

## CABINET MEETING – 15 FEBRUARY 2012

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

**Title of Report:**

Sure Start Review and An Integrated Early Intervention Service

**Author(s):**

Executive Director Children's Services

**Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of the report is to update members on the current position in relation to the development of an early intervention service which includes services delivered as part of the former Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant (SSEYCG). The report focuses on the outcomes of the recent formal consultation exercise and asks members to consider how changes will be implemented following consultation. In addition the report describes proposals for service delivery for the 12 months from April 2012 and seeks approval to develop proposals for commissioning services from April 2013 linked to the establishment of Area Boards.

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to approve that:

- (i) The number of Children's Centres which are designated is reduced from 17 to 5 in the 5 localities and that the remaining 12 centres remain open as service delivery centres;
- (ii) That the criteria set out in 5.1 of the report is applied to determine which of the 17 centres will be the 5 designated centres and that Area Committees are asked to consider this;
- (iii) That from April 2012, arrangements for Area Community Boards for each of the five are established in order that these Boards shape and direct service delivery and the further development of Children' centres moving forward;
- (iv) That the proposal to prioritise families needing additional support is progressed recognising that criteria relating to need will be clearly defined and that a range of services will continue to be delivered on a universal basis;
- (v) That proposals to secure service delivery from April are progressed in line with the recommendation of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 for one year from April 2012, with services from April 2013 identified and prioritised by the newly established Area Community Boards.
- (vi) That Cabinet receive a further report on progress in due course.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? \*Yes/No**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

National changes to funding arrangements for Children's Centres have required that the Council undertake a thorough review of how services are delivered in Sunderland from April 2012. Linked to this, there is an imperative to integrate Children's Centres more effectively as part of an Early Intervention Offer which improves outcomes through better targeting of services and increased community involvement.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

Maintaining current arrangements has been considered and rejected as to do this would not support the development of an early intervention model which better engages with families and improves outcomes. It would not deliver the required efficiencies of £1.77 million

**Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?**

**Yes**

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee:**

Children, Young People and Learning

**Is it included in the Forward Plan?**

**Yes**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**SURE START REVIEW AND AN INTEGRATED EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members on the current position in relation to the development of an early intervention service which includes services delivered as part of the former Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant (SSEYCG). The report focuses on the outcomes of the recent formal consultation exercise and asks members to consider how changes will be implemented following consultation. In addition the report describes proposals for service delivery for the 12 months from April 2012 and seeks approval to develop proposals for commissioning services from April 2013 linked to the establishment of Area Boards.

**2. Description of Decision**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve that:

- (i) The number of Children's Centres which are designated is reduced from 17 to 5 in the 5 localities and that the remaining 12 centres remain open as service delivery centres;
- (ii) That the criteria set out in 5.1 of the report is applied to determine which of the 17 centres will be the 5 designated centres and that Area Committees are asked to consider this;
- (iii) That from April 2012, arrangements for Area Community Boards for each of the five are established in order that these Boards shape and direct service delivery and the further development of Children' centres moving forward;
- (iv) That the proposal to prioritise families needing additional support is progressed recognising that criteria relating to need will be clearly defined and that a range of services will continue to be delivered on a universal basis;
- (v) That proposals to secure service delivery from April are progressed in line with the recommendation of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 for one year from April 2012, with services from April 2013 identified and prioritised by the newly established Area Community Boards.
- (vi) That Cabinet receive a further report on progress in due course.

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 Cabinet received a report on 2nd November 2011 which detailed the context of proposed changes to the existing children's centre infrastructure and the services delivered. Financial constraints require a saving of £1.77m to be delivered from the review and the proposals developed across Children's Centres and service delivery and childcare will deliver the required financial

savings whilst providing a service which gives children the best start in life, is better targeted to reach the most vulnerable families, offers support and interventions across the whole family and is responsive to differing needs at a local level.

