

## **Report to Cabinet**

**February 2021**

### **Consultation on Early Help Service Redesign Proposals**

**Report by Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning**

**Electoral divisions: All**

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#### **Summary**

This report seeks approval for a wide consultation on proposals for a redesign of Early Help services. The consultation plans are fully described. The aim of the proposals is to provide an improved and targeted offer to vulnerable children and families and alignment with children's social care.

The report sets out the current Early Help offer (section 3), the enhanced targeted service being proposed and detail on the proposal for a new service model and how it has been developed (sections 4 and 5 and Appendix A). The detail of the consultation and consideration of alternatives to the proposed model are set out in section 7.

#### **Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to approve the plans for consultation from early March 2021 on the proposals for the Early Help service, the outcome of which will return to Cabinet in July 2021 for further consideration of the proposals for the service.

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#### **Proposal**

##### **1. Background**

- 1.1 This proposal outlines plans to consult on a new Early Help model of delivery to improve the quality of a child's home and family life, enable them to perform better at school, provide early prevention of harm and improve their long-term outcomes. The improved targeted early help offer should reduce the need for higher level intervention and therefore the demand on children's social care services.
- 1.2 Rising demand in Social Care and Early Help means there is a need to ensure that every part of the early help resource is maximised to improve outcomes for children. In line with national trends, West Sussex has seen a significant increase in the numbers of children who are the subject of a child protection plan and in the numbers of children looked after. There is also a significant increase in the number of Early Help Plans. It is clear that demand will continue

to increase, and it is vital that early help services are effective at targeting and reducing demand for social care. Consultation will test these expectations.

- 1.3 The review of the current offer has included an evaluation of the whole service offer, including targeted intervention, the current delivery points, the group offer, analysing the centres' usage as well as a scoping of the health and library offer across the county to understand the range and reach. It also included a review to check if there is any duplication in the offer as well as an assessment of the impact of the proposed changes on service delivery. Critical is the ability to reach children who are most in need which requires the service to provide a much more agile approach. Feedback from consultation will help inform this.
- 1.4 Not all of the current early help services will be in the scope for this service redesign proposal and the planned consultation. The services set out below in Table 1 will not be included. They will be developed as part of the wider service redesign that is currently underway within Children Young People and Learning to provide a more seamless service provision as part of the Family Safeguarding model.

**Table 1 – Services out of scope for the Early Help Redesign proposals:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Emotional Support</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse</li> <li>• Youth Homelessness</li> <li>• Early Years and Childcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PAUSE</li> <li>• Young Carers</li> <li>• Intentionally Homeless</li> <li>• Business Support and Performance</li> </ul>
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## **2 Context – the aims of the service review proposed for consultation**

- 2.1 In 2017 early help services were known as the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help (IPEH) service. It was created by bringing together several different services and functions including Think Family, the Youth Service and The Early Childhood Service. The review was needed to ensure a more joined-up approach with other children's services and partners.
- 2.2 The service review aims to support the principles of the West Sussex County Council Reset Plan 21/22 to 24/25. The Reset Plan outlines the need to strengthen our support to those who need it most. This means we will need to:
- Prioritise the most important things to do
  - Manage the demand on our services better
  - Make sure our resources go where they are needed most
  - Make the very best of resources in the short and long term
- 2.3 The Reset Plan specifically informs that Children's Services should maintain a 'whole family' approach to ensuring children are safe, with families supported by multi-agency 'early help hubs' to provide coordinated support.
- 2.4 Recognising the need to modernise the service to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children a detailed and comprehensive review has now been completed underpinned by the following principles:
- services are targeted to those in greatest need
  - services are proportionate to the level of need
  - to put children first and ensure that they are listened to

- a service that is seamless and integrated
- meets all statutory requirements
- to support partners to provide universal services

