

BRIEFING PAPER: FAMILY HUBS CONTRACT AWARD/CHILDREN'S CENTRE DELIVERY PLAN

Part One



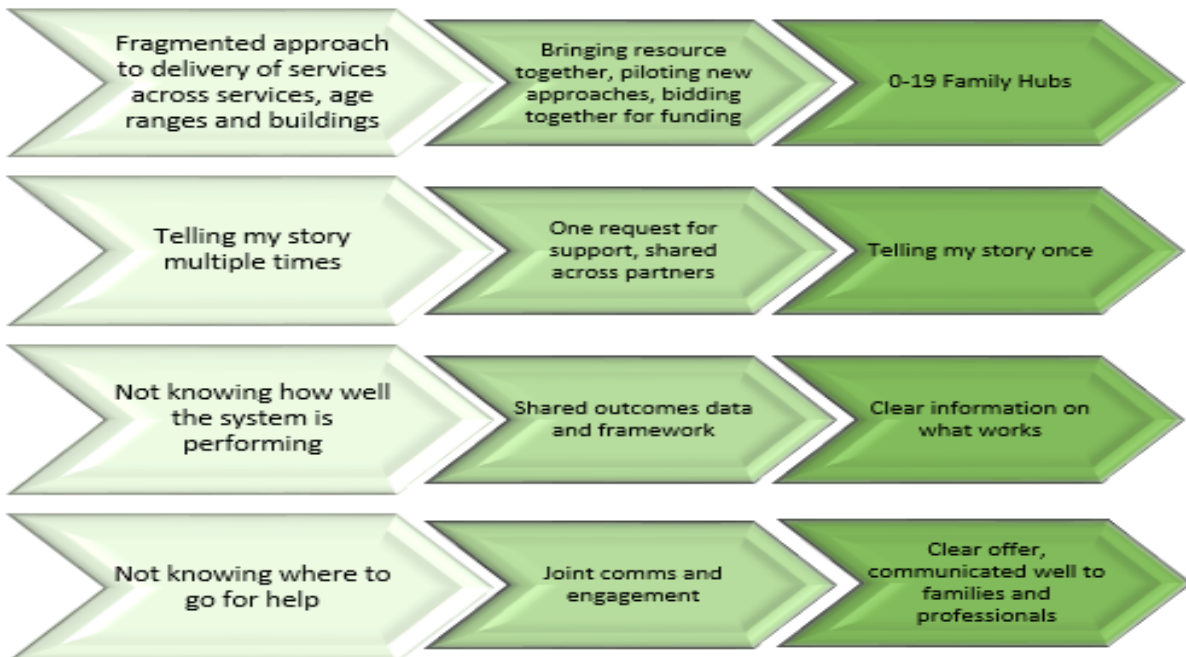
I. PURPOSE

“Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early Help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care”.

Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2018

We need to offer families the support they need earlier, to prevent problems later on in children’s lives. Services are currently fragmented, leading to confusion for families and practitioners. The ambition is to drive significant system change over the next decade, to deliver improved experiences and outcomes for families that is felt at every level, from strategic to operational delivery.

This approach builds on areas of integrated working which are already taking shape, including co-commissioned approaches to Community Health, Wellbeing and SEND and embedding community maternity services into Children’s Centres. The development of 0-19 Family Hubs will support a whole family response to identifying and meeting needs early, also tackling some of the wicked issues in the Plymouth system:



2. CONTRACT SAVINGS TARGETS

This paper sets out:

- How an agreed reduction in the Children’s Centre contracts for 2023/24 will be achieved and the proposed next steps to deliver this, along with any associated risks and benefits;
- The award of new contracts to the Children’s Centres providers to support the development of Family Hubs in Plymouth for a period of 2 years from April 2023.

Both are considered in the context of wider development of the to the Early Help Target Operating Model in Plymouth, to deliver improved locality based services which intervene earlier and more effectively if families begin to experience difficulties. This is also aligned to the use of grant funding to support families.

In line with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan the total savings required from Children's Centre contracts from 2023/24 equates to 18.3% of current 2022/23 value (see table below for breakdown).