- 3.2 Following consideration of the report Cabinet agreed to a period of formal consultation on proposed changes which considered 3 key areas:
- Reducing to 5 designated Children's Centres rather than the existing 17, with the remaining centres remaining as service delivery centres. In addition, delivery of services will also be maintained through a number of access points in locations across the city;
  - Increasing community involvement in governance and influence on the delivery of services through the introduction of 5 Area Boards from April 2012
  - Prioritising service delivery to families identified as needing extra help

- 3.3 Alongside the consultation and in line with the recommendations of the 2nd November Cabinet Report, officers have carried out a full review of current service delivery through Children's Centres` to inform commissioning of services from April 2012 for a twelve month period. This commissioning process is now underway and is described in more detail at sections 6 and 7 below.

#### **4. Consultation Process and Outcomes**

- 4.1 The formal public consultation ran from 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011 to 13<sup>th</sup> January 2012. A number of channels were available for consultation and response including public events in local Children's Centres, web based and paper based questionnaires. There was also an opportunity for staff, local councillors, head teachers and members of the Children Centre Local Advisory boards to express their views.
- 4.2 Promotion of the consultation was overseen by corporate communications and included an article in Sunderland Echo, Chatter Magazine to 16,000 homes, posters in all children's centres, Twitter and use of Customer Service network answer phone system.
- 4.3 Although these consultation events were heavily publicised attendance was low. Therefore additional sessions were linked into existing activities within Children's Centres and one to one sessions were arranged with hard to reach families. These approaches proved more successful than the formal consultation events.

4.4 The response from consultation is as follows:

4.4.1 'Proposal 1 - We want to continue to deliver services from our existing Children's Centres but need to save money by reducing administration and management costs. We could do this by keeping the 17 main buildings to deliver activities and services but only have five (one in each area) formally called Children's Centres.

	Website and feedback forms	Play and Learn Sessions	Number of Responses	% Total
Strongly Agree	54	30	84	30
Agree	67	42	109	39
Disagree	27	17	44	15
Strongly Disagree	27	18	45	16
Total	175	107	282	100

4.4.2 Proposal 2 - We want the local community to influence how and what services are delivered through Children's Centres, rather than decisions being made centrally for the whole city

	Website and feedback forms	Play and Learn Sessions	Number of Responses	% Total
Strongly Agree	69	27	96	34
Agree	77	70	147	52
Disagree	25	2	27	9
Strongly Disagree	9	5	14	5
Total	180	104	284	100

4.4.3 Proposal 3 - We want families who need extra help to be our priority

	Website and feedback forms	Play and Learn Sessions	Number of Responses	% Total
Strongly Agree	47	10	57	20
Agree	38	34	72	25
Disagree	38	26	64	23
Strongly Disagree	53	37	90	32
Total	176	106	283	100

4.5 Analysis of the responses demonstrates a broad consensus for Proposals 1 and 2 with 59% and 86% of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with the respective proposals. The position is less clear in terms of Proposal 3 where 45% either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal but 55% either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal.

4.6 Detailed consideration of the comments submitted for proposal 3 has been undertaken and the reason respondents have given for disagreeing with the proposal can broadly be summarised as a principled view that services should be available to all (33), a concern that prioritisation leads to isolation/stigmatisation (7), how “need” is defined (4) and an incorrect assumption that “need” is based on ability to pay or postcode (20). The views of consultees on this proposal illustrate that the move to more targeted delivery needs to be supported by good communication which clarifies that universal access will remain to some services and that targeting of service will be based upon the identification of clear needs-based criteria. Further work is being undertaken on the programme of activities to define access to universal and targeted services. For example it may be that some play sessions will be staffed sessions because families have been identified in need of support to play more effectively with their children, whereas some timetabled play sessions allow families to have access to the facilities but no member of staff is present. Subject to a clear definition of ‘extra help’, through the programme of Children’s Centre services, it is recommended that the proposal to provide additional support to families who need this be progressed.

## 5. **Children’s Centre Designation Changes**

5.1 The response to consultation described in 4.4.1 above gives support to reducing the number of designated Children’s Centres from the existing 17 to 5, one per locality area. The next step in implementation is to determine the basis on which the designated centres will be agreed and to support the decision making a series of criteria are proposed for consideration. For example, the designated Children’s Centre would:

- be in a 0 – 30% IMD area and be accessible for families who are living in the most disadvantaged areas
- be easily accessible to families within the locality with consideration given to walking routes, bus routes, proximity to shops and homes and ease of access from the whole locality
- have good links to a wide range of organisations either on site or in close proximity to the site;
- have buildings which are fit for purpose for a range of Children’s Centre activities

Designated sites would be those that meet the criteria described above with further consideration being those that support the highest number of target families.