### 3 Current Model

3.1 The current Early Help service comprises:

- **6 Early Help Hubs**; one in each district locality providing support to children aged between 0-19 or 25 if a young person has additional needs. Each of the 6 Hubs offers 4 core services, Family Support, Enabling Families, Termly Conversations, Youth Support.
- **Family Support** is a targeted offer to support children and families with more complex needs who require help through the coordination of a multi-agency Early Help Plan.
- **Enabling Families** provides a short-focussed offer of up to 5 sessions often addressing parenting or single issues which if unaddressed could escalate to require an Early Help Plan.
- **Termly Conversations** is an offer to education partners where a scheduled meeting is conducted on a termly basis to discuss children the school have emerging worries about. This is with the view to early identification of issues that the school can support and respond to as well as a named link worker supporting with partner held Early Help Plans.
- **Youth Support** is delivered in youth centres through group work, one to one youth support and *Find It Out* drop in with a focus on education, employment and training opportunities, health and wellbeing.
- **43 Children's Centres** providing support to families with children aged 0-5 years dealing with child development and school readiness; parenting aspirations and parenting skills; child and family health and life chances. Included in these centres is 1 sensory/play vehicle shared between 3 rural districts.
- **Information, Advice and Guidance** is also offered as part of the early help service and includes, **Crisis Support**, support to access **Free Entitlement** for 2, 3, and 4-year olds and the **Family Information Service**.

3.2 The review demonstrated that;

- The current 'centre-based' offer does not necessarily reach those children and families who are most in need of help.
- The number of families visiting centres in some areas is very low and, in several areas, the most vulnerable children and families do not visit the centres.
- Those who visit centres are mainly those who can access other universal services.
- Each centre requires a minimum number of staff to safely operate and perform facilities management tasks, diverting resources from those most in need. Many centres are only able to be open on a part time basis due to staffing required.

#### 4 Proposals for Change - the focus for consultation

- 4.1 Central to the proposal is the greater alignment of Early Help and Social Care as well as moving towards having co-located locality teams. This change should strengthen relationships within Children's Services improving the journey for children who require help and protection as well as creating better connections locally to partners promoting a shared responsibility to the children within localities. Appendix A outlines the proposed Early Help offer on a page. This will aid the consultation work as an easy reference document.
- 4.2 It is proposed to have a greater focus on intervention pre and post-statutory support. Early Help continues to evidence improved outcomes for children who receive a targeted intervention through an Early Help Plan. This work has the highest success rates both for improving outcomes for children and families and reducing the demand into children's social care. Early Help supports circa 4,000 children a year on Early Help plans. Where children's needs are met through an Early Help Plan, less than 3% go on to require a social care intervention in the following 12 months. These outcomes support the key performance indicator for early help in the Reset Plan to achieve a set percentage of Early Help Plans closed with outcomes met and without 'step-up' to social care. The West Sussex Early Help targeted intervention is also recognised nationally as a leader in achieving outcomes for the *Troubled Families* program.
- 4.3 The new model proposes an increase in the staff delivering targeted interventions with a view to the service operating in a more agile way in communities. The review has identified those centres that are in the areas of highest deprivation and therefore highest demand and it is proposed that these centres are maintained and open full time in the new model to improve their usage. The new model proposes to reduce the overall number of Early Help delivery points across the county with a minimum of one access centre in each district and borough. This is an approach that has been undertaken by a number of local authorities and the consultation information will provide some examples of where this approach has been taken and what the impact was.
- 4.4 A higher proportion of the Early Help offer has always been delivered in the community, with less than a third, taking place at designated delivery points. With most of the early help offer conducted in family homes, the community, with schools and partners. While the COVID19 pandemic did not form part of the initial offer review it has demonstrated the need for the service to modernise and to be more responsive and agile. Early help has not been delivered from centres since March 2020 instead centre based staff have mobilised to deliver in the community and virtually. This enabled staff to continue to deliver the provision of information, advice and guidance, high levels of crisis support and the follow up of Free Entitlement.
- 4.5 Reduced building/facilities management effort will enable the service to redirect resources to the targeted interventions. Consultation input and evaluation will help to test these assumptions. Centre proposals and access to service analysis is in Appendix B. The proposed change in delivery points is as follows:

**Table 2: Delivery Point Changes**

Type	Current number	Proposed number
Children and Family Centres Including 1 x sensory/plays vehicle	43	11
Youth and Find It Out (FIO) Centres	11	0

Note the Find It Out Offer would move to the remaining children centres

4.6 The Early Help service withdrawal from some delivery points would create significant opportunities for rationalisation of the estate and potential use by other County Council services or income generation from leasing properties to community partners or on the open market. The provisional timeline for implementing the proposed operating model for Early Help services is October 2021, however, the timeline to complete the rationalisation of the estate will be longer. This will also be informed by the outcome of the consultation.