Cluster	Provider	Contract Value 2022/23	2023/24 savings target	Revised contract value 2023/24
1	Barnardo's	553,740	101,334	452,406
4	Barnardo's	598,416	109,510	488,906
5	Barnardo's	413,520	75,674	337,846
6	Barnardo's	500,028	91,505	408,523
Barnardo's sub total		2,065,704	378,023	1,687,681
2	Action for Children	608,400	111,337	497,063
3	LARK	605,548	110,815	494,733
TOTAL		£3,279,652	£600,175	£2,679,477

3. RATIONALE FOR AWARD OF CONTRACT

The following are factors in the award of new contracts to the existing Children's Centre providers for a period of 2 years:

- The next 2 years will be a period of significant change in the local Early Help system – until this period of redesigning and trialling new approaches has concluded it is very difficult to procure a new service fit for the future needs of the city
- The current contracts have been in place since 2014, with providers well embedded in the city and known and trusted by families and professionals; this will provide stability during a period of change
- The Children's Centre providers have been instrumental in the design of grant funding bids, and provide expertise in delivery of services for expectant parents and parents of children aged 0-2 which will be a key focus of grant funded delivery
- This will allow for the Family Hubs to open and embed as part of the new Early Help TOM and in line with grant funding requirements and outcome measures, while longer term partnership, commissioning and contractual arrangements for Early Help are developed.

4. METHODOLOGY FOR CHANGE

Workshops have been held face to face with the Children's Centre providers to consider how the savings target can be achieved for 2023/24. This broadly falls into 2 areas:

- Buildings - moving services to other buildings or release of some sites which are no longer required or fit for purpose.
- Service Delivery - grant maximisation to focus service delivery into specific evidence based areas which can be supported through funded programmes. The aim is to safeguard quality of service delivery to families and Plymouth's eligibility for central Government grant funding, by

minimising compulsory redundancies of skilled staff or staff seeking other employment due to uncertainty.

A number of other factors were taken into consideration, which add further complexity:

Statutory consultation - the proposed change to any designated Children's Centre building requires statutory consultation – see Appendix 1.

Potential DfE capital funding clawback - A number of the Plymouth Children's Centre sites attracted capital Sure Start funding which would trigger clawback if the support for families with children aged 0-5 was to cease. For some sites the potential clawback is significant (see Appendix 2 for figures.) However, this can be mitigated if the site continues to offer services for families with younger children.

Target Operating Model - the intention is for the Plymouth system to switch to a new Target Operating Model (TOM) for Early Help linked to locality working, wrapped around our schools, and able to flex according to changing need. This is linked to our developing understanding of need in the city, underpinned by data. There are risks in reducing established buildings and services which may weaken the effectiveness of the TOM at a time when central government policy and likely regulatory oversight is moving towards reinforcing expectations of early help and preventative services for families.

Existing leases and income - Plymouth has for some time been working towards an integrated model of early help with our health partners, including health visiting and midwifery, which are co-located in some children's centre buildings. This means that some buildings have lease arrangements with partners – the withdrawal of Children's Centre services from some buildings will require negotiation with partners to establish if they are able to take over the whole building, or whether other services would seek to use the space, for example nurseries. The income from partners also needs to be taken into account in any savings calculations.

It is therefore proposed to achieve the reduction in budget via the following:

BUILDINGS – PROPOSALS

The Children's Centres have put forward proposals for the withdrawal or change of use of 7 buildings, while retaining services for families. The vacation of some children's centre buildings will achieve the savings in the table below – if the buildings are released promptly at the start of April 2023. Any delay to vacating buildings will reduce the amount of savings achieved in 2023/24. Similarly, any dilapidation or other relocation costs incurred may reduce the savings achieved. These will be carefully tracked and mitigations considered.

