

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Executive Decision Record

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member For Children's Services
<b>Date:</b>	1 July 2016
<b>Title:</b>	Proposed Family Support Service
<b>Reference:</b>	7497
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

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#### 1. The decision:

That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services:

- 1.1. Acknowledges the outcome of the public consultation, staff and union consultation, any additional responses received outside the consultation period and the petitions submitted, as detailed in the report.
- 1.2. Agrees to the proposal to develop a new integrated Family Support Service for families with children aged 0–19 years (up to 25 for young adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities), as set out in the report, having regard to the necessary human resource implications and particularly the restructuring and reduction in the workforce.
- 1.3. Having taken account of the responses to the consultation and the Equality Impact Assessment, agrees to reduce the number of designated children's centres from 54 to 11, by closing buildings listed in Appendix 5 of the report.
- 1.4. Agrees that the Director of Children's Services continues to develop a digital strategy and other strategies in order to ensure that families are better able to access online information about family support services that are available in their local area, particularly in rural parts of the country.
- 1.5. Agrees that the Director of Children's Services should monitor, on a monthly basis for at least the next six months, the closure of children's centre buildings and particularly parental access to mental health support.
- 1.6. Agrees that where a local community group may want to offer some children's centre level 1 or 2 services the Director of Children's Services establish a mechanism to help such community groups set up their groups from current children's centre buildings wherever possible.
- 1.7. Agrees that the Director of Children's Services ensure that relevant existing staff have access to support and advice on future options such as meeting demand for childcare sufficiency.

## 2. Reasons for the decision:

- 2.1. In 2015, the County Council undertook a countywide consultation (Shaping Hampshire Spending Review: [www3.hants.gov.uk/budget/spendingreviewsurvey.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/budget/spendingreviewsurvey.htm)) with residents to seek views on options for managing the anticipated £98 million shortfall between its projected income and expenditure, by April 2017. Along with the other departments, Children's Services were asked to achieve a share of the shortfall, which represents £21.5 million, or a 14% reduction in the departmental budget. The consultation indicated that for savings in Children's Services, the majority of residents and stakeholders opposed reducing spend on services for children, older people and vulnerable people because these were rated as being the most important services to protect. Instead, respondents gave a preference that the County Council should focus on making savings by seeking efficiencies and making overall delivery more effective.
- 2.2. The above feedback from the 2015 consultation informed the development of a proposal to deliver £8.5 million of savings by combining children's centres, Early Help Hubs and the youth support budgets (which would include a previously agreed target saving of £1 million from youth support services) into a single Family Support Service targeted at the most vulnerable families. This proposal went before the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on 16 September 2015 and was agreed by Cabinet on 5 October 2015, with a requirement that there would be further public consultation on any proposed model, including any proposed closure of children's centres.
- 2.3. The need to make savings has provided Hampshire County Council with an opportunity to review the work of the children's centres and Early Help Hubs (including youth support services) and to consider whether there are more efficient and effective ways of delivering early help services to those vulnerable families who most need it. One of the key considerations of this review has been how Hampshire County Council and its partners, e.g. health and the voluntary sector, can offer a more flexible, responsive and coordinated service that provides help to families who have additional needs, where and when this is required. With this in mind, it has been proposed that these services could be brought together to become one complete, holistic, integrated service, providing support to vulnerable children and young people aged 0-19 (or age 25 where young adults have learning difficulties and/or disabilities) and their families and aligned closely with the STFP. By targeting these services at those families and children with multiple needs who require the involvement of more than one agency (categorised at level 3 of the threshold of need), as well as providing some services for families in level 2 priority groups, (e.g. teenage parents, service families); the Family Support Service (FSS) would be operated from fewer designated children's centre buildings, requiring a lower level of staffing and a more streamlined management structure, all of which would contribute towards delivering the proposed savings.
- 2.4. The FSS would aim to enable children at risk of poor outcomes to achieve educationally, socially and physically by supporting parents and carers to build their skills and resilience. By enabling parents to more effectively meet their children's developmental needs and by offering support as needs arise,

difficulties can be prevented from escalating into something more complex, requiring statutory intervention.

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

- 3.1. To do nothing. This would not enable Hampshire County Council to meet its savings target or develop a seamless early help service providing support to vulnerable children and young people aged 0-19 (or age 25 where young adults have learning difficulties and/or disabilities) and their families
- 3.2. To make savings by reductions to each separate service and retaining the different management arrangements for these. This would not enable Hampshire County Council to develop a seamless early help service providing support to vulnerable children and young people aged 0-19 (or age 25 where young adults have learning difficulties and/or disabilities) and their families
- 3.3. To increase the number of buildings to be used in the new Family Support Service while making the same level of savings. This would mean that fewer staff could be employed to deliver services and would not offer significant advantages over the proposed model as outreach venues have been identified in all the current children's centre locations where services can be delivered to each community.

**4. Conflicts of interest:**

4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker:

4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted:

**5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: none.**

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

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

In reaching this decision, I have taken into account the comments made by Councillor Jackie Porter at my decision day, as well as the discussion and recommendations of the Children and Young People Select Committee.

<b>Approved by:</b>  -----  <b>Executive Lead Member for Children's Services Councillor Keith Mans</b>	<b>Date:</b>  <b>1 July 2016</b>
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