough - Cobden</li> <li>2. Coalville - Warren Hills</li> <li>3. Mountsorrel</li> <li>4. Desford</li> <li>5. Hinckley Westfield</li> <li>6. Hinckley West</li> <li>7. Melton - The Cove</li> <li>8. Ashby de la Zouch</li> <li>9. Ibstock</li> <li>10. Thringstone</li> <li>11. Countesthorpe</li> <li>12. South Wigston</li> <li>13. Anstey</li> <li>14. Fleckney</li> <li>15. Bushby</li> <li>16. Vale of Belvoir</li> <li>17. Melton - Fairmead</li> <li>18. Market Harborough Satellite (SLF Centre)</li> <li>19. <i>Shepshed*</i></li> </ol> <p><b>Changes from original proposals are in <i>italics</i>*</b></p>

41. The children's centre in Shepshed, originally to be retained, is now to be re-designated as it has become apparent that its location is not convenient for local families and few Early Help programmes are being run there. Moreover, there is only a small space available, offering little flexibility.

### **Buildings to be Re-designated**

42. The 19 buildings which will no longer be used by the service will, where possible, be re-designated and the possibility of clawback will be mitigated by ensuring use for some Early Years activity where possible.

43. It is envisaged that some buildings may be taken on by the local schools, and their future community use will be encouraged. Discussions would also be needed with building owners (in some cases this will be the County Council).

44. Appendix D gives details on each of the individual centres, in terms of their current use and the rationale for the proposals.

45. Families who are currently receiving support at the Centres to be re-designated will be advised of the nearest alternative location (Appendix D), and potential mitigation measures have been identified in the EHRIA (Appendix B).

### **New Family Wellbeing Service**

46. The proposed new service model would integrate the four existing areas together into a single family wellbeing service, providing a core age-related offer for vulnerable children, young people and their families, via whole-family working. The new model would be run on a mainly targeted basis as at present, with families being assessed to identify levels of need.
47. The Service would be delivered from locality based teams operating from the 21 service buildings, community centres, and in people's homes. Multi-skilled Early Help Workers will deliver group and one-to-one interventions as necessary. Drop-in clinics will also be available.
48. In addition to the locality-based teams, a centrally-based unit at County Hall will continue to work closely with First Response Children's Duty 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 or young person which is so important in keeping children and young people safe. This will also support the infrastructure of the locality services, for example, through the provision of quality assurance activity, practice development, policy and process.
49. Assessments will inform the most appropriate level of support for a family, matching needs to services. This may include, for instance, referral to external partners, the family wellbeing service, other County Council services, giving information and advice, and coordinating multi-agency responses.
50. Criteria for receipt of Early Help services will need to be refined further to target those families which are unlikely to achieve good outcomes without support. Evidence shows that domestic violence and adult and child mental health problems in particular are key features in families needing support.
51. The focus of the service will be on continued support to the most vulnerable families, helping them to function effectively, ensuring that children are safe, and preventing escalation to statutory services.

### **Staffing**

52. All staff in Early Help will be affected to some extent by the new service model. The greatest impact will be on the management roles but front line staff will also see changes to roles, and some reduction in overall numbers is an inevitable consequence of the overall budget reduction. Some changes to the focus or re-prioritisation of work may require new skills and competencies.
53. A Staff Action Plan would be launched in September 2018 with the new service model in place from Spring 2019.

### **Partnership Working**

54. As described above the consultation included stakeholders affected by the proposed changes including Health and District Councils. Work is ongoing

regarding the joint planning of services with health colleagues, midwifery and health visitors as part of the core early help offer and to develop effective information-sharing protocols.

55. Service users accessing Health services may need to be redirected to other venues (such as GP surgeries) and this is being considered as part of the mitigation measures for each area.

### **Conclusion**

56. The new integrated family and wellbeing service will ensure that the resources available to the Council of just over £10m to support Early Help and Intervention are targeted to those in greatest need and that there is sufficient service provision in each locality. Merging the four services will realise efficiencies thereby reducing the impact of the required saving on frontline staff and services, and the SLF model has already highlighted the benefits of supporting families holistically.

57. It is intended that the new service will be implemented from April 2019.

58. The proposed model will deliver a whole family service aimed at supporting families with significant needs and their family networks around them. It is based on extensive consultation, the findings of the individual centre profiles and views of partners, and having regard to the needs of the most vulnerable families.

### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

59. The full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) is attached as Appendix B. 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 experience a reduced service. In developing the new service due regard will be paid to the findings of the EHRIA and measures will be taken to mitigate any impacts identified.

60. This EHRIA has been considered by the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group and a statement from them is included in Appendix E.

61. Overall the Group feel that the equalities implications have been considered thoroughly and particularly noted that officers had considered implications well beyond the usual protected characteristics. They suggested improvements in considering the impact on people depending on their disability; the EHRIA has been updated to reflect this.

### **Environmental Implications**

62. The project may have environmental implications linked to the proposed service change in terms of the increased travel requirements where centre numbers are reduced. However, this should be offset where centres are redesignated as building running costs such as energy use will be reduced overall by the service area.

## **Background Papers**

Sure Start Statutory Guidance 2013

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/273768/childrens\\_centre\\_stat\\_guidance\\_april\\_2013.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273768/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april_2013.pdf)

Report to the Cabinet, County Council Strategic Plan and Transformation Programme – 6 May 2014 (Minute 142 refers)

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=3990&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet, Early Help and Prevention Review – 17 June 2016 (Minute 438 refers)

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4603&Ver=4>

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Map

Appendix B – Full EHRIA

Appendix C – EHRIA screening document, January 2018

Appendix D – Centre Profiles

Appendix E – Statement from the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group

Appendix F – Consultation information document

Appendix G – Consultation Survey

Appendix H – Consultation Survey – Easy Read Version

Appendix I – Consultation Findings Report

Appendix J – Summary Report of Consultation Information Events

Appendix K – Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 March 2018

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