- 5.3 The most notable difference in service delivery to service users following the de-designation would be the loss of a staffed reception as designated centres need to provide this facility whereas others do not. In reviewing the footfall for each centre there are some well used centres where the loss of a reception facility would have a more significant impact. It would be possible to consider providing a reception facility where these are not the designated centres. This would reduce the level of savings achieved but would be manageable if limited to the two or three sites with the greatest footfall.
- 5.4 It is proposed that, following Cabinet consideration and agreement to the criteria, the outcomes of the resulting application of the criteria is considered by Area Committees to agree the designated children's centre in each locality.

## 6. **Commissioned Services**

- 6.1 All services currently commissioned will come to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 as noted in the previous report to Cabinet.
- 6.2 In preparation for securing new services, a full review has been undertaken of the effectiveness of current service delivery in meeting a set of defined outcomes for children and their families and a thorough needs assessment has also been undertaken, overseen by the Project Board which includes partner organisations and schools. These outcomes are linked to the 'Core Purpose' of Children's Centres which envisages access to universal services providing early learning and childcare, information and activities for families, adult learning and employment support and child and family health services. The targeted services include parenting and family support, early intervention and links through to specialist services based upon the national policy and research that early intervention and support is essential in supporting families to get out of a cycle of poor outcomes. In planning the design and delivery of future service delivery through Children's Centres the Board has adopted an outcomes based commissioning approach. Based on current available intelligence from needs analysis and on the findings from a review of all services including those contracted from providers external to the Council a set of service specifications has been prepared focussed on improving outcomes for children and their families. Service reviews and the engagement of external providers has supported decisions on which outcomes to adopt, how to measure these and to identify 'what works' to improve outcomes.
- 6.3 A key development from this commissioning process is the design of a generic Early Intervention Family Team bringing together a range of roles and activities that are currently delivered for families through Children's Centres by different agencies through contracts or by the Council. The purpose of the team is to offer consistent and coordinated support to families with additional needs and to promote and enable family access to universal and targeted services across learning, health and social care services. The family team will work in localities and will enhance the work that is already underway to tackle the needs of children and their families across the continuum through earlier intervention. This team will be based upon (and will develop further through

specific training) the generic skills of staff so that they can develop positive relationships with service users to identify and develop their strengths as well as supporting them with addressing needs. This team will provide a significant resource to be delivered from within the Council for the first twelve months. Future commissioning arrangements will be determined for April 2013 through the governance of the proposed Area Boards.

6.4 The generic Early Intervention Family Team will be the largest team within the Children's Centre workforce and will encompass not only those staff currently employed by the Council to deliver Play and Learn activities and child and family support, but potentially a small number of play workers currently employed through external commissioned arrangements. Legal and personnel advice is being utilised in relation to any contractual or TUPE implications.

6.5 The range of and scope of the Family Team impacts upon what other services are procured for Children's Centres and as a consequence these have been re-specified based again upon the delivery of outcomes linked to the Core Purpose. In addition to the Family Team, the following services are planned for 2012/13 and subject to further review in 2012:

#### 6.6 **Mobile Crèche**

6.6.1 This service will provide high quality childcare delivered through the provision of a mobile/ outreach crèche service for children 0-5 for parents attending courses and events delivered through Children's Centres.

#### 6.7 **Parental Involvement and Transition to Employment**

6.7.2 This service will provide specific support through Children's Centres to access training and employment opportunities and to engage in volunteering to increase employability. The service has also been designed to work with parents to take an active role in governance arrangements for the Children's Centres and in the wider community..

#### 6.8 **Portage (for disabled children and their families)**

6.8.1 Portage is a home visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families. Portage offers a framework of support with regular home visits, generally weekly or fortnightly, by a trained Portage Home Visitor. Parents share with the home visitor their understanding of their child's individual strengths, abilities and support needs. The Portage Service is currently delivered by Sunningdale School.

