



City of Westminster

Cabinet Report

Meeting or Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	23 February 2015
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Service Proposals for Early Help
Wards Affected:	All
Better City, Better Lives Summary	These proposals contribute to the BCBL priority to support “Strong, responsible families which give every child the best start in life”
Key Decision:	This report includes Key Decisions and has been included in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions
Financial Summary:	Please see paragraph 9 for full details
Report of:	Andrew Christie, Executive Director of Children’s Services

1. Executive Summary

This report presents a number of proposals to change service provision in relation to the delivery of three key aspects of Westminster’s “early help” offer. The service areas considered are Children’s Centres, play/after school childcare and youth provision. The proposals are informed by the City Council’s Early Help Strategy and have been formulated following significant consultation and engagement with residents and service users as well as key stakeholders and partners.

2. Recommendations

2.1. That the Cabinet:

- Considers the responses to the consultation as set out in Appendix A and summarised in paragraph 5.3 of the report.
- Agrees new service arrangements are implemented for the delivery of Children's Centre services to ensure that they are focused on children and families most in need, and support the expansion of the City's 2 year old early education programme, as set out in paragraph 6.4.
- Agrees that the Council's play service provision is transitioned to new schools or third sector providers to implement a sustainable service model, providing both universal and targeted play services in response to local needs. Such providers will either be schools, third sector providers or a combination of the two, with the decision on which organisations will provide being delegated to the Executive Director of Children's Services;
- Agrees that Youth services are reorganised and recommissioned to deliver a hub and spoke service arrangement that provides both universal and targeted support for young people across the City;
- Delegates to the Executive Director for Children and Young People authority to agree any further operational changes required in order to implement these decisions.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1.** New service arrangements are necessary in order to support the delivery of the Council's Early Help strategy and ensure that resources and support for children, young people and families are focused to meet local and individual needs whilst securing the improvement of outcomes and life chances.
- 3.2.** Local authorities have a duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to consult before opening, closing or significantly changing Children's Centres. To address this duty, a significant number of consultation opportunities were made available, including a survey in a range of formats, public consultation meetings including family support outreach workers available to offer translation in key community languages as well as engagement with key professional stakeholders. Individual responses were received along with a number of petitions. The feedback from these has been taken into account when reviewing the initial proposals.

4. Background, including Policy Context

- 4.1.** The funding the Council receives from the Government is reducing and the Council needs to save £100m over the next five years. To meet this challenge, the Council is refocusing its services to those who need support most by identifying opportunities to work closer with our partners to deliver joint services and encouraging and enabling communities to become more self-supporting.
- 4.2.** To continue the Council's commitment to offering high quality, effective services to the families and young people in Westminster most in need of support, the City Council needs to make some changes to the services for children and young people. These changes are embedded in our Early Help Strategy which is to develop integrated services across the Council and our partners at defined points in a child's health and development. This is in order to identify and support families at the earliest point so as to prevent the escalation of needs to a level that requires more intensive support and higher cost service interventions. This strategy was developed with key stakeholders and partner agencies, including representatives of Westminster's voluntary and community sector, health partners and schools. Young people and parent representatives were also involved in its development.
- 4.3.** To achieve this we will focus our services to those most in need and bring a range of support together to make it easier for families and young people to get the appropriate help, whether it is parenting and family support, employment, health or childcare support. Working in this way will allow us to make the most of the money we have available and will deliver better outcomes for families.
- 4.4.** Localities where there are higher levels of need and particular children and young people will be targeted by our early help services to include those who are at risk of poor outcomes in relation to:
- children's health (e.g. not reaching their milestones at the 2 year development check, children with disabilities, those at risk of developing mental health issues, young carers, young people who misuse substances);
 - parenting (children living with parents who have a range of issues which might affect their ability to parent, young parents and pregnant young women);
 - education (children with poor school attendance, at risk of exclusion from school or difficulties transitioning to a new school, those with learning difficulties or disabilities, those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET);

- exposure to violence (including domestic violence and abuse, young people involved in gangs or serious youth violence or at risk of engaging in violent extremism);
- being at risk of criminal behaviour or who are victims of crime; children who go missing, are at risk of exploitation, or are on the edge of care;
- Services will also be provided to meet the needs of children and young people who are:
 - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or intersex (LGBTQI);
 - looked after or care leavers

4.5. Working with families and our partner organisations, we have developed a shared understanding of the challenges the Council faces and shaped the future of these services together. Listening to their feedback and finding out what support they value, we have developed proposals to improve the lives of the families, children and young people who need it.

