
Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

20 July 2021

Early Help Service Redesign Proposals

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Summary

On 7 January 2021 this Committee considered the aims and principles for a redesign of the Early Help Service to provide an improved service to vulnerable children and families in West Sussex, and the plans to launch a public consultation on proposals for the future of the service.

The Committee broadly supported the need to investigate an improved and targeted early help offer and the launch of the public consultation. The Committee noted the potential impact of the proposals on the availability of universal services and asked that this be addressed as part of the next phase.

The Committee suggested that the following information be provided following the consultation to help their consideration of the final proposals:

- How the proposals will help improve the identification and support of vulnerable children and families to access early help support.
- A communication plan for the new service and on how residents will access the services, especially where delivery points will be withdrawn.
- A robust Equality Impact Report.
- What will be the impact on wider services, including from partners who use the delivery points to deliver their services.
- Data on usage and services provided in each centre by partners.
- A breakdown of consultation responses by hub area.
- How the impact of the 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.
- More detail around proposals for service delivery to remote service users

Cabinet took a decision on 27 February 2021 to launch a 10 week public consultation to seek views from partners and residents on the proposals.

The consultation ran from Monday 8 March 2021 to Monday 17 May 2021. The outcome and analysis of the Public Consultation is set out in Appendix A to the decision report. The attached draft decision report (Appendix 1) seeks approval from the Cabinet to implement the Early Help Redesign as revised following the consultation.

The information in the report and appendices include:

- The aims and principles of the service review
- The public consultation process and analysis (Appendix A)
- An overview of the response to the consultation including the adjustments proposed as a result of the consultation feedback
- The revised proposed Early Help Model
- Further work planned with partners and communities to manage the impact of the proposed offer
- The proposed plans for staff consultation
- The financial impact of the proposed Early Help Model
- An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix D)
- Early Help Access Case Studies (Appendix E)

Following this meeting, the committee's views on the plans for the service will be presented to Cabinet Members for their consideration ahead of the decision being taken by Cabinet on 27 July 2021.

Focus for scrutiny

The Committee should consider the analysis of the Early Help redesign consultation (Appendix 1) and how this has informed the proposals set out in the draft decision report (Appendix A). Seeing what the proposal seeks to achieve in the context of the Council's priorities and agreed outcomes for children and families how can the Committee influence the achievement of those through this proposal?

Areas for scrutiny include:

- 1) The aims of the proposal for service users and whether it is clear that these will be met in light of the responses to the consultation and engagement with partners. This could include:
 - Evidence for how the proposed model will deliver improved outcomes for vulnerable children and families.
 - How well the revisions to the original proposals will address issues raised
 - The accessibility of services to all residents who need them
 - How any impacts on services by partners and others are to be addressed
 - Evidence or learning from other areas that have implemented a similar model, and how this has been considered in the final proposals.
 - The impact of the pandemic on the service and communities and how this has been taken into account when developing the final proposals.
- 2) The mitigations for any risks or issues identified through the consultation analysis or the Equality Impact Assessment. Do these provide assurance that potential adverse impacts are understood and being addressed.
- 3) Plans to monitor the implementation and impact of the proposed model and identify how scrutiny could add value to this process in the future.
- 4) The effectiveness of the consultation process in capturing the full range of views from stakeholders and service users and any learning for future consultations.

The Chairman will summarise the output of the debate.

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Appendix 1: Draft Decision Report: Early Help Service Redesign Proposals

Appendices to Decision Report:

- Appendix A: Consultation Report
- Appendix B: Early Help Offer on a Page
- Appendix C: List of the 12 proposed retained centres
- Appendix D: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix E: Early Help Access Case Studies
- Appendix F: Children and Family Centres Overview

Background papers

None