



**City of Westminster**

# Cabinet Member Report

<b>Meeting or Decision Maker:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Children Councillor Danny Chalkley</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>12 May 2016</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Early Help Changes including Children's Centres</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>City for All Summary</b>	<b>Give an overview of how this decision contributes to City for All</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>Detailed in Paragraph 6 of the report.</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Jayne Verkin, Head of Early Help</b>

## 1. Executive Summary

This is a proposal for a re-shaped early help service, including children's centres (CC) in Westminster, to achieve both service improvements in targeting those families most in need and efficiency savings. We are challenged to improve outcomes for children, reducing the numbers of vulnerable adolescents coming into care, and re-referrals into the system, by strengthening our early intervention work with families within a context of reducing resources. This work has been developed through the following collaborative process:

1. Developing an outline model for children's centres, within a wider early help model, together with the children centre leaders and internal Westminster managers;
2. Two workshops with stakeholders in December 2015 and January 2016.
3. Public consultation on children's centres in January 2016.(see Paper 3)
4. Defining the future early help model. Staff consultation underway.

The model will be live by October 2016 and all stakeholders will continue to influence the proposals between now and October 2016.

## 2. Recommendations

Agreement is sought for the following recommendations:

1. The new arrangements for children's centres as outlined in section 5. 1 of this report.
2. The new arrangements for Westminster's internal early help service (section 5.2)
3. The response to parents following the consultation (Appendix 4)

## 3. Reasons for Decision

We have developed this new model to focus our resources on families with the greatest need, maintaining the highest level of service delivery, whilst making reductions in the budget. The Early Help service budget reduction is from £7,758k to £3,079k.

## 4. Current context and challenges

- **On 23rd February 2015, Cabinet approved the report "Service proposals for Early Help"** which set out the Council's intention in relation to early help services and the desire to focus future services on those most in need.
- **There are still legal responsibilities for Local authorities in relation to Children's Centres but these are expected to change.** The Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act 2009 sets out Local Authority duties, however, in July 2016, **childcare and education minister Sam Gyimah announced that he will be consulting on the future of children's centres. They are not currently being Ofsted inspected.**
- **The current children's centre buildings are expensive to run.** They cost us £259,000, 23% of the total children's centre budget.
- **Integration with local health services is improving** and supports the identification of need and a tailored support offer. **The new commissioning framework supports greater integration in work practices.**
- **The introduction of the 2 year early education places has provided a framework for targeting families more effectively** and changed the usage of the CC buildings.
- **Children's centres are now mainly 'reaching' the 0 – 2 age group.**
- **The expansion of the Troubled Families programme** is a catalyst to service reform.

## 5. Towards a new model for Early Help – the changes

The new early help model will consist of the following:

- The set – up of **3 children and family hubs** (or early help hubs) that will support families with children across the age spectrum (0 – 19 years). These will develop from the existing 3 children centre hubs.
- **An early help partnership** of organisations committed to a shared approach, information sharing, joint assessment and meeting processes.
- A weekly **early help partnership action meeting** to manage referrals.

### 5.1 A summary of the proposed changes to children's centres

- We will target services to those families most in need.

- The 3 existing children centre hubs will become the 3 children and family hubs. The the ‘hub’ will develop services for 0 – 19 years after school and in the holidays as the opportunity arises.
  - Maida Vale Children’s Centre will continue to offer a full range of services.
  - We will set-up parent led stay and play sessions.
  - Children’s centre satellite sites will deliver the 2 year offer. Some are already delivering this offer and it will be developed at the others.
  - We will continue the integration of health services at our hub sites.
  - A reduced commissioned outreach service will continue to operate.
- Attached at appendix 1 is a breakdown of the children’s centre changes.

## 5.2 The proposed internal early help service changes

We will have a **new single early help service** that will achieve savings and maximise outcomes for children by ensuring better use of all existing resources.

**Our priorities** will be to:

- Reduce re-referrals to higher level interventions;
- Prevent family breakdown resulting in care entry
- Build capacity in universal providers to support children earlier.

The new proposed structure is attached as appendix 2.

- **A Generic Early Help Team**

A single team will deliver services from the three existing localities The team will undertake 1:1 case work with families.

- **Intensive Support/Edge of Care Team**

This will be a single central team providing intensive support to families in crisis, **Innovation and Business Development Team.**

This will generate income through partnerships, opportunities within the local business community, and through ‘trading’ with schools

- **Early Years Team**

This team will ensure the development of childcare places for 2,3 and 4 year olds.

There are currently **86 staff** that are in scope of the proposed re-organisation and **44.6 FTE** posts are proposed in the new service. The exact numbers are subject to full consultation.

## 6. Financial Implications

### 6.1 Children’s Centres

The current children’s centre budget is **£2,220,500**; this consists of £1,100,000 from commissioning and £1,120,500 from family services.

The future budget, to deliver the model above, will be **£883,000**; that is a reduction of 60%. This will represent 28% of the total early help budget.

### 6.2 Internal Early Help Service

Current internal spend is £5,553, 000. This will reduce to £2,195 000.

## **7. Equality implications**

Equality Impact assessments were completed for both these service areas and were considered by the cabinet on 22/2/16 and the full council on 2/3/16.

## **8. Legal Implications**

The Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning (ASLA) Act 2009 sets out legal duties summarised by the DfE in 'Sure Start CC's Statutory Guidance' (April 2013). We will remain compliant with this following the change programme set out in this report.

## **9. Consultation**

The ASLA 2009 places a duty on Local Authorities to consult on 'significant' changes to children's centres or closures of them.

The CC's consultation ran from 4<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January. Parents were given the option of attending three face-to-face meetings, or completing a questionnaire. **170 people** responded (136 of whom are parents) and 72 attended a meeting, in **total 242. (See Appendix 3).**

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Children’s Centre changes

Appendix 2 - Proposed new early help structure

Appendix 3 - Consultation report

Appendix 4 – Draft web page response to parents

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:**

Jayne Vertkin, Head of Early Help – [jvertkin@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:jvertkin@westminster.gov.uk)

**BACKGROUND PAPERS as follows:**

**Available for reference**

**Paper 1 – Children’s Centres – a new proposal**

**Paper 2 – Towards a new model for Early Help in Westminster**

**Equality Impact Assessment for Children’s Centres**

**Equality Impact assessment for the internal Early Help Reorganisation.**

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

State nature of interest if any .....

.....

*(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **'Early Help Changes including Children's Centres'** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

Cabinet Member for

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment: .....  
.....  
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If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should

take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.