



Notice of a Meeting

Performance Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 24 May 2016 at 10.00 am

Rooms 1&2 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

Membership

Chairman Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE
Deputy Chairman - Councillor Neil Fawcett

<i>Councillors:</i>	Lynda Atkins	Yvonne Constance OBE	Steve Harrod
	John Christie	Janet Godden	Stewart Lilly
	Sam Coates	Mark Gray	Charles Mathew

Notes: ***Date of next meeting: 23 June 2016***

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

- The performance of the Council and to provide a focused review of:
 - Corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting
 - Budget scrutiny
- the performance of the Council by means of effective key performance indicators, review of key action plans and obligations and through direct access to service managers, Cabinet Members and partners;
- through call-in, the reconsideration of decisions made but not yet implemented by or on behalf of the Cabinet;
- queries or issues of concern that may occur over decisions being taken in relation to adult social care;
- the Council's scrutiny responsibilities under the Crime and Justice Act 2006.

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman	-	Councillor Liz Brighthouse E.Mail: liz.brighthouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Policy & Performance Officer	-	John Courouble, Research & Intelligence Manager Tel: (01865) 896163 Email: john.courouble@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Committee Officer	-	Sue Whitehead, Tel: (01865) 810262 sue.whitehead@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Peter G. Clark
County Director

May 2016

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. **Election of Chairman for the 2016/17 Council Year**
2. **Election of Vice-Chairman for the 2016/17 Council Year**
3. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
4. **Declarations of Interest - Guidance note on back page of the agenda**
5. **Minutes**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2016 (**PSC5**) and to receive information arising from them. (**to be circulated separately**)

6. **Petitions and Public Address**
7. **Support for Continuing Delivery of Early Intervention Services (Pages 1 - 46)**

Report by the Director for Children's Services (**PSC7**).

The 2016/17 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan agreed by Council in February 2016 made a number of financial changes to the Children, Education and Families Directorate. Included in this was the decision to remove a proposed reduction of £2 million from the Early Intervention/Children's Centres budget line from 2017/18 (reference CEF 12, Section 4.2, agenda item 9). In addition, £1 million one-off funding has been set aside as part of the £4m transition fund agreed by Council in February 2016, in order to assist communities to develop proposals for children's centres that will not receive longer term funding from the Council.

The retained £2 million is to be targeted at the continuing delivery of early intervention services and preventative services.

In light of the previous decisions described above, this paper focuses on proposals for the £2 million retained within the Early Intervention budget.

Cabinet is being RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) develop eight outreach centres and two shared locality bases, in addition to eight Children and Family Centres;
- (b) agree that the Locality and Community Support Service is expanded to enhance its preventative elements and enable it to support universal provision within the eight outreach centres, and other centres that remain open through community support;
- (c) agree that the Family Support Service is enhanced, enabling the delivery of casework and evidence based group programmes from the eight outreach centres; and
- (d) ask officers to commence a staff consultation on the staffing structure for the new Service.

This Committee is asked for its views prior to consideration of the proposals by Cabinet.
PTO

Pre-Meeting Briefing

There will be a pre-meeting briefing at County Hall on Tuesday 24 May 2016 at 9.30 am in the Members' Board Room for all Members of the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on (01865) 815270 or glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

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Division(s): All

CABINET - 24 MAY 2016

SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING DELIVERY OF EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