## 5 Proposed New Model

5.1 The proposed new service will remain based in 6 geographical locality hubs aligned to district boundaries with each district hub containing at least 1 Children & Family Centre. (Arun 2, Adur and Worthing 4, Chichester 1, Crawley 2, Horsham 1 and Mid Sussex 1).

5.2 The proposed Early Help model is intended to:

- Provide a single point of entry for all families and professionals
- Continue to deliver from 6 locality Hubs who will work more closely alongside Social Care teams
- Increase the targeted response to vulnerable children
- Increase the *Enabling Families* Offer to those families that usually can cope but may need a little extra help
- Improve early identification; taking action to respond to problems before they are more difficult to reverse
- Improve collaboration and strengthen support to schools to support children and young people with attendance, achievement, attainment and health and wellbeing
- Promote alignment with social care so that all children and families are accessing the right help and protection from the most appropriate part of children's services
- Support collaboration with Public Health and the Healthy Child Programme to promote the best start in life for all West Sussex children and young people
- Support local partnerships to collectively improve outcomes for children and better identify when a child needs help. Making Early Help everyone's business

5.3 Early Help currently provides open access services such as *stay and play* at children centres, *open access youth groups* and *youth drop-ins*. Providers of universal services include schools, health, libraries and the voluntary and community sector. In the proposed new model, where limited early help non-targeted services will be provided, the service would support local communities

to develop and retain their support to children through enhanced and more effective partnership arrangements. Consultation output will inform this.

### **Early Intervention**

- 5.4 The County Council is still committed to ensuring intervention at the earliest opportunity to support families and this approach will be supported by a comprehensive communications plan. The proposals ensure that the County Council continues to identify and take action to respond to problems before they become more difficult to reverse. There is also the view that Early Help is everyone's business and that together we can respond early to children's needs, including the use of partner led early help plans. To that effect, it is proposed that Early Help build on the success of *termly conversations* between named link workers and schools. The aim is to support partners to deliver additional support to children by strengthening the service through the establishment of dedicated teams, responding more flexibly to support schools and partners as issues arise. Moving away from the *planned conversations* model, this team will actively support partners to lead Early Help Plans, enabling partners to put support in place before problems escalate. The new service would also be available to offer advice and support to improve the identification of vulnerable children. Support would be provided to escalate concerns about a child to the appropriate service, specifically identifying emerging needs and safeguarding concerns.
- 5.5 It is proposed that Early Help will continue to facilitate locality partnerships through local partnership boards, one in each district. The terms of reference for these boards will be reviewed and will be attended by Early Help, Social Care, Health and key stakeholders in the locality. Key stakeholders invited include service users, education, early years, elected members, voluntary and community sector. Boards will provide a network of support and information through and will focus on how partners can collectively deliver early help and improve outcomes for children and young people in West Sussex. Partner relationships will be critical to improving the identification and support of vulnerable children and families to access support. These boards will serve as a space and network for local partners who know and understand the early help offer and how to help families access the services.
- 5.6 *Enabling Families* provision will be increased in the new model. This service provides a short and focused intervention of between 1 to 5 sessions of family support work to parents. This is a parent-focused offer providing help for single issue or lower level concerns, often focused on parenting, behaviour and communication issues for those who do not require a multi-agency coordinated response. This is another key tool to help parents build their confidence and prevents problems and issues from escalating into more formal interventions. The offer can be delivered flexibly to suit parent's needs, in the community, in centres or virtually.

### **Children and Family Centres**

- 5.7 It is proposed that the new model be delivered from a network of 11 full time Children and Family centres which will provide an opportunity for Children's Social Care staff to co-locate. There will be a minimum of one centre in each district. Some universal services will continue to be delivered from these centres, such as health clinics, whilst maintaining some space to meet with children and families receiving support from Children's Services. The core

early help centre offer will be the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance for parents and the continuation of Find It Out for young people, Crisis Support; the provision of emergency essentials and support to access Free Entitlement for 2, 3, and 4-year olds. Families will have open access to all remaining centres even if they are not located in the area they live. For families and young people not able to access a centre this core offer can also be offered by phone or online. Those identified for help can also seek support via the partners, schools and the school link worker. Response within the consultation will greatly assist the evaluation of these aims before a final decision.