#### 6.9 **Enhanced Safety Equipment**

6.9.1 This service will provide and install an enhanced package of safety equipment within the homes of families with young children where children have a protection plan or where need is identified.



## **6.10 Health Services**

- 6.10.1 It is proposed that the targeted service for children aged 0-5 will continue with a focus on the mental health needs of the very young within the wider Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for 0-19 year olds.
- 6.10.2 Current contracts with Health Providers are to be terminated from March 2012. Further commissioning to provide particular health specialisms within the Family Team will be undertaken as appropriate in consultation with health partners. Discussion with Health providers is underway, particularly around the role of Health Care Assistants to support the delivery of parenting with a focus on child health, and the Health Co-ordinator role which is a key partnership role within Children's Centres. The 'enhanced' health visitor offer which the Council has commissioned to date is not proposed to be re-commissioned.
- 6.10.3 However, from April 2012 there will be a national health visitor specification (commissioned through the Primary Care Trust) For the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme 0-5, which will identify the importance of Children's Centres as a delivery point and the need for health visiting to inform delivery as members of Children's Centre Boards.
- 6.10.4 Given the key role of health visitors and midwives as the initial contact for families and the referral route into Children's Centres, it is essential that this relationship continues and is strengthened. Baby Days, currently hosted by the health visiting service in Children's Centres, are clearly a key route in drawing families into the wider services on offer.
- 6.10.5 The development of the Family Team will also support families to identify early health needs and offer support or refer to more specialist services..

## **6.11 Parenting**

- 6.11.1 Parenting is an essential component of the Early Intervention Offer. The services described all have a parenting component within them, whether this is support in specific areas such as child health and development or more formal training. Parenting support is also delivered across the wider spectrum of Children's Services eg through the Family Adult and Community Learning Team and within Social Care. A fundamental review is underway of the many strands of parent support including the delivery of formal parenting programmes. From this review will emerge a clear 'parenting offer' in 2012 and a specification for a consistent and coordinated approach to parenting support and to service delivery.

## **7. Area Community Boards**

- 7.1 The original Sure Start philosophy was very much around community involvement in the management of Sure Start Children's Centres. This has been somewhat reduced in the expansion of the Children's centre programme

and it is proposed that this is now addressed through the development of Community Area Boards. It is proposed that there would be five of these, one in each locality and that these would include representation from members and local partners, schools, parents and community representatives. The Boards would govern the future development of Children's Centres and shape future commissioning of services based upon the identification of need in local areas. It is proposed that work commence to develop these Area Boards in order that they are operational by September 2011.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The revenue budget for 2011/12 includes for £1.77m of efficiencies delivered from this review. The restructure of management posts and "quick win" savings implemented during this financial year have secured the required savings to date. Implementation of the changes which have been subject to formal consultation, together with the re-commissioning of services as detailed in the report, are expected to deliver the required savings on a permanent basis.

## **9. Reasons for Decision**

- 9.1 National changes to funding arrangements for Children's Centres have required that the Council undertake a thorough review of how services are delivered in Sunderland from April 2012. Linked to this, there is an imperative to integrate Children's Centres more effectively as part of an Early Intervention Offer which improves outcomes through better targeting of services and increased community involvement.

## **10. Alternative Options**

- 10.1 Maintaining current arrangements has been considered and rejected as to do this would not support the development of an early intervention model which better engages with families and improves outcomes. It would not deliver the required efficiencies of £1.77 million

## **11. Equality Assessment**

- 11.1 An equality assessment has been completed at this stage with:
- identified impacts and actions, or
  - identified data/intelligence gaps, meaning that action is needed to address these gaps before repeating the equality analysis.
- 11.2 Initial considerations of equality analysis have been undertaken and services have already identified potential impacts on particular groups and are planning further detailed equality analysis as the proposals are further developed.

## **12. Relevant Consultations**

- 12.1 Details of the consultation process and outcomes are provided in section 4 of this report.

## **13. Background Papers**

Cabinet Report – November 2011  
Consultation document

