

## Cabinet – 7 November 2017

### 0-5 Redesign of Children's Centres

#### Report of the Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

##### Recommendation

That Cabinet agrees the recommendations of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out at paragraph 4 below

##### 1.0 Introduction

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 7 November to consider the report to Cabinet regarding the outcome of consultation and proposals for the 0-5 Redesign of Children's Centres. This followed the meeting that the Committee held in July following the Cabinet's agreement to consult on proposals. There had been a number of speakers at that meeting.

The Committee had agreed that it should meet once the consultation had concluded to consider the proposals being put to Cabinet. The meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November was attended by over 20 members of the public, 10 of whom made representations to the Committee. These are set out in the enclosed draft minutes.

##### 2.0 Key themes

There were a number of issues raised at the Committee as can be seen in the minutes but some key issues were:

- There are children's centres which have provided services that many have found invaluable and that users do not wish to lose.
- Accessibility will be an issue for many, particularly for those without transport, or where public transport is poor or in cases where people will find going to a new service challenging, particularly where they have built strong relationships with staff and users.
- Services and activities (such as Stay and Play) need to be led by trained staff and professionals such as the early years workers need to be retained.
- There needs to be sufficient capacity and sustainability in the voluntary and community sector, and support may be needed to ensure this.
- The extension of services to 19 needs to be managed to overcome concerns about mixed age groups using facilities, and facilities need to be appropriate for use and ensure safeguarding.

- Parent and user involvement in the design of services going forward is important.
- More detailed plans are now needed including how the transition will occur to ensure there are no gaps in service.

### **3.0 Committee Debate**

The Committee noted the outcomes of the consultation and the revisions that had been made to the proposals.

There were some members who expressed a wish to revisit the proposals to find a way of not making the budget cuts or of identifying additional funding to give more time to consider the proposals. The Committee did not pursue this but did discuss the importance of the transition period and whether additional support was needed.

A number of recommendations were put to the Committee by Councillor Jonathan Chilvers and were seconded by Councillor Roodhouse. These are set out at page 8 of the enclosed minutes and include a detailed transition plan, additional transition funding and assurance that there will be no gap in service during the transition. The recommendations also include a proposal to look at the cost/benefit analysis of employing more early years and family support workers. During the debate on the transitional funding, Councillor Morgan confirmed that it is recognised that there is a need to set aside one-off funding of up to £400k for any implementation delays.

The recommendations proposed by Councillor Chilvers were not accepted but the Committee did agree to recommend that providers give details of how outreach services will operate and also how to reach 'hard to reach' families within geographical areas.

The Committee also agreed with a proposal from Councillor Jerry Roodhouse that there be a quality assurance framework within the commissioning process, which will include safeguarding matters.

The Committee are also keen to ensure they receive detailed implementation plans and ongoing progress reports.

### **4.0 Recommendations to Cabinet**

Following a vote, the Committee concluded as follows:

The Committee

- (1) Welcomes the increase in the number of proposed Children and Family Centres in the revised proposals to Cabinet from 12 to 14 and the adoption of a transitional approach to implementation of the new Hybrid Model as outlined in the report.

- (2) Welcomes the prioritisation of Family Support which has to date through the Family Support Worker model been successful in improving outcomes for local children and families and the proposal for an integrated Family Support Work service as set out in the report to Cabinet.
- (1) Asks that Cabinet ensures that those providers operating the 14 Children and Family Centres clearly outline how they will successfully deliver outreach services from the list of 16 Outreach Centres identified at 1.4 (b) of the report to Cabinet.
- (4) Asks that Cabinet ensures that all new providers operating Children and Family Centres in rural areas supply detailed proposals outlining how they will provide services for those 'hard to reach' families within their geographical areas.
- (5) Asks that Cabinet ensures that (i) ongoing progress reports are provided to CYPOS in respect of the 'milestones' as outlined in the timetable at 6.4 of the report to Cabinet and (ii) that if these proposals are accepted by Cabinet detailed implementation plans are brought forward to CYPOS for consideration when available.
- (6) Asks Cabinet to ensure that, prior to any closure of the 11 sites that will no longer be designated as Children's Centres or as providing Children's Centre services as identified at 1.4 (d) of the report to Cabinet, regard will be given to current usage, provision and proximity to the proposed Children and Family Centres in respect of identified outreach needs.
- (7) Asks Cabinet to review the present arrangements around local advisory boards to ensure greater inclusivity, local involvement and accountability moving forward.
- (8) Asks that Cabinet ensure there is a quality assurance framework within the commissioning process, which includes all safeguarding matters.

## Background Papers

None

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