

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	31 May 2012
Title:	Grants from Children's Services: Children's centres
Reference:	3914
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Tracey Sanders

Tel: 01962 847123

Email: tracey.sanders@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek the approval of the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services for the Children's Services Children's Centre grant process, with an indicative budget of £150,000. This paper also seeks approval for the Director of Children's services to issue grants to sustain community activity to voluntary and independent sector organisations within Hampshire, subject to compliance with the grant process detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.2. Grants to organisations will enable them to provide local projects and services which have previously been delivered by them under the former management arrangements for the delivery of children's centre services. Supporting the sustainability of these community based programmes is in line with children's services commitment to working in partnership with the voluntary sector and the commitment made by the executive lead member for children's services to reinvest additional savings into the children's centre programme. These services will be required to retain a focus on improving outcomes for young children aged 0-5 years and grants will enable families and children to access continued services in their local area.
- 1.3. This paper seeks to:
 - set out the background to the proposals
 - consider the funding mechanism for the proposals

2. Contextual information

2.1. The Children's Services children's centre grant budget results from savings generated from the re-design of the management of children's centres services across the County. The grant funding has been identified to support the sustainability of activities that were delivered by former third party managers of children's centres within Hampshire with a view to the organisations securing alternative funding for these activities within the next year. A set of criteria and conditions of grant has been established to support this budget stream and organisations will be invited to bid against specifications based on the needs of the community. The applications will be evaluated by a panel of Service Manager (Childcare and Business Support); Children's Centre Support Officer/s; Business Support Officer/s and a Finance representative against the specifications and published criteria. Other Children's and Adult Services officers will also be included, depending on the type of services requiring funding. This will ensure that services are not being duplicated.

3. Organisations requesting children's centre grant funding

- 3.1. Meetings were offered with organisations who submitted a bid and formerly provided the management of children's centres in Hampshire to discuss transition arrangements and in particular to consider whether there were sustainability issues relating to the former children centre programmes. The activities delivered by these organisations were particularly at risk due to the limited period of time (24 February until 23 April) between receiving confirmation of the outcome of their bid and planning for the transition of activities to the new provider. Three of these organisations raised concerns about the sustainability of a number of activities that they previously provided to the community and are likely to apply for grant funding. These activities are not part of the new children's centre core programme as they are either universal services or services that supplement core provision and include activities such as messy play, a café etc. Discussion with local stakeholders and communities has confirmed that the activities are highly valued universal activities and support improved outcomes. However, these organisations have not yet been able to secure alternative sources of income for the activities and their viability is now at risk. They have therefore requested that their grant applications be considered as a matter of urgency.
- 3.2. It is proposed that grant funding be provided to these organisations upon application and that the grant process is published to enable other exiting providers to submit a grant application if required (subject to compliance with the grant process detailed in Appendix 1). Final amounts will be agreed by the Director of Children's Services and will reported to the next decision day of the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in July 2012.

4. Finance

- 4.1. The 2012 /13 children's centres budget has been set at approximately £11m, of which about £10m will be spent on children's centres service delivery. This includes £877,000 which has been released through the contract awards and will now be used to support children's centres service delivery more widely as agreed by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on 27 May 2011.
- 4.2. It is proposed that a provisional allocation of £150,000 is made for grants to sustain community activity up until March 2013. This will be reviewed and may change if other previous children's centre provider organisations raise sustainability concerns as the new management arrangements commence.
- 4.3. Other funding commitments set against the £877,000 additional savings include investment in new services delivered through children's centres by partner agencies, funding to secure premises arrangements in local communities and funding to extend support for families accessing the two year old free early years education offer.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves:
 - the Children's Services children's centre grant applications process
 - a provisional budget to be allocated to the grants programme of £150,000
 - delegated decision making for the Director of Children's Services to agree grants over £5,000 for 2012/13, for organisations within Hampshire subject to their compliance with this process with final amounts being reported to the July decision day meeting of the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Securing the Future of Hampshire's Children's Centres	<u>Reference</u> 2635	<u>Date</u> 27 May 2011
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u> Childcare Act Apprenticeship Skills Children and Learning Act		<u>Date</u> 2006 2009

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. Equalities were considered when developing the proposal for the changes to the management of children centres in Hampshire . The impact assessment concluded that the proposals were likely to benefit all target groups, as the proposals suggested that reach areas remained smaller where levels of deprivation were higher and that service should be proportionate to need and contribute towards closing the outcomes gap. The recommendations in this report further mitigate against any possible impact as a result of the changes to the management of children centres.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. Children's centres are part of an Early Intervention Programme which may prevent crime and disorder in the longer term.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

The recommendations within this report support the delivery of services within their local community and therefore reduce the potential impact on the carbon footprint.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

- c) No specific measures have been identified