Report by Director of Children's Services

Background

1. The 2016/17 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan agreed by Council in February 2016 made a number of financial changes to the Children, Education and Families Directorate. Included in this was the decision to remove a proposed reduction of £2 million from the Early Intervention/Children's Centres budget line from 2017/18 (reference CEF 12, Section 4.2, agenda item 9). In addition, £1 million one-off funding has been set aside as part of the £4m transition fund agreed by Council in February 2016, in order to assist communities to develop proposals for children's centres that will not receive longer term funding from the Council.
2. The retained £2 million is to be targeted at the continuing delivery of early intervention services and preventative services.
3. The decisions of Council and Cabinet in February 2016 sit within the context of previous decisions to reduce the budget available to Early Intervention Services in the Medium Term Financial Plan by £6 million by 2017/18, and the increasing pressures in workloads within children's social care. Given these pressures, it is no longer possible to sustain current provision and a new model of service is required. Proposals to remodel early intervention provision and develop an integrated service with children's social care were presented to Cabinet on 15 September 2015 (see *Report to Cabinet, Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care*) and were subsequently subject to public consultation between 14 October 2015 and 10 January 2016. At the time of the consultation it was believed that the Early Intervention Services budget might have to be cut by a further £2m by 2017/18 (i.e. total cuts of £8m), but Council decided not to proceed with that further £2m cut at the budget meeting of 16 February 2016 (see paragraph 1).
4. An analysis of feedback from the public consultation and a proposal for the future service was then presented to Cabinet on 23 February 2016 (see *Report to Cabinet, Proposed Future Arrangements for Children, Education and Family Services*).
5. In summary, the key features of the future service were confirmed as:
 - Targeted service for vulnerable 0-19 year olds (up to 25 years if children have additional needs) and their families

- Integration of services currently provided by Children's Centres, Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Social Care
 - Creation of a new Locality and Community Support Service, supporting universal services to identify children at risk and put in place support
 - Family Support Service providing early help and statutory casework and evidence based interventions to vulnerable children and their families
 - Eight Children and Family Centres and mobile bus from which services will be delivered, including some open access sessions from the eight Centres
 - Outreach service providing casework and evidence based interventions to vulnerable families close to where they live
 - Support to Children's Centres that currently provide child care, with a view to enabling them to be financially self-sufficient by April 2017.
6. Cabinet on 23 February 2016 agreed the following recommendations in relation to the proposed new service:
- That eight Children and Family Centres are developed in the locations set out in the report. These Centres will deliver services that meet the authority's statutory duties relating to Children's Centres and deliver statutory and targeted services to vulnerable children and families
 - That limited open access services are provided from within the eight Children and Family Centres
 - A mobile bus is retained to deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community as these communities are less likely to attend the main centres
 - To continue to support the child care settings currently based in Children's Centres through to April 2017. Approve the inclusion of £1.9m budget in the capital programme for the new Children and Family Centres to be funded from corporate resources.
 - Commit to continue conversations with organisations and groups that have shown an interest in using alternative funding streams to enable centres to remain open
 - Commence a staff consultation on the staffing structure for the new Service, to include proposals for an Emergency Duty Team.
7. Further to Council's decision to retain £2m for the Early Intervention/ Children's Centre's budget and the agreement to come back to Cabinet at a later date to agree how this would be allocated, on the 19th April 2016 Councillor Tilley emailed staff to inform them that the timeframe for implementing the new service needed to be extended and that all Children Centre contracts and Hub funding would be extended until end of March 2017.
8. In light of the previous decisions described above, this paper focuses on proposals for the £2 million retained within the Early Intervention budget.

Key messages from public consultation

9. An analysis of responses to the public consultation found that most consultees were not supportive of change, which, given the popularity of the current

Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs, is not surprising. Key themes from the public consultation included:

- Concern over the loss of preventative services and the impact on the health and social wellbeing of families
- Concern about how accessible the proposed new model would be because of the reduction in 'on the doorstep' provision. In particular the potential impact on families living in rural areas, and those not able to drive was highlighted
- General opposition to cutting services.

