

**CHILDREN'S CENTRES UPDATE**

**To: CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Date: 14 March 2017**

**From: Jo Sollars, Head of Family Work**

**Electoral division(s): All**

**Forward Plan ref: n/a**

**Key decision: No**

**Purpose: To update Members on the Children's Centres Programme of Work. The Committee considered a paper on Children's Centre Service Delivery and Proposed Future Developments in 2017-18 at its meeting on 11 October 2016. It was agreed that further information would be brought to the Committee for discussion prior to consultation about changes to service delivery.**

**Following the elections in early May and until the end of June it is proposed that discussions about the future delivery of the Children's Centre Programme will take place at a local level with Members, parish councils, community groups and partners, families and centre users. All of this information and feedback will be used to inform a public consultation in July 2017, the outcome of which will result in final proposals being submitted to Committees for agreement in September / October 2017.**

**Recommendation: To be aware of work done to date and timescales for future engagement and public consultation.**

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|-------------------------|--|
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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 This paper updates Members on work done to date on the Children's Centres Programme in Cambridgeshire. This work is part of the Children's Change Programme and seeks to ensure that the work of Children's Centres supports the transformation of services for children and families, particularly the youngest and most vulnerable, whilst delivering the agreed savings target. (£1 million (Business Plan Ref A/R 6.224) in 2018/19)

1.2 "We want Cambridgeshire to be a place where all families have the opportunity to thrive and we will ensure, where it is safe and in their best interests, our children will live within their families and communities. We will support those families with high quality services that support good outcomes for all our children."

*Children Change Programme Vision statement*

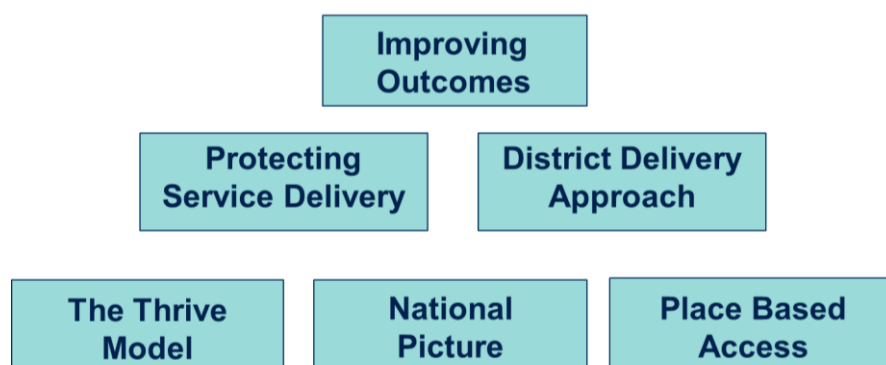
## 2.0 MAIN ISSUES

2.1 The Children's Change programme in Cambridgeshire is developing a more integrated approach to support for families across Early Help and Social Care services. Service design has been built on the Thrive model (additional information available on request) Within this programme, there has been a commitment for the Children's Centre service offer to be at the heart of District-based provision, linking across higher tier provision. This will ensure that Children's Centre services are clearly accessible for our most vulnerable families, and able to respond to the increasing complexities and higher levels of need emerging in the county.

2.2 We are ensuring that our integration and redesign of services diminishes gap in services, simplifies processes creating efficiencies, decreases the number of transitions for families, delivering the principle that families only need tell their story once and are targeted on the most vulnerable populations where we know the gap in outcomes across the County is of concern and is a priority for the Council.

2.3 *The Building Blocks for future service design*

In current thinking it is proposed that Children's Centre services going forward are modelled on these six building blocks.



## 2.4 We are working around four themes within the Children Centre Work Programme

- Child and Family Centres
- Building capacity in the provision of Child Care in the County
- Integrating and delivering services with health and other partners at a District level
- Building capacity in our future community hubs supporting the universal service offer and developing community resilience

## 3.0 The National Picture

3.1 There have been a number of announcements from Government indicating that a consultation about the future of Children's Centres is imminent. A plan for a national consultation on the future of Children's Centres was announced in September 2015, which has yet to be published. Children's Centre provision has been maintained to a good level and standard in Cambridgeshire during this period of uncertainty.

3.2 Officers have been involved at a national level in participating in an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Children's Centres. This APPG concluded that the expertise and ways of working with families which have evolved during the SureStart era should seek to address the wider needs of more vulnerable families. Some early activity in Cambridgeshire to respond to this proposal has included the early thinking about Child and Family Centres which places Children's Centre experience and expertise within the wider Children's Transformation programme. A second national response came from the Children's Commissioner in October, with the publication of 'Family Hubs-A Discussion paper' suggesting how a whole family approach could support vulnerable children.

## 4.0 Child and Family Centres

4.1 Some preparation work has been underway to consider the development of a Child and Family Centre offer, this has considered evolving from the current Children's Centre offer to extend across the 0-19 age range, with a particular focus on families with identified vulnerabilities. This offer is likely to be delivered from a number of dedicated Child and Family Centre buildings, alongside delivery from Community Hubs and 'pop-up' locations, similar to the current spread of venues used by the service.