## **Family Support**

- 5.8 Family Support is the current Early Help targeted intervention offer which supports children who are identified as in need of help through an Early Help Plan. These children will receive whole family coordinated support from a dedicated 1:1 support worker in their home and the community. Workers support families to resolve issues, build resilience and seek to prevent them requiring a social care intervention. Early Help also provides an enhanced Family Support Keyworker offer for those who are experiencing multiple, complex or entrenched issues within their family. These workers work directly with children on the cusp of social care and are often stepped across from social care to help sustain the changes and progress made while on a child protection or child in need plan. The proposal is to increase the number of Family Support staff increasing the Early Help reach across the county and delivering more efficiencies across the directorate by preventing the need for a higher cost service. Children and families are usually identified for this support via partners, identified by school or through an early help link worker discussion or are stepped across from social care but can self-refer by centre drop in or by phone or email.

## **Impact on County Council services out of scope for this proposal**

- 5.9 The wider youth offer is being reviewed as part of the children services transformation and adolescent offer. Changes within this proposal will impact on delivery space for the Youth Emotional Support offer and Young Carers but has no effect on the structure of these teams and opportunities for delivery space will be further worked on as part of the asset plan.
- 5.10 Supervised contact requires meeting space in the community to deliver and would like full use of a small number of centres. Early Help withdrawal from some centres could provide an opportunity to create contact centres. This will be further worked on as part of the asset plan.

## **6 Other Options**

- 6.1 Other options will be included in the consultation as set out in paragraph 7.8 below. They are summarised below as is the 'do nothing' or 'no change' option and other variations to the model which will not be included in the consultation. As no final decision on the future service design has been taken it is important that other options for the service are provided within the consultation work.
- 6.2 Reduce Early Help targeted intervention: this would mean that children's needs would be at risk of not being met at the right time placing further strain on higher cost interventions. Early Help would continue to employ staff in centres

with low access rates in areas of less need and prevent the service moving to a more impactful and agile service.

- 6.3 Do nothing: this would risk a lost opportunity to improve the level of service to those who most need it. The current model is not seen to be fit for purpose as outlined in this report at section 2 above given the service improvement, alignment and development that is needed and without which costs would continue to increase. These initial assumptions based on the work to date will be tested through the consultation work and its evaluation.
- 6.4 Greater reduction in delivery points: this would result in the areas of highest need with the most vulnerable children not having open access. Centres in areas of highest deprivation have the highest centre usage rates and are being accessed by families which need them.
- 6.5 Develop the mobile offer in rural areas: consideration can be given to maintaining the early help mobile outreach offer for rural areas. Children and Family centres have operated a model previously whereby workers deliver groups from community buildings in rural areas or from the 1 sensory/play vehicle shared between the 3 areas. In this proposal open access groups would cease to be delivered in all areas leaving only the commitment to deliver Information, Advice and Guidance. This service could be delivered by a bus but would require the purchase of 2 further vehicles and would require a minimum staffing of 6 FTE at 2 grades higher than centre-based staff delivering this offer due to licencing requirements. This may not be considered good value for money for what is a universal offer that can be facilitated remotely via phone, email or virtual means. Consultation responses will test this.
- 6.6 Retain more part time centres in more areas rather than a reduced number of centres operating full time: this option has been considered but will mean part time centres which still require the same facilities management/health and safety functions at a cost to the early help budget. Multiple staff would be required to move between centres several times during the working day and week. Early help would be retaining buildings that could have alternative use from other council departments or partners. This approach would not allow any opportunity for the council to rationalise estates to reduced costs and having centres empty for a high percentage of the week may not represent good value for money. These principles and the factors which have informed the service design proposals against these options will be tested in the consultation.