Cluster	2023/24 savings target	Savings identified from buildings (full year effect)	Savings still to be found
Barnardo's	£378,023	£29,654	£348,369
Action for Children	£111,337	£83,411	£27,926
LARK	£110,815	£0*	£0
Total	£600,175	£113,065	£376,295

**Lark has been able to identify the £110,815 from the service delivery budget without impacting on staff numbers or buildings in 2023/24*

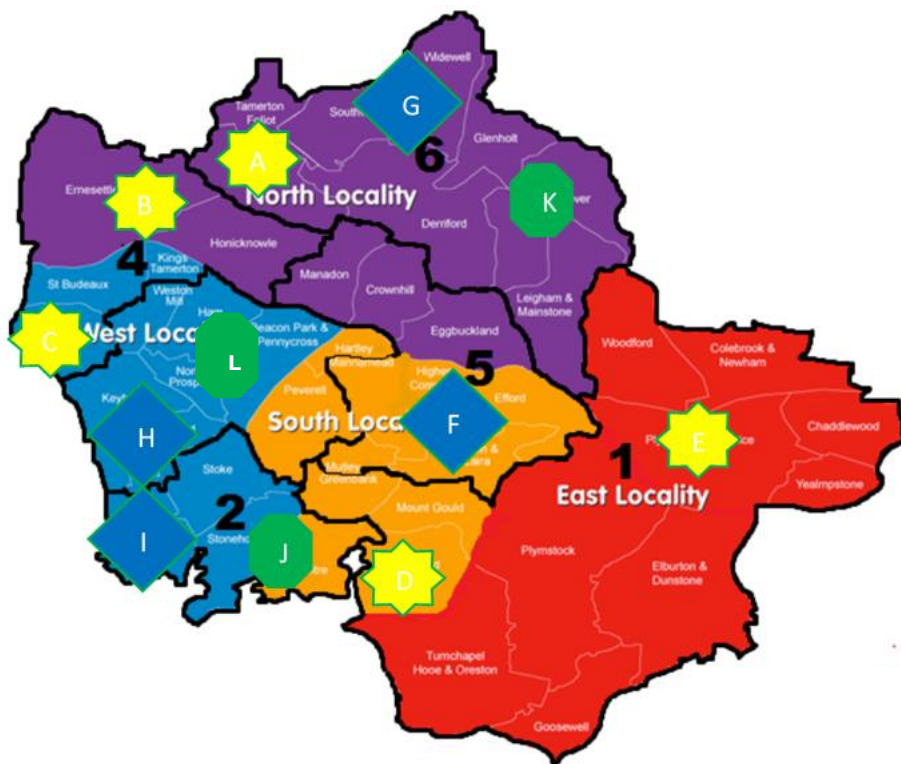
Consideration was given to which buildings are no longer fit for purpose, either in terms of suitable space, use by the community, or unsustainable running costs, including landlord’s service charges. The aim is to:

- retain a network of buildings sufficient to meet the requirements of the Family Hub programme
- have at least one building in each health locality in the city
- retain space to support multi-agency working as part of the Early Help locality based TOM

All proposals are subject to the outcome from statutory consultation and further negotiation with partners.

It is proposed that a phased approach is then undertaken to launching branded Family Hubs, suggested at this stage as the following sites:

- Phase 1 (June 2023) – Four Woods or Four Greens (North), The Barn (West), Nomony (South) and Rees Centre (East)
- Phase 2 (2024) – TBC Efford (South), Southway (North), Green Ark (West) and Morice Town (West)
- Phase 3 (2025) – any other potential Family Hubs (e.g. Frederick Street, Estover Youth Centre, The Beacon)



KEY	
Phase 1 –	★
Phase 2 –	◆
Phase 3 –	●
A –	Whitleigh CC - Four Greens
B –	Four Woods CC
C –	The Barn
D –	Nomony CC
E –	Plum Tree/Plympton CCs - Rees Centre
F –	Efford YC
G –	Southernway CC – South YC
H –	Morice Town CC
I –	Green Ark CC
J –	Frederick St
K –	Estover YC
L –	The Beacon

SERVICE DELIVERY - PROPOSALS

Grant funding can be used to reshape the delivery of local services and mitigate against staff redundancies/loss of skilled workforce and loss of frontline service delivery to families. The Part 2 briefing paper contains more information on the funding likely to be available.