4.2 Child and Family Centres would be family-accessible spaces, in areas of the county with high population and need, where really closely integrated services will have the greatest impact. They would provide a more preventative approach to support for our most vulnerable children; together with a way of coordinating family support across the age range within a family, and across other services where required.

## 5.0 Community Hubs

5.1 Work is also in progress to develop a network of community hubs across the county, building on the strengths of Libraries as safe, trusted and neutral places used by people of all ages and abilities. There is some consideration

of working to bring together our universal, customer facing services into one place in each community, combined with other public and voluntary sector services, where this is pragmatic and possible. Hubs will be the place in the community where people can access the widest range of information, advice and support. We have been considering what elements of existing Children Centre services could be delivered from hubs.

## **6.0 Improving Child Care Sufficiency**

- 6.1 If we were to deliver some of our Children Centre services in hubs this may free up space in existing Children Centre buildings for additional child care provision. Where possibilities emerge for making alternative use of any of our Children Centre buildings this will be done in full alignment with Cambridgeshire's need for additional child care places. Certain conditions exist in respect of the use of former SureStart grants for Children's Centres including ensuring investment continues to be used for families with children under 5, and these conditions will be fully adhered to.

## **7.0 Engagement to date**

- Officers and Members have been engaged in an ongoing dialogue from May 2016 to understand the current Children's Centre offer and consideration on how these services might look going forward.
- From July 2016, this work was aligned with the emergent Children's Change Programme which placed the Children's Centre work within a district delivery structure.
- A members Seminar was held regarding the future direction of Children's Centres on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017. This presentation included the development of Child and Family Centres, as well as designing our future service delivery around a place-based approach.
- Initial discussions with current providers of Children's Centres within Cambridgeshire have taken place in February 2017, to help to develop early ideas around this work. (this included Children Centres operating from schools)
- Following the elections in early May and until the end of June, it is proposed that discussions about the future delivery of the Children's Centre Programme will take place at a local level with Members, parish councils, community groups and partners, families and centre users.
- All of this information and feedback will then be used to inform a public consultation in July, the outcome of which will result in final proposals for agreement by Committees in September / October 2017.

## **8.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

### **8.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### **8.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

The report above sets out details of significant implications in sections 2, 4, 5, and 6

### **8.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

The report above sets out details of significant implications in sections 2 and 4

## **9.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **9.1 Resource Implications**

9.1.1 The report above sets out details of significant implications in section 1.1

### **9.2 Statutory, Legal and Risk**

9.2.1 The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- There is no clear national steer on the future requirements for Children's Centres. We are still awaiting a consultation on their future and the Ofsted Inspection Framework is currently paused. The Local Authority is currently required to make provision for Children's Centres, secured in statute through the Childcare Act 2006.
- The timescales for the interdependent work streams are complex. Close attention will need to be paid to this through the consultation and implementation period.

### **9.3 Equality and Diversity**

9.3.1 The following bullet point set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Twelve of our current centres have been designated as Specialist Hubs for children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). We would need to ensure the model going forward protects these services and facilities.

### **9.4 Engagement and Communications**

9.4.1 The report above sets out details of significant implications in paragraph 7

### **9.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

9.5.1 The report above sets out details of significant implications in paragraph 7

### **9.6 Public Health**

9.6.1 The proposal will continue to support the effective delivery of the Healthy Child Programme across Cambridgeshire, and will continue to work towards further integration of children's services which will ensure excellent access to information and resources that build confidence and capacity and provide an additional focus on health priorities including family smoking, obesity, alcohol related harm, sexually transmitted infections and teenage pregnancies.

| Source Documents   | Location  |
|--|---|
| Family Hubs: A Discussion Paper (Children's Commissioner, October 2016)  | <a href="https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Family%20Hubs%20-%20A%20Discussion%20Paper%202016.pdf">https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Family%20Hubs%20-%20A%20Discussion%20Paper%202016.pdf</a> |
| Family Hubs: The Future of Children's Centres (All Party Parliamentary Group on Children's Centres, July 2016) | <a href="http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_82938-8.pdf">http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_82938-8.pdf</a>   |

| Implications  | Officer Clearance   |
|---|---|
| <b>Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?</b>                            | Comments awaited<br>Name of Financial Officer:<br>M Wade (CYP)        |
| <b>Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?</b> | Comments awaited<br>Name of Legal Officer:<br>Lynne Owen              |
| <b>Are there any Equality and Diversity implications?</b>                                 | Yes. Paragraph 9.3 refers<br>Name of Officer:<br>CFA Service Director |
| <b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b> | Comments awaited<br>Name of Officer:<br>Simon Cobby                   |
| <b>Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues?</b>                        | Yes. Paragraph 7 refers<br>Name of Officer:<br>CFA Service Director   |
| <b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>                  | Comments awaited<br>Name of Officer:<br>Tess Campbell                 |