4.6. The Early Help Strategy and the process leading to the proposals in this report were considered by the Children, Sport and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2015. The Committee acknowledged that the consultation had been widely publicised throughout Westminster and the level of engagement by parents, youth groups and young people through the organised workshops and the on-line surveys had been good. The Committee also acknowledged the importance of introducing an integrated pathway in order to publish an early years offer to families with children aged 0-5 so they could see what was available to them. Other observations included the importance of identifying and working with families in need, especially encouraging them to sign up for 2 year old early education places, the benefits of changing the balance towards a more targeted service and the importance of effective communication and partnerships between key partners.

4.7. Subsequent to these observations, work is taking place to publish to parents and carers a clear overview of what services are available according to children's levels of need and how we work as a whole system to deliver coordinated packages of support. A common assessment will also be agreed for all services to identify the support needed. Further strategies are being developed to follow up families who might benefit from the two year old offer, enhanced by outreach work from the children's centre hubs.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1.** A process for consultation and engagement on the Early Help strategy was developed focusing on providing clear messages around each of the proposed service changes. The proposed changes to Children's Centre services required a statutory consultation whilst the City Council also engaged with key audiences on other service changes so that parents, young people and providers could shape the services with the City Council.
- 5.2.** An overview of messages from the consultation and engagement exercises are included in Appendix A) and more detailed reports are available.
- 5.3.** All consultation responses and correspondence related to these proposals have been reported to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
- 5.4.** Key themes which emerged were as follows:

Children's Centres

- Residents from a wide range of social backgrounds use Children's Centres, valuing this provision and its staff;
- "Stay and Play" sessions are valued and should be available in convenient locations;
- There were mixed views about targeted two year old early education places with some respondents feeling that targeting families who were eligible was positive while others had concerns about the eligibility criteria;
- There is a need to improve how information about early years services is promoted.

Youth Provision

- Services should be based on, and be responsive to the needs of young people aged 11-19;
- Youth services should maintain a balance between universal and targeted provision while young people should not 'feel' like they are being targeted;
- Stakeholders agreed that the "hub and spoke" model would work well, in order to deliver a balance of universal and targeted provision, although they acknowledged this would require close partnership working in order to be successful;
- There should be an agreed and consistent method for monitoring and evaluating outcomes;

- Youth services should not become part of locality social work teams and should also remain separate from schools. The value and different approach of youth work should be recognised and developed.

Play provision

- The low cost of attendance, the consistency of staffing and the quality of the sessions were the most important aspects of the services that should be retained following any reorganisation;
- The majority of those responding to a users' survey felt a play service offer should be maintained but also recognised the necessity of a reduction in the subsidies available;
- While there was a general concern about potential fee increases, there was a wish for continuity of staffing and a range of activities to be provided.

6. Children's Centres

6.1. The proposed re-shaping of Westminster's Children's Centres takes place within the context of a wider vision for early years services, termed the *Best Start in Life*. The vision is to create one integrated early years pathway with universal, targeted and enhanced components while providing greater clarity for parents about the early years service 'offer' and bringing together the Healthy Child Programme and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's Centres are an integral part of this pathway.

6.2. The key principles informing the redesign of Children's Centres are:

- to achieve greater integration between organisations as outlined in the Early Help Strategy and 'Best Start in Life' service model so that we can identify need as early as possible and make it easier for parents to access coordinated health, childcare, education, training and employment services;
- to do this by ensuring that our resources and effort are targeted effectively, and to agreed priorities, in terms of the children and families who need our help the most and the outcomes we most need to improve;
- to deliver more free 2 year old early education places within Children's Centres as a way of targeting these families more effectively;
- to achieve savings across the service whilst improving outcomes for the children and families at risk of the poorest outcomes.

6.3. The service proposals are made within the following context:

- Some Children's Centre services at some sites are undersubscribed and/or are not being used by the families we most need to engage with;
- Our duty to identify families who meet the eligibility criteria for free 2 year old early education places. There is currently a shortfall in local provision of these places (799 eligible families and a shortfall of 195 places);
- The need to maintain accessible services for all families, whilst also ensuring further support is available for those who need our help most;
- The need to ensure that money is effectively targeted where it makes most difference to the lives of local families, through the commissioning and delivery of evidenced based services and effective operational practice.

