

By: **Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services**  
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To: **Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Subject: **CHILDREN'S CENTRE FUTURE SERVICE OPTIONS PROGRAMME**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral Division: **All**

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**Summary:** The purpose of this report is to introduce the Cabinet Committee to the Children's Centre Future Service Options Programme. This includes outlining the aims of the Programme, the proposed timetable and the proposed level of member involvement.

**Recommendation(s):** The Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to note and comment on;

- (a) The aims of the Future Service Options Programme.
- (b) The proposed timetable
- (c) The proposed level of member involvement

## **1. Introduction**

1(1) The nationally prescribed core purpose of a Children's Centre is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers through a combination of the following universal and targeted services;

Universal Services:

- High quality, inclusive, early learning and childcare
- Information and activities for families
- Adult learning and employment support
- Integrated child and family health services

Targeted Services:

- Parenting and Family Support
- Targeted evidence-based early intervention programmes

- Links with Specialist Services

1(2) A Children's Centre is a place or a group of places which should make available these services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. Local authorities must ensure that Children's Centres provide some activities for young children on site<sup>2</sup>.

## **2. Aims of the Future Service Options Programme**

2(1) The Children's Centre FSO Programme aims to;

- Deliver better, earlier support to those children and families who need it
- Continue to provide Children's Centre services to improve health, education and social care outcomes
- Strengthen the working relationship between Children's Centres, early years settings, schools and health services
- Meet budget savings (of at least £1.5 million by 1 April 2014) and address areas that could be improved further

## **3. Financial Implications**

3(1) The Children's Centre Future Service Options Programme is required to meet efficiency savings of at least £1.5 million in the 2014/15 financial year.

3(2) These savings are in addition to £1.4m savings from April 2013 and a budget reduction of £2.8m between April 2010 and April 2012.

## **4. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework**

4(1) At the heart of **Bold Steps for Kent** is the need to change the way we work, not only to improve our own services, but also to reflect the changing shape of wider public services. Increasingly, those directly responsible for delivering front line services will be empowered to design and commission services that better fit the needs of parents, children and communities. Therefore, we must adopt an approach that is both inclusive and sees prevention and intervention as a continuum so that it is never deemed too late to positively intervene and prevent the deterioration in an individual child or young person's circumstances.

4(2) KCC's Children and Young People's Strategic Plan 2012-2015, Every Day Matters, provides the overarching framework within which KCC's children's

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<sup>1</sup> Section 5A (5)

<sup>2</sup> Section 5A(4)(c)

services work together seamlessly to deliver integrated services and the best possible outcomes for all children and young people in Kent. Kent's Children's Centres and the Futures Service Options Programme support the delivery of the strategic priorities as set out in Every Day Matters;

- Safeguarding and protection
- Early help, prevention and intervention
- Community ambition, health and wellbeing
- Learning and achievement
- Better use of resources

4(3) Kent's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy (August 2012) sets out that Children's Centres need to strengthen their working relationship with early years settings and schools in order to improve the quality of early years education, improve readiness to learn and ensure young children and their families in need of early support can access this at the earliest point.

4(4) Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service provides the model for early intervention and prevention services for young people aged 11-19. The new service delivery model aligns professionals and integrates activity through a Framework of Integrated Adolescent Support so that young people access the right services, at the right time, in the right place. Children's Centres across Kent are actively supporting this service to reduce teenage pregnancy rates and improve outcomes for teenage parents and are developing a model of integration 0-11 to provide transition into this service.

4(5) Action on Health Visiting Programme (designed to define and implement an improved health visiting service and an expanded health visiting workforce to deliver improved health and social outcomes for children), sets out its intention to deliver improved outcomes through delivery of a public health and Healthy Child Programme aligned service for children aged 0-5 years and their families.

## **5. Undertaking the Future Service Options Programme**

5(1) Work to review Kent's Children's Centres has been undertaken to inform decisions around the future focus and purpose of Children's Centres across Kent through;

- Understanding how the service currently operates
- Identifying the pressures and need for change
- Identifying the opportunities for change

5(2) Corporate Board, on the 10th December 2012, agreed that the findings from the review would be addressed through the development of Future Service

Options. Four key elements have been developed to shape a future model. These include;

- The use of an empirical approach.
- The development of an alternative resource model based on need.
- The investigation of potential opportunities from revised staffing structures.
- The use of local engagement information to shape the development of a number of 'local solutions'

5(3) During January and February 2013, a strategic and series of district engagement workshops were held. These workshops focused on a number of principles which were designed to support the development of a number of options to deliver efficiency savings and support the development of a Strategic Plan for the Kent Children's Centre Programme. Participants supported a policy and planning approach which:

- Gave emphasis to a consistent approach to service delivery and planning across Kent;
- Supported a shift to more focus on the neediest children and families by developing a Kent enhanced offer;
- Harnessed Children's Centre to add value to existing services and extend functional role and brief to support siblings of Under 5s up to age 11;
- Ensured the continued provision of Children's Centres in every community;
- Ensured consolidation of service provision and embedding of integrated working;
- Encouraged service delivery alignment and integration.

