

Cabinet



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| Date of meeting: | 09 February 2023 |
| Title of Report: | Family hubs contract award/Children's Centre delivery plan |
| Lead Member: | Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People) |
| Lead Strategic Director: | Sharon Muldoon (Director for Childrens Services) |
| Author: | Emma Crowther, Strategic Commissioning Manager |
| Contact Email: | Emma.crowther@plymouth.gov.uk |
| Your Reference: | |
| Key Decision: | Yes |
| Confidentiality: | Part I - Official |

Purpose of Report

We are committed to transforming our Early Help offer for children, young people and families in Plymouth, to give our children the best possible start in life. The development of 0-19 Family Hubs are central to this ambition, and will provide safe, welcoming places where families can seek advice and support and make connections with a range of services and community links. The Hubs will be underpinned by integrated working between agencies, to enable families to 'tell their story once' and get the help they need at the earliest possible point.

In order to achieve this there is a range of activity ongoing to progress the launch of Family Hubs, with the first due to open in summer 2023. This paper provides an update on proposals to reduce the Children's Centre contract in line with Council delivery plans, but also how the resilience of services will be maintained for families as the Family Hubs progress to opening, through the appropriate deployment of grant funding and the award of new contracts.

Recommendations and Reasons

The following recommendations are made in order to ensure the sustainability of services for families in Plymouth and supporting the strategic direction of travel into developing Family Hubs. They are also intended to maximise the benefits of grant funding and ensure Value for Money in the delivery of services. Cabinet is recommended to approve or agree as follows:

- New contracts are awarded to LARK, Action for Children and Barnardo's to support the conversion of Children's Centres into Family Hubs between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2025. The current contracts expire at the end of March 2023.
- that statutory consultation is undertaken to consider the change of use of seven Children's Centre sites.
- Agree that the reduction in service budgets will be mitigated by a shift in service delivery to focus on conversion to Family Hubs and delivery of grant funded activity.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Ceasing the service – Children’s Centres are a core partner in the Early Help offer in Plymouth, offering a local “front door” to support which is trusted by families. Ceasing the service would likely increase requests for statutory support in the mid to longer term and lead to poorer outcomes for families. It would also risk significant amounts of financial clawback on buildings which were originally funded via the Sure Start programme, as this liability remains.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This proposal links to Caring for People and Communities in the Corporate Plan, with a focus on prevention and early intervention. Achieving improved outcomes and opportunities for children, young people and families is woven throughout the Plymouth Plan. These themes are picked up in more detail in the Children and Young People’s plan for the city, A Bright Future 2021 – 26.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

This proposal links to Council delivery plans for 2023/24 and a reduction in the commissioned Children’s Centre contracts. The proposal considers how this can be achieved whilst retaining resilience in service delivery for families.

Financial Risks

There is a possible financial risk in any delay to achieving efficiencies from the change in use or vacation of buildings, or unforeseen dilapidation costs.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

The Children’s Centres are all based within the Plymouth city boundary and provide a local service for families. The proposals would ensure that a local footprint of services remains and are put on a more sustainable basis for the future.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council’s duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

Children’s Centres are part of the Early Help offer for children, young people and families in the city, which is linked to the Child Poverty agenda and action plan, specifically:

- Support and improve disadvantaged children’s emotional Health and Wellbeing (with a focus on disadvantaged children)
- Ensure children from disadvantaged households get access to Healthy Lifestyle opportunities
- Continue the Oral Health improvement programme with a focus on disadvantaged children
- Boost child and parental literacy in the city

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

| Ref. | Title of Appendix | Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) | | | | | | |
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| | | If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box. | | | | | | |
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| A | Family hubs contract award/children's centre delivery plan – Part 1 | | | | | | |
| B | Family hubs contract award/children's centre delivery plan – Part 2 | | | X | | | |
| C | Equalities Impact Assessment | | | | | | |

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

| Title of any background paper(s) | Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box. | | | | | | |
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| N/A | | | | | | | |

Sign off:

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| Fin | DJN. 22.23. 352 | Leg | MS/3 9702 | Mon Off | | HR | N/A | Asset s | N/A | Strat Proc | PB/SC/019 /CAB/012 3 |
| Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Jane Anstis (Service Director Children, Young People and Families) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date agreed: 18/01/2023 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date approved: 25/01/2023 | | | | | | | | | | | |