6.4. It is proposed that:

- All current Children Centre sites will remain open but some will be used in new ways, such as the expansion of the City's childcare programme to better meet local needs and to reach those children most at risk of poor outcomes;
- Commissioned Children's Centre services, such as family support currently delivered through outreach, parenting, speech and language therapy services and domestic violence support programmes will be retained. The delivery of a more intensive parenting offer to families most in need of support will be implemented as a part of an 'enhanced' pathway;
- The creation of a new jointly appointed post, between Central London Community Health (CLCH) and Westminster City Council, to develop the integrated early years pathway and coordinate the approach across all partners, working with children and families;
- A reduction in the number of open access "Stay and Play" sessions at some Children's Centres in areas where there is the most need to preserve targeted services. There will still remain a good network of these across the City, especially when considered alongside similar sessions provided by the voluntary sector;
- Further work to take place in relation to promoting the early years offer to parents and carers. This will include engagement with parent forums in each locality;
- Implementation of new arrangements for back office support;
- A target date of April 2015 for changes to become operational.

- 6.5.** Following consultation, changes have been made to the initial proposals. For example, space has been identified to provide one stay and play within Essendine School and quotes are being sought with the aim of providing a service at another site. We had previously proposed a complete replacement of this provision with two year old early education places. The school and parents will be consulted regarding their preferred times and days.
- 6.6.** A table detailing proposed changes to the original model are included in Appendix C.

7. Youth Provision

- 7.1.** Community based services are uniquely placed to engage and support children and young people. Westminster City Council commissions youth services across the borough to provide activities that are fun and engaging. The majority of these services are youth clubs, mainly in estates across the borough, particularly in the north east and north west of Westminster.
- 7.2.** The Children's Services youth programme is currently commissioned from the third sector, with contracts due to reach the end of their term on 30th September 2015. The proposal is to extend the current contract for six months so that there is sufficient time to commission new locality based services from April 2016. This will ensure that there is no gap in provision. The Council will review existing service arrangements before recommissioning these services to ensure that these are aligned to needs and deliver strong outcomes.
- 7.3.** Other than services commissioned by Children's Services, the City Council delivers or funds services for children and young people through libraries and sports. This includes EDUTAIN, a holiday camp programme for children and young people, specialising in work with those who have disabilities and a range of Neighbourhood Sports Clubs along with the ActiveWestminster Passport programme and Champions of the Future.
- 7.4.** Additional services and activities are provided in schools, through the Early Help Localities Service, housing providers, the voluntary and community sector, uniformed groups, arts, sports and leisure providers and national initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and the National Citizens Service.
- 7.5.** A number of independent organisations provide additional services. Sportwestminster is a Community Interest Company providing educational and training opportunities through access to sport. Registered Social Landlords such as CityWest Homes, Octavia and Peabody also operate a range of services including youth clubs and estate based outreach. For example, CityWest Homes, who manage the City Council's 22,000 residential properties are commissioned to deliver youth services in the South of the borough. Meanwhile there are a number of wider services to children and young people directly

funded by CityWest Homes across the borough including targeted estate based provision and support into employment.

7.6. Such bodies could also be potential providers of services commissioned in the future.

7.7. Following engagement, it is proposed that:

- Early Help Youth services should be delivered through a locality based 'Hub and Spoke' model providing both universal, targeted and specialist activities and support to young people across the City;
- Targeted services will be focused to meet higher levels of need in key wards (such as Church Street, Queens Park, Harrow Road and Westbourne, Churchill wards);
- The future youth services programme will be accessible to young people from the ages of 11-19, or up to the age of 25 for disabled young people or those with learning difficulties;
- Each locality service will offer targeted and flexible activities in the community "spokes", delivering a network of activities that will engage young people across Westminster;
- Support for young people with additional needs will be available within both universal and targeted provision, and in addition, specialist services will be commissioned such as in schools, through detached youth work or smaller estate based projects;
- A borough wide positive activities holiday programme will also be commissioned during Easter, Summer and the October half term school holidays, extended to other key periods according to need. It is anticipated that a single provider will co-ordinate the programme.
- The services will be planned and delivered in collaboration with young people and the schools and other services. Providers will also be expected to work with children and young people to inform service design and development.

7.8. The proposals above will deliver a high quality and flexible service that meets both universal and targeted needs across the City.

8. Play Provision

8.1. School-based childcare and play provides a service which supports working families. There is currently a range of provision in Westminster including seven after school play centres provided by Westminster Play Service in five primary

schools and two community sites. Holiday childcare and play services are offered to clusters of schools from some of these sites.