5. RISKS AND MITIGATION

The risks and mitigation of the proposed approach are set out below:

Risks	Mitigation
Reduction in service quality or level of service experienced by families in Plymouth	Careful consideration has been given, in partnership with the providers, as to which buildings are no longer fit for purpose and needed. This has included consideration of the impact on families. Associated grant funded programmes will focus on families with children aged 0-2 and expectant parents, with new, evidence based programmes of support being introduced with the aim of supporting families sooner and more effectively. This activity will sit alongside the wider redesign of the Early Help TOM for Plymouth, so that families with children aged 0-19 receive better, earlier support.
Staff could face redundancy consultation from end of December 2022 (3 months before the end of the contract) as the Children's Centre contracts currently end in March 2023	To rapidly agree allocation of a proportion of associated grant funding to Children's Centres to retain staff for grant funded activities. Agreement for Delegated Decision via Director of Children's Services is in place to support this.
Contract award decision may not be implemented until after Cabinet call-in period in the second half of February 2023 which is only 5-6 weeks before contracts end.	Communicate our proposed intentions to Children's Centre providers 'subject to' Cabinet sign-off
Clawback from buildings no longer used by Children's Centres	Every effort will be made to continue to deliver early years support in some form.
Childcare sufficiency potentially impacted in if the existing nurseries are not able to take over larger spaces	Explore options for the sustainability of the building and tenants
Buildings not released in time for 1 st April 2023	Allocated savings are achieved during 2023/24 from buildings or other efficiencies

APPENDICES

Appendix I – duty to consult

Childcare Act 2006 Section 5D: Duty on local authorities to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children's centre provision in their area.

Significant changes to children's centre provision and the duty to consult

Local authorities **must** ensure there is consultation before:

- opening a new children's centre;
- making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through a children's centre and / or how they are delivered, including significant changes to services provided through linked sites; and
- Closing a children's centre; or reducing the services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a Sure Start children's centre.

Local authorities (or a third party acting on the authority's behalf) should consult everyone who could be affected by the proposed changes, for example, local families, those who use the centres, children's centres staff, advisory board members and service providers. Particular attention should be given to ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in consultations.

The consultation should explain how the local authority will continue to meet the needs of families with children under five as part of any reorganisation of services. It should also be clear how respondents' views can be made known and **adequate time** should be allowed for those wishing to respond. Decisions following consultation should be announced publically. This should explain why decisions were taken.

Statutory definition of a children's centre

A Sure Start children's centre is defined in the Act as a place or a group of places:

- which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way;
- through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and
- At which activities for young children are provided.

It follows from the statutory definition of a children's centre that children's centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas. Early childhood services are defined as:

- early years provision (early education and childcare);
- social services functions of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents; and
- Information and advice services for parents and prospective parents.

A children's centre should make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers

and fathers) and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere. Local authorities must ensure that children's centres provide some activities for young children on site.

Appendix 2 Clawback figures

Four Woods	Plymbridge	Crownlands (Austin Primary School)	Green Ark	Tamar Folk (Victoria School)	Plymstock (Dunstone Primary School)	Nomony	DELL High View
£194,000	£878,813	£186,662	£376,877	£352,297	£73,804	£398,216	£625,000

Appendix 3 Building Costs

Buildings	Barnardo's	Buildings	Action for Children
Crownlands	£5,776	Manor Street	£37,233
Plymbridge	£4,061	Green Ark	£46,178
DELL	£0	Total	£83,411
High View	£6,309		
Whitleigh	TBC		
Tamar Folk	£13,508		
Total	£29,654		

Buildings that will not become Family Hubs from 2023/24 (depending on notice period and DfE consultation):

- Crownlands – school to potentially demolish to rebuild a new space.
- Sweetpeas – too small as Family Hub site but continue to be used as outreach site.
- DELL High View – relocated to nearby Efford Youth Centre. School to retain.
- DELL Blandford Rd – relocated to nearby Efford Youth Centre due to issues with the fabric of the building.
- Plymbridge – potential to use Estover Youth Centre as a delivery site
- Manor Street – need to ensure the sustainability of the building for existing childcare tenant
- Tamar Folk – office space to be offered to health partners.

Interdependencies

- DfE statutory consultation
- Section 106 funding opportunities
- Wellbeing Hubs expansion
- Youth Centres application for capital funding (Youth Innovation Fund)
- Midwifery and Health visiting co-location
- Childcare settings co-location and impact of Children's Centres moving from buildings
- DfE SureStart Grant clawback to be avoided by ensuring buildings are continued to be used for similar early year's activity or renovated.
- Development of an Early Years Centre of Excellence for the Southwest in Plymouth