5(4) As part of the Future Service Options Programme's engagement with stakeholders, it was expressed that there is a need to refresh alignment with all partner agencies, with a particular focus on developing better links with:

- Clinical Commissioning Groups and GPs
- Community health services and primary care
- Local Health Watch and GPs
- Adult Social Care relating to harm from substance misuse, Domestic Abuse and Violence and Mental Health.

5(5) During February 2013 Kent Children's Centres were part of a peer challenge as part of the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme. The positive peer challenge identified that "there is cause for general confidence and optimism but the current work on reviewing the role and function of Children's Centres will be critical to their future." It is recognised that a need exists to formalise arrangements through the establishment of an agreed integrated

model that will strengthen and clarify process and pathways for children and families to access services and support. There is also an acceptance by all partners that Kent's Children's Centres role can offer further value added by through access to a continuum of services (0-11) to align with Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Strategy (11-19).

## 6. Principles underpinning a Future Model

6(1) A future model needs to;

- Maximise the use of our resources and meet efficiency savings of at least £1.5million in 2014/15.
- Identify potential opportunities to achieve additional savings in 2015/16.
- Involve local health services and other agencies at the heart of service delivery.
- Prioritise 'need' and continue to meet local needs and deliver services that are reflective and responsive to changing need, including targeted support.
- Protect service delivery by reducing management, administration and accommodation costs.
- Deliver an integrated continuum of support and formalise an integrated model of delivery.
- Maintain a comparable accessibility to existing delivery.
- Consider risk and mitigating actions.
- Formalise Kent's offer to support the wider family and operate outside of the 0-5 age range (pre-birth to 11 years) and improve access to specialist services locally.
- Align delivery with local strategies and continue to meet legislative requirements.
- Require a full Public Consultation to be undertaken in line with the Childcare Act 2006.

## 7. Consultation

7(1) Any final proposals will be subject to formal public consultation. The Committee will be able to contribute to that consultation at a future meeting.

## 8. Timetable

8(1) Cabinet Committee is asked to note the timetable below;

Activity	Date
Initial discussion at Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee	12 <sup>th</sup> June 2013

Preparation of proposals for formal consultation	June/July 2013
Formal public consultation and opportunity for engagement (12 weeks)	July to September 2013
Opportunity for Cabinet Committee to discuss and to contribute its views to the consultation	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2013
Analysis of consultation responses and preparation of recommendations for decisions	October 2013
Report to Cabinet Committee for discussion prior to the decision being taken	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
Decision taken	November/ December 2013

## 9. Conclusions

- 9(1) Children's Centres are required to deliver efficiency savings of £1.5 million in 2014/15, to be achieved by the Children's Centre FSO Programme. It is imperative that timescales are met in order to achieve required savings in 2014/15.

## 10. Recommendation(s)

The Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to note and comment on;

- (a) The aims of the Future Service Options Programme.
- (b) The proposed timetable
- (c) The proposed level of member involvement

## 11. Background Documents

Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance (April 2013)

<http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/userfiles/CHC/file/CC%20Staff%20Documents/Home%20Page/childrens%20centre%20stat%20guidance%20april%202013.pdf>

Ofsted Framework for Children's Centre Inspections (April 2013)

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-childrens-centre-inspection-april-2013>

Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant and Aiming High For Disabled Children Grant Capital Guidance (DfE capital 'clawback')

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/capital%20guidance.pdf>

Kent Future Service Options Programme documentation at:

[http://www.kent.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/childcare\\_and\\_early\\_education/childrens\\_centres/future\\_service\\_options\\_program.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/childcare_and_early_education/childrens_centres/future_service_options_program.aspx)

This includes;

- A map of current Children's Centre locations
- The executive summary of the hypothesis-led supporting analysis
- Workshop presentation for each district
- Analysis of the district workshop feedback forms
- A Frequently Asked Questions document

## **12. Contact details**

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