## **7 Consultation, engagement and advice**

- 7.1 This is a major service redesign and the proposal will therefore require the appropriate level and reach of consultation and engagement. There are specific requirements for consultation if making changes to Children Centres, including the range of consultees, the timeliness of the process, the content of the information provided and how it is evaluated. The aim is to have a public consultation period of ten weeks. All consultation activity is subject to a quality assurance process and an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 7.2 The proposed model and the intention to hold a public consultation on this was considered by the Children's and Young Peoples Services Scrutiny Committee on 7 January 2021. The committee confirmed that it broadly supports the need to investigate an improved and targeted early help offer for vulnerable children



and families and requested that work is progressed in order to achieve this. The Committee made the following recommendations for the future consideration of the proposals:

- Clarity on how the proposals will help improve the identification and support of vulnerable children and families to access early help support.
- A communication plan on the new proposal and ongoing support for residents on how they will be able to continue to access the services, especially for those areas where delivery points will be withdrawn.
- A robust equality impact assessment.
- Clarity on the impact of the proposals on wider services, including partners who use the delivery points to deliver their services.
- Further data and information on usage and services provided in each children and family centre by all partners.
- The breakdown of consultation responses by hub area
- How the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on families has been taken into consideration when assessing the proposals and their resilience.
- Information on the outcome of early help redesign in other Local Authorities and how this learning is taken into account in the proposals for West Sussex.
- More detail around proposals for service delivery to remote service users.
- That the consultation proactively approaches service users and stakeholders and that the consultation document, including the list of proposed consultees is available to members.

7.3 These points have been addressed by providing additional clarification within the text of this paper and in the additional appendices listed below. Some of the detail requested will be provided in a further paper to the Scrutiny Committee in June. Members will be able to see the consultation material before launch.

7.4 The consultation will be based on the aims and principles of the new model as set out in this report. The consultation questions will involve consulting on four options for change;

- Increased targeted support with limited open access and information services
- No open access and information services
- Retain current open access centres
- Other suggestions

7.5 Prior to the formal consultation there have been informal engagement sessions during January/February to provide some early feedback, challenge and suggestions to inform the offer and identify further issues that may need to be addressed during the formal consultation. It is proposed that there will be a schools engagement session with a specific focus on the schools offer and a broader session for wider partners from the voluntary and community sector, districts and boroughs and local councillors, identified through the Early Help Partnership Advisory Boards and partners who currently deliver from centres. This intensive additional informal engagement with schools and the voluntary and community sector is to ensure compliance with the West Sussex Compact.

- 7.6 UNISON will be consulted ahead of the formal staff consultation on the potential impacts to staff, including possible redundancies. Initial staff briefings took place the week commencing 7th December outlining the details of this proposal.
- 7.7 External partners and service users will be consulted on the proposal in March 2021 through a public consultation process. This process will create an opportunity to review the proposed offer and raise any concerns, issues or provide feedback. The consultation will be delivered by means of a 'Your Voice Engagement Hub survey function on the County Council website and there will be briefing sessions delivered virtually outlining the offer and giving the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback.
- 7.8 While the model described in Section 5 is the currently proposed option, it is proposed to consult on the three options as outlined below. The option to make no changes to the current Early Help offer has not been included as this would not meet the principles and aims of the service. Feedback and consultation responses addressing this option will however be taken into account and applied against the principles of the aims of the service.

**Table 3: Option 1**

Option 1	<b>Proposed model: Increased targeted support with reduced open access and information services</b>
Summary	<p>In this option the local authority will increase the targeted intervention offer. This will allow the service to operate in the community and be more agile and responsive to need.</p> <p>There will be an increase in support to schools and in “Enabling Families” our short term one to one parent lead interventions.</p> <p>Early Help will continue to deliver some limited open access services through the retention of 11 Children and Family Centres and throughout the county via virtual means. Early help will cease the direct delivery of group work.</p> <p>This will be achieved through an increase in targeted intervention delivering direct work to our vulnerable children and families pre and post social care intervention.</p>
Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased targeted intervention</li> <li>• Increased Enabling Families offer</li> <li>• Reduction in children and family centres and youth centres</li> <li>• Retaining 11 children and family centres, 8 in areas of high need and a further 3 to ensure all districts retain at least 1 centre</li> <li>• Find It Out move to be delivered from the remaining centres and online, email and phone</li> <li>• Cease the delivery of group work</li> <li>• Remaining children and family centres to offer key partners a venue to deliver</li> <li>• Enhanced offer to schools with dedicated schools’ team in each district area</li> <li>• Greater alignment with social care with colocation in centres</li> <li>• Continue to deliver information, advice and guidance, crisis support and follow up on Free Entitlement</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the Partnership Boards and support partner delivery through the provision of information and data</li> </ul>
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived disadvantage to rural communities by locating Children and Family centres in the County's main settlements</li> <li>• Reduced capacity to support partner delivery of services</li> <li>• Reduction in suitable office space for staff</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Option 2**

