

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Executive Decision Record

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
<b>Date:</b>	27 May 2011
<b>Title:</b>	Securing the Future of Hampshire's Children's Centres
<b>Reference:</b>	2635
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

**Contact name:** John Coughlan, Director of Children's Services  
Tracey Sanders, Head of Services for Young Children

**Tel:** 01962 846400  
01962 813872

**Email:** [John.coughlan@hants.gov.uk](mailto:John.coughlan@hants.gov.uk)  
[Tracey.sanders@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Tracey.sanders@hants.gov.uk)

#### 1. The decision:

That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services:

- a) takes note of the consultation responses and considers the implications when determining the future provision of children's centres in Hampshire;
- b) notes and agrees the content of the Part B report (Securing the Future of Hampshire's Children's Centres);
- c) notes the financial context for this decision as defined by the Children's Services budget strategy paper "Children's Services Department Revenue Budget 2011/2012" agreed by the Executive Lead Member 28 January 2011 including the framework of principles reaffirmed in that report as a basis for guiding strategic budgetary decisions for the department;
- d) notes the decision of the Full Meeting of Hampshire County Council on 24 February 2011 which set the budget for the local authority as outlined in the budget statement "Tough Times require Tough Decisions";
- e) acknowledges the petition that was presented to the County Council by SOCC which has been responded to separately and acknowledge the deputations made to the full council meetings on 24 February 2011 and 26 April 2011.
- f) notes the range of consultation responses as evidenced in the previous report to this agenda and also note the extent of effort by officers and members at all levels to seek out and consider comments and views;

- g) notes the content and implications of the formal resolution passed by Hampshire County Council on this issue at the Extraordinary Meeting on 26 April 2011
- h) agrees the revised proposals as outlined in section 3 and appendix 2 of this report for the reorganisation of children's centres in Hampshire in order to secure the future of those centres and achieve the savings required, while protecting the capacity of the centres to continue serving the whole of the county and sustaining the provision of core services especially those which support the most vulnerable children and their families;
- i) requires the Director of Children's Services to implement the necessary programme of change;
- j) agrees that the change programme should include the development of a framework charging policy, which is aimed at discretionary services only and based on an ability to pay, on the understanding that any income generated should be retained for the future development of the centres;
- k) emphasises that the programme of change should pay particular regard to the support of and communication with affected staff, partners and service users;
- l) undertakes, assuming no significant changes to the County Council's forecast financial position and within the context of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, that the children's centres programme in Hampshire should be protected from further substantial savings requirements for the duration of this Administration.
- m) further undertakes that in the event of any future funding opportunities through any future slippage and/or efficiencies that may be identified through these or other initiatives resulting in savings within the Children's Centres budget, then the officers should look to reinvest in the locally controlled budgets of Children's Centres to increase their discretionary spending capacity on services according to local need for the remaining period of the current Administration;
- n) in response to comments from the Children and Families Select Committee about the risk attached to the change process, requires the Director of Children's Services to personally oversee the change management process.

## **2. Reason(s) for the decision:**

- 2.1. The decision takes place following the completion of the children's centre programme in Hampshire and the need to review services after the removal of a prescriptive approach to their development. It also takes place following the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services agreement of a saving target of £6 million from Children's Centre Services on 28 January 2011 and the County Council meeting on 24 February 2011 and the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services decision to authorise a public consultation regarding the future of children's centres in Hampshire.
- 2.2. It links to the County Councils Budget Strategy "Tough Times require Tough Decisions" and the decision supports corporate strategy to:

- Make Hampshire safer and more secure for all by ensuring early intervention services are offered to the most vulnerable families and safeguarding procedures in caring for young children, are followed:
- Maximise well being by ensuring that families and young children continue to access a range of services which enhance well being
- Enhance our quality of place by providing services within local communities

### **3. Other options considered and rejected:**

3.1. To make no changes to the current children's centre service. This would not meet the required efficiency savings or include a review of the children's centres service following the completion of the final phase in the establishment of centres which is timely

3.2. To exclude school managed centres from the cluster model, this would require over £1 million additional funding to ensure all centres were sustainable.

### **4. Conflicts of interest:**

4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: **None**

4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: **None**

**5. Dispensation granted by the Standards Committee: none.**

**6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable.**

### **7. Statement from the Decision Maker:**

In reaching my decision, I have taken into account my democratic responsibilities and the County Council's duty to set a balanced budget.

The Hampshire County Council's budget, set in February 2011, confirmed the overall parameters within which the Department must operate. It is my duty to decide, in the light of advice given to me, how we discharge that budget.

As well as the professional advice of the Director of Children's Services I have paid close attention to the responses received in the consultation process (a process which was extended to give the public more time to respond), the views expressed in a petition and also the views of the Children and Young People's Select Committee which has twice considered issues related to the budget and children's centres.

I have taken account of the representations made in the deputations to the two Council meetings and at my decision meeting of 27 May 2011. Additionally, I have taken account of the resolution of the special Council meeting of 26 April 2011.

I have agreed the recommendations put to me as the most effective way of helping children's centres and using our resources wisely.

I have added two clauses to the decision regarding finance and supervision.

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

-----

**27 May 2011**

**Executive Lead Member for Children's Services  
Councillor Roy Perry**