- 8.2.** St John's Wood Adventure Playground and the Westminster Society also provide play and childcare (including some services for children with additional needs or disabilities) although without core funding or a contract from the Council. Four other primary schools either manage their own childcare and play services or secure a third sector provider to deliver childcare at their schools, at no cost to the Council.
- 8.3.** An additional source of after school provision is available through childminders, although these are often more expensive than play provision. Extended families are a further provider of care.
- 8.4.** In line with the objectives of the Early Help Strategy which include revising our service model of investment in universal services in line with priority outcomes, we have reviewed play provision and found that the existing in-house service has relatively high management and administrative costs compared with other ways of providing the service. The majority of local authorities no longer directly provide such services and there are examples of nearby boroughs which have transferred management of such services to schools or third sector providers over a number of years with evidence that the schools have subsequently established effective models of provision. There are already four schools successfully providing such good quality services in Westminster at no cost to the City Council. There are also examples of schools working in partnership with external providers leading to additional opportunities for income generation, enterprise and innovation, and links to other organisations.
- 8.5.** There is potential for existing Westminster Play Service staff to seek to establish new social enterprises that could be in a position to bid for future third sector contracts following implementation of the service proposals outlined below.
- 8.6.** Changes are therefore proposed to the model through which play and after school care services are provided to ensure that services are sustained to ensure continued provision for families across the City.
- 8.7.** It is proposed that:
 - The management of after school childcare services should be transferred to school governing bodies from September 2015 where schools have indicated they wish to manage these directly. The services will continue to be provided by the Council until April 2016;
 - External providers are commissioned for the delivery of targeted play and childcare services where schools decide not to take on the management responsibilities for these services by April 2016. These providers will also be responsible for the delivery of universal play services;

- A targeted play place scheme is established and commissioned to ensure continued access to play and childcare services for children in need, including support for families on low income that cannot access other childcare subsidies;
- Transitional funding is allocated for a maximum of 2 years from April 2015 to support the creation of good quality sustainable childcare and play services.

8.8 Some support for the current service model was identified within responses to the engagement process. The proposals above are recommended as providing the best approach to achieve a suitable service model that ensures that support is focused to meet the needs within the reduced funding available to the Council.

9. Financial Implications

9.1. The table below summarises the Medium Term Plan savings proposed for the three years from 2015/16. These are as a result of the three aspects of the Early Help strategy covered by this decision report.

Service Proposal	Savings Proposed (£,000s)			
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Children's Centres	474	191	0	665
Youth Provision	125	197	0	322
Play Provision	152	170	30	352
Total	751	558	30	1,339

Service proposals for Children's Centres

9.2. The combined Children's Centre budget, including commissioned services is £2,796k. From this, savings of £474k are proposed to be achieved in 2015/16, with a further £191k in 2016/17 being taken from other early years commissioning budgets. A total proposed saving from early years of £665k over the 2 financial years. In summary, it is proposed that year one savings will come

from Children's Centre delivery budgets and year two savings from the commissioned services budgets

- 9.3.** In 2015/16, it is proposed that savings will be achieved from a reduction in staffing, property and other overhead budgets, including Children's Centre management costs. An investment of £62k is to be made in the creation of an Early Years Systems Change Lead post, which will be partly funded in partnership with Public Health.
- 9.4.** Where we are instead able to increase or offer targeted 2 year old places, these will be funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Service proposals for Youth Provision

- 9.5.** Locality budgets will be divided between universal 'hub' provision and targeted 'spoke' provision. This will be dependent on need and subject to change according to need as identified and agreed between provider and commissioners.
- 9.6.** The current Youth provision budget is £796k. Savings have been identified for £125,000 for 15/16 and £197,000 for 16/17. The current contracts expire in September 2015 but extensions will be sought to 31st March 2016. To achieve the savings required for 15/16, both the current contacts and extensions will be (re)-negotiated to fit within the budget available. The new contracts will be let from 1st April 2016 for a period of two years and at a maximum total value of £474,112

Service proposals for Play Provision

- 9.7.** Currently all school-age childcare places for working families are subsidised by the Council. In future, available funding will be focused on targeted places for children in need and for some families on low income, delivering savings to the Council.
- 9.8.** Westminster currently provides £453k of funding for the Play Service. From this, proposed savings of £152k are to be achieved in 2015/16, with a further £170k in 2016/17 and £30k in 2017/18, a total of £352k over the 3 financial years. This will leave £101k of targeted funding for places for children in need and families on low incomes. Savings of £152k in 2015/16 will be delivered as a result of proposals in this paper.
- 9.9.** From 2015/16, the delivery of the Play service will transition to schools and third sector organisations. It is envisaged that transition funding will be available to those providers, thus enabling the savings to be made over the period 15/16 - 17/18. In advance of the transfer, the in house service will reduce costs and increase efficiencies in the current service.

