
Subject:
Review Children's Centre Provision

Cabinet Member: Councillor Donna Martin, Children, Schools & Families

1. RECOMMENDATIONS / DECISION REQUESTED

- 1.1 It is recommended that the proposed budget and staffing proposals are agreed as a basis for consultation.
- 1.2 Explore the possibility through consultation of transferring the governance of children's centres to schools.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 This proposal sets out a new way of delivering Children's Centre services across the Borough which will meet our legislative duties and ensure services are provided for families with greatest need. The model will be a hub and spoke model based on a merger of one lead Centre and a number of satellite centres incorporating all of the current 16 Children's Centres. The Lead Centre and Satellites will be merged together in accordance with DfE guidance which means they will be treated as one Children's Centre and subject to one Ofsted inspection. The decision requested is to proceed with this model for consultation based on merging 7 Lead Centres with 9 Satellite Centres

3. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 **Closing Children's Centre's:** This poses a very significant risk for the Local Authority in three areas.
 - (i) Clawback of capital investment in the buildings.
 - (ii) Failure to ensure sufficient provision of Children's Centres under the Childcare Act 2006 and Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.
 - (iii) A number of the children's centre's are attached to schools, which could incur a capital budget problem.
- 3.2 **Adopting a hub and spoke model based on clusters:** In this model Children's Centres would be clustered together but each centre would fulfill the statutory definition of a Children's Centre. This model would continue to provide a wide range of services for local families but would not realise a significant saving because staffing levels would need to remain roughly the same as at present in order to deliver the range of services across 16 centres as required.

4. BACKGROUND & SUMMARY

- 4.1 Rochdale Borough currently has 16 Children's Centres which deliver integrated Early Childhood Services to comply with the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Childcare Act 2006. The Department for Education defines Early Childhood Services

as “childcare, social services and health services relating to young children, their parents and prospective parents; employment services for parents and prospective parents; and advice services for parents and prospective parents.” Children’s Centre Statutory Guidance 2010 sets out that “Children’s centres are intended to be the first, local port of call where a mother, father or carer needs help or advice... either by providing this service at the Children’s Centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents in gaining access to a service provided elsewhere.” However “relying on signposting for example only through leaflets for all families whatever their circumstances is not sufficient to meet this aspect of the definition”.

4.2 A range of agencies provide services in Children’s Centres in order to deliver an integrated multi-agency provision which complies with this definition of Early Childhood Services and meets the requirements of Ofsted and Integrated Children’s Centre inspections. These include; Pennine Acute NHS Trust, Pennine Care Foundation Trust, Private, Voluntary and Independent Childcare providers, training providers, voluntary sector organisations Barnardos, CAB, Homestart and JobCentre Plus.

4.3 The Childcare Act and Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act places a number of duties on the Local authority in relation to the provision of Children’s Centres and any changes to that provision.

“Local Authorities are required to make sufficient provision for Children’s Centres to meet local need. Local need refers to the need of parents, prospective parents and young children (under 5 years) in the local area“

Determining what is sufficient provision is a decision for Local Authorities to take and the Government expects this to be taken in full consultation with Primary Care Trusts and Jobcentre Plus, other Children’s Trust partners and local families and communities.....Local authorities should be guided by demographic factors and demonstrate an understanding of different communities – both geographical and socio economic- Children’s centres will serve.”

4.4 In developing this proposal the following factors were considered to ensure that the provision meets local need and borough wide priorities. This needs assessment is set out in the Children’s Centre Strategy 2012-14.

- Number of children under 5 in each Centre and cluster footprint
- The distribution of the target groups set out in the Children’s Centre Strategy by Lower Super Output Area. (these target groups are those set by Ofsted; Workless households, lone parents, disabled children, children of disabled parents, fathers, black, minority and ethnic communities, teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers. In addition we have added local priority groups; children living in poverty, looked after children and children on the child protection register)
- The number of children in poverty by Lower Super Output Area.
- The levels of deprivation as set out in the IMD 2010
- The number of children currently ‘reached’ by each centre

4.5 Children’s Centres will be delivered through a hub and spoke approach as set out in table 4.5a below.

The Lead Centre will deliver the full Early Childhood Services offer and satellite centres will be open for an average of 20 hours each week depending on the need in the cluster and will deliver a reduced range of services. All satellite centres will continue to deliver Health contacts (antenatal and postnatal services), early years services (focused sessions for parents and children to attend), other services will depend on local priorities. The centres will be available for use by other organisations at other times of the day for a charge. The satellite centres must not deliver the full offer of Early Childhood Services otherwise they will be considered a Children’s Centre in their own right and subject to an Ofsted inspection.