<b>Option 2</b>	<b>No open access and information services</b>
Summary	<p>In this option the early help will cease to provide any open access and information services, including the provision of children and family centres, youth centres, group work and the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance.</p> <p>The available resource will be used to maximise the capacity of the targeted intervention teams to the most vulnerable children and families through direct case work and through additional support to schools.</p>
Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No open access or information services provided by early help</li> <li>• Further increase in the number of targeted intervention workers</li> <li>• Increased Enabling Families offer</li> <li>• Withdrawal of all children and family centres and youth centres</li> <li>• Withdrawal of Find It Out with the exception of online information, advice and guidance</li> <li>• Cease the delivery of group work</li> <li>• Enhanced offer to schools with dedicated schools' team in each district area</li> <li>• Greater alignment with social care with colocation in centres</li> <li>• Develop the Partnership Boards and support partner delivery through the provision of information and data</li> </ul>
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of access by families most likely to require information advice and guidance, reduction of open access reduces opportunity to identify need with our most vulnerable children</li> <li>• Impact on capacity to follow up on Free Entitlement potentially disadvantaging children</li> <li>• Completely removes capacity for partner delivery in centres in locations of highest need</li> <li>• Removal of all centre office space, impacting on colocation of early help and social care staff</li> </ul>

**Table 5: Option 3**

<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Retain current open access centres</b>
Summary	<p>In this option the local authority would retain the vast majority of children and families centres and youth centres and continue to deliver open access groups such as play and stay and youth groups.</p> <p>There would be a reduction in targeted intervention support for the most vulnerable children, which would not recognise the increase in demand for early help since September and the likely continued increase as a result of the pandemic. It would include maintaining the current termly offer to schools and the reducing the current Enabling Families offer (short parent led intervention).</p>
Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce capacity to deliver targeted intervention</li> <li>• Reduce delivery of Enabling Families offer</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of the majority of children and family centres and youth centres</li> <li>Find It Out would remain in current bases</li> <li>Open access group work would be maintained</li> <li>Schools would continue to receive a termly conversation</li> <li>Greater alignment with social care and colocation in centres</li> <li>Continue to deliver information, advice and guidance, crisis support and follow up on Free Entitlement</li> <li>Develop the Partnership Boards and support partner delivery through the provision of information and data</li> </ul>
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compromise the ability to support vulnerable children and meet the increase in demand for early help and future demand.</li> <li>Increased risk of children's needs not being met early enough resulting in a social care intervention</li> <li>Risk of increased pressure on social care resource</li> <li>Early help unable to meet current demand resulting in longer waiting times for vulnerable children</li> <li>Reduced capacity to support schools and partners in early identification of concerns for children</li> </ul>

7.9 It is anticipated that the formal staff consultation would take place in August 2021, lasting for a month to allow for meaningful consultation with staff and UNISON on the staff impact. This will only occur should the further decision be to implement the proposed new model. Staff will be encouraged to participate in the public consultation.

7.10 Provisional key dates:

- January/February informal key stakeholder discussion groups
- 23 February 2021 Cabinet
- March 2021 start Formal Consultation (10 weeks)
- May 2021 evaluation of feedback and impact assessments
- June 2021 Consideration by the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of the consultation and the final proposal
- July 2021 Cabinet decision
- August 2021 Staff Consultation
- October 2021 Implement final proposed new model

## 8 Finance

8.1 Revenue consequences of the proposal should it be implemented following the consultation exercise and the evaluation of feedback and impact assessments.