10. Legal Implications

10.1. The City Council is fulfilling its duty to secure sufficient provision under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children & Learning Act 2009. The Childcare Act 2006 requires that an English local authority must secure such consultation as they think appropriate is carried out before:

- making arrangements for the provision of a children's centre, i.e. before establishing a new children's centre;
- making any significant change in the services provided through an existing children's centre;
- doing anything which would result in a children's centre ceasing to be a children's centre, i.e. either closing it or reducing the services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a Sure Start Children's Centre.

10.2. The City Council has undertaken consultation exercise on children's centres under the Childcare Act 2006 and also choose to consult and engage with the community and key stakeholders on proposals for the Youth Service and Play Service. The responses to these consultations have been properly considered and are summarised in paragraph 5.3 and Appendix A The responses to the consultations must be carefully taken into account before any decision on the proposals contained in this report can be taken.

11. Staffing Implications

Service proposals for Children's Centres

11.1. Proposed changes to Children's Centre provision will lead to the total establishment of Local Authority employed Children Centre staff reducing from 9 full time equivalent to 4 full time equivalent. 10 members of staff will be potentially vulnerable to redundancy, with a maximum of 5 actual redundancies. There will also be an impact upon some staff employed by nursery schools.

Service proposals for Youth provision

11.2. There are no staffing implications for City Council staff resulting from these proposals as current services are provided by external organisations. TUPE could apply depending on who wins contracts and where they deliver but this would be addressed as part of the contract award and implementation process.

Service proposal for Play provision

11.3. Where childcare services are currently provided by the in-house service and transferred to a community school, TUPE will not apply because there is no change in employer. If a school is unable to accommodate all eligible staff within the new model of delivery then a re-organisation/redundancy process

would be required. The Council would be liable for redundancy costs arising from the transfer of services. Consideration will also need to be given to the existence or absence of any mobility clauses in the contracts of employment.

- 11.4. TUPE will apply if an in-house service transfers to a voluntary-aided school, an academy or free school, or a third sector provider, this would be deemed a Service Provision Change (SPC). This is likely to be the case for a number of the existing in-house play centres. In order for TUPE to apply to a SPC there must be an organised grouping of employees (or even a single employee) which before the change had as its principal purpose, the carrying out of the relevant activities on behalf of the Council. The new TUPE 2014 provisions states that the activities must be fundamentally the same. All staff transferring would transfer on the same terms and conditions of employment.
- 11.5. A programme of staff information and consultation will be implemented following this decision. This will include consultation on the transfer and redundancies of all staff affected whether or not they are vulnerable to transfer or redundancy.

12. Consultation

- 12.1. A strategy for consultation and engagement on the early help strategy was developed, focusing on providing clear messages around each proposed service change. This was also developed for each of the service areas to provide clear, consistent and targeted information to key audiences. Three consultations were run separately allowing a focus on the content of the proposals and enabling parents and providers to offer comment and feedback.
- 12.2. The Childcare Act 2006 as amended by The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 contains specific statutory duties about consulting about significant changes to Children's Centres. Such consultation has therefore happened in respect of Children's Centre service changes. Consultation and engagement exercises also took place in relation to changes to Play and After School Care and youth provision. Therefore there were a range of opportunities to work with parents and providers to shape the services together.
- 12.3. Please review the Early help strategy – Consultation and Engagement Summary in Appendix A.

13. Equality implications

- 13.1. The City's Early Help Strategy aims to improve the lives and life chances of children, young people and their families by providing assistance and support that can be better tailored to needs and can help to prevent issues from escalating or worsening.

- 13.2.** These proposals will ensure that our most vulnerable families and young people will continue to be supported. The City's Children's Centre offer will be more integrated and more clearly communicated with parents and carers, Play Services will be in a position to target those who require additional support and Youth services will likewise be adapted so that provision can meet higher level of needs in particular wards, as well as ensuring that more universal services are accessible to all.
- 13.3.** The Equality Impact Assessment considers the current use of provision and the extent to which it benefits people with different protected characteristics. By targeting provision to need, the services will be better placed to identify and respond to those situations where protected characteristics can act as a barrier to accessing and benefitting from services and outcomes.
- 13.4.** A full Equality Impact Assessment of these proposals has been conducted and is included as Appendix B.
- 13.5.** The public sector Equality Duty came into force on 05 April 2011. The Equality Duty replaces the three previous duties on race, disability and gender, bringing them together into a single duty, and extends to cover age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity and gender reassignment.
- 13.6.** The new Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
 - Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- 13.7.** The Equality Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 13.8.** The City Council has had due regard to its equality duty throughout this process.

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

Steve Bywater, Policy Manager, 020 8753 5809

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Westminster City Council Early Help Strategy 2014-18