Table 4.5a Hub and Spoke model

Lead centre (delivering full offer)	Satellite centres	Number of children in area	Number of children in lower super output area with more than 40% of children in poverty
Langley		873	540
	Boarshaw	674	0
	Hollin	399	100
	Kirkway	1063	111
Total		3009	751
Derby street		701	154
	Woodland	1210	259
Total		1911	413
Sandbrook		711	556
	Castleton	677	0
Total		1388	556
Newbold		754	644
	Moorhouse	811	0
Total		1565	644
Deeplish		848	361
	Castlemere	710	217
Total		1558	578
Howard st		1123	184
	Meanwood	750	267
	Norden	680	0
Total		2553	451
Belfield		904	904
	Littleborough	1042	0
	Heybrook/Hamer	1088	289
Total		3034	1193

4.6 Under this model there will be one Ofsted inspection.

4.7 Under this model there will be one Advisory Board per hub and spoke.

4.8 Under this model there will be one Early Intervention Manager per hub and spoke.

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN / REQUIRED

5.1 The Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families has been consulted.

CONSULTATION REQUIRED

5.2 Appendix 1 sets out the statutory consultation requirements in relation to “a significant service no longer being provided at a Children’s Centre” and / or “a greatly reduced level of services provided at a Children’s Centre.”

5.3 Consultation will be undertaken with staff and Trade Unions.

5.4 Further Consultation will be carried out with stakeholders.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.2 **Theme:** Building Success

6.3 **Proposal Title:** Review Children's Centre Provision

6.4 Breakdown of Savings from the Service

Service Name: Support for Learning

Area of Service: Sure Start

Cost Centre affected:

	Savings 2013/14 £000		Savings 2014/15 £000		Total Savings £000	
	Ongoing	One Off	Ongoing	One Off	Ongoing	One Off
Employees Other Costs Income lost (Show as minus)						
Net Savings Additional Income Generated (show as a positive figure)						
Total Savings Implementation Costs Does this include if we slip into April / May						
Total Savings less Implementation Costs	1,001				1,001	

6.5 **Financial Impact on another service?** At this stage there is no immediate financial impact on another service. Depending on service configuration as a result of consultation this may become apparent

6.6 **Voluntary Sector Financial Impact:** There is no financial impact on the voluntary sector as a result of this proposal.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Under this model we will continue to meet our statutory duties under the Childcare Act 2006 and Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 as long as we consult in accordance with the guidance and ensure sufficient provision of Children's centres.

8 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1

9 RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The number of families engaging in Children's Centres will reduce which will impact on Payment by Results which is being implemented from April 2013. There are 6 indicators in Payment by Results, 2 of which will be detrimentally affected by this proposal. The first is sustained contact over 12 months. If families find it more difficult to engage in a centre then they may attend less frequently so affecting this indicator. The second is engagement in parenting programmes.

10 ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Under this model all the buildings would remain open and so there is no disposal of assets.
- 10.2 The reduced service provision could, however, provide an opportunity for co-location of other council services thus releasing assets for disposal.

11 JOINT WORKING

- 11.1 Joint working and multi-agency working is at the core of Children's Centres. Ofsted inspections consider the range of agencies engaged in a centre and how by working in an integrated way resources are effectively utilised and outcomes for children and families are improved.
- 11.2 Pennine Care Foundation Trust, Pennine Acute Trust and Job centre Plus have a statutory duty to consider the delivery of early childhood services in Children's centres as part of the integrated offer. In Rochdale Borough antenatal and postnatal services are well embedded which is a significant achievement in contrast to many other Local Authority areas. Partners may decide that with a reduced offer to families in the satellite centres that the benefits of integrated delivery are reduced and may consider moving their services to other locations e.g. GP surgeries, clinics.
- 11.3 Appendix 1 sets out the duty to consult and fully engage all partners but particularly Primary Care trusts and Jobcentre Plus in any significant decisions in relation to Children's Centres.

12. EQUALITIES IMPACTS

- 12.1
- 12.2 **Equality/Community Impact Assessments:** An equality/community impact assessment will be completed for this proposal.

13. VOLUNTARY SECTOR IMPACTS

- 13.1 This proposal does not impact on the voluntary sector.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Children's Centre Strategy 2012 – 14	Crossfield Mill
Children's centre Statutory Guidance 2010	Crossfield Mill
Childcare Act 2006	Crossfield Mill
Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009	Crossfield Mill