	Current Year 2020/21 £m	Year 2 2021/22 £m	Year 3 2022/23 £m	Year 4 2023/24 £m
Revenue budget	9.877	8.877	8.327	7.927
Change from Proposal	-1.000	-0.550	-0.400	0
Remaining budget	8.877	8.327	7.927	7.927

## 8.2 The effect of the proposal:

### (a) **How the cost represents good value**

The proposal would enable the Early Help service to re-focus their offer towards the families and children who are the most vulnerable and provide them with the support they need to divert them from more costly social care interventions. Working closely with schools and other partners and reducing the number of physical access points means that the Council can reduce the cost of delivery whilst implementing an enhanced targeted early help offer and an enhanced and more proactive schools offer that aims to be more preventative.

### (b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

The initial savings proposal was for £1.95m in total to be delivered over a two-year period, with £1.0m planned for delivery in 2020/21 and the remaining £0.95m to be delivered in 2021/22. Due to a number of vacant posts having been or planned to be deleted, the £1.0m has been delivered in 2020/21. Should the decision lead to the implementation of the proposed new model in October 2021 the planned saving of £0.95m in 2021/22 would be revised to £0.55m anticipated in 2021/22 and the remaining £0.4m being delivered in 2022/23. These remaining savings could be achieved by the removal of a layer of management in early help, a reduction of posts relating to the delivery points and the group work offer.

### (c) **Human Resources**

The proposal, if proceeded with, requires a revision of the current staffing structure. The number of FTE will be increased to deliver the new Early Help Offer, and there will be a reduction in or removal of other posts that will no longer be required at the same level or at all, for example some non-targeted duties or youth group work. The proposed changes also present the opportunity to review the management tiers and bring greater clarity on accountabilities.

Overall, there will be a reduction in the size of the current workforce. Vacant posts totaling 25 fte have already been removed from the establishment and the current modelling indicates a further reduction in the order of 40 to 50 fte posts which brings a potential risk of staff redundancies. However, with a continued focus on vacancy management, and active support for redeployment across the local authority, the actual number of staffing redundancies will be kept to a minimum.

### (d) **Asset Impact**

Capital Claw back - when a local authority puts forward proposals on change of use of capital projects which were funded through the Sure Start and Early Years Capital Grant, they must inform the Department of Education and, subject to prior approval, there will be no claw back of the grant where it will be used for a similar purpose consistent with the aim of the grant.

The Children and Family Centre Delivery points are subject to different clawback arrangements and relate to buildings and equipment. However, from experience to date, and in line with the proposal to rationalise the estate and use any capital receipts from the unretained buildings to support similar services, it is

understood that capital clawback may not apply. This is subject to further legal advice and consultation with the DfE.

The Estates team have produced a draft Asset Plan. Further decisions will be taken to declare assets surplus to operational requirements if this is the outcome.

## 9 Risk implications and mitigations

**Table 6: Risks - Impact and Mitigation**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action (in place or planned)</b>
Potential for staff redundancy	Early Help has operated a strict vacancy management process enabling several posts to be deleted. This will continue. The need to reassign staff during COVID presents opportunities to develop broader skills and experience. Active management of redeployment across the local authority will help mitigate the actual number of redundancies.
Access to health clinics and financial risk to the Healthy Child Programme if centre access limited.	Public Health will work with the lease providers and the County Council's Estates Service to renegotiate service level agreements.
Clawback of SureStart grant by Department for Education	The project will address the need to ensure plans align with grant aims.

## 10 Policy alignment and compliance

### 10.1 Legal Implications

Legal advice will continue to be used to address the potential capital clawback and compliance with statutory duties.

### 10.2 Equality duty and human rights assessment

A full equality impact assessment will be conducted and the plan for conducting the assessment is at Appendix C.

### 10.3 Public Health

Early Help has a collaborative working agreement with public health. The areas of specific focus are:

- Improved mother and baby health, especially the most disadvantaged
- Good mental health for all children
- Home environment – healthy and nurturing parents
- Healthy weight

These elements will be fully embedded in the proposed enhanced early help offer.

Lucy Butler

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**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Early Help Offer

Appendix B – Delivery Point Summary

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment Plan

Appendix D – Maps including Existing and Proposed Delivery Points

**Background Papers:** None