Proposals for retained £2 million

10. It is proposed that the £2 million is spent in direct response to issues raised by the public consultation, namely concerns around the loss of preventative support and the accessibility of the new service.
11. The retained money will increase the early help and preventative work within the new service, and increase the number of locations from which outreach is delivered. It is proposed to allocate it across three areas of the new service as follows:
 - a. £1 million into the Locality and Community Support Service to increase staffing, including new community co-ordinator posts which will work closely with outreach centres and work with local community groups to support the development of universal provision
 - b. £900,000 into the Family Support Service to increase staffing in early help teams; these extra workers can provide direct work to children and families from the outreach centres
 - c. £100,000 for building costs towards the development of two new 'shared locality bases'
12. If these proposals are agreed, it will spread the geographical reach of the service from 8 to 18 centres, as set out below.

Locations for delivering the new service

13. It is proposed that the new service deliver support and evidence-based group programmes to children and families from 18 locations across Oxfordshire (see map in Annex 1). These are set out below but include;
 - Eight main children and family centres, these were set out in the Cabinet paper in February. They will provide a service to 0-19 (up to 25 for children with special educational needs) and these will be designated children's centres. These services will be fully funded and run by Oxfordshire County Council.
 - Two shared sites, one in East Oxford which will act as an additional base for Blackbird Leys and one in East Street, Banbury which will act as an additional site to Banbury Children and Family Centre.
 - Eight outreach centres which provide outreach activities to children and families from the centres which will run childcare services. These centres

were highlighted in the February Cabinet paper with a recommendation to support the centres childcare functions becoming self-sustainable. This paper proposes we enhance those services with council run outreach activities (see paragraph 29 for an example of how this might work). We would also encourage and support community groups to deliver universal services from these bases. Whilst these would not be council-run designated children centres in the way that the eight main Children and Family Centres are, the intention is that these Centres remain open offering a range of services, some of which will be run by the council.

Eight Children and Family Centres

North area:

- Banbury Early Intervention Hub, Hilton Road, Banbury
- Bicester Early Intervention Hub, The Courtyard, Launton Road, Bicester
- West Oxfordshire Early Intervention Hub, Witan Way, Witney

Central area

- The Roundabout Centre, Waynflete Road, Barton, Oxford
- Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Way, Blackbird Leys, Oxford
- Rose Hill and Littlemore Children's Centre, Ashhurst Way, Rose Hill, Oxford
The Rose Hill Children and Family Centre currently provides child care and this provision is being supported to become self-financing from April 2017.

South area

- Abingdon Early Intervention Hub, The Net, Stratton Way, Abingdon
- Didcot Early Intervention Hub, The Vibe, Park Road, Didcot

In addition, mobile bus provision will provide services to rural communities and the traveller community.

Two shared locality bases

North area:

- East Street Children's Centre, Calder Close, Banbury

Central area:

- East Oxford Children's Centre, The Union, Collins Street

Both of these centres currently provide child care which is being supported to become self-financing from April 2017.

Eight outreach centres

North area

- The Sunshine Centre, Edmunds Road, Banbury
- North Banbury Centre, Hardwick School, Banbury
- Britannia Road Centre, Grove Street, Banbury
- The Ace Centre, Burford Road, Chipping Norton

Central area

- Slade Children's Centre, Titup Hall Drive, Wood Farm, Oxfordshire County Council
- Grandpont Children's Centre, 47 Whitehouse Road, Grandpont, Oxford

South area

- Elms Road Children's Centre, Elms Road, Botley, Oxfordshire County Council
- Stephen Freeman Children's Centre, Freeman Road, Didcot

All of these centres currently provide child care which is being supported to become self-financing from April 2017.

Community proposals

14. Oxfordshire County Council is actively working with community groups in areas where there is a children's centre which will no longer receive funding from the County Council to maintain the delivery of universal access services from that building. Where buildings remain open the County Council would wish to use those buildings as a base to deliver outreach services.

Details of proposals for retained £2 million

Locality and Community Support Service

15. £1 million would be used to enhance staffing capacity to deliver the preventative elements of the Locality and Community Support Service.
16. The Locality and Community Support Service is a new service designed to offer early help, advice and guidance to professionals working within universal services. It will also work closely with the eight outreach centres, and other centres that remain open through community support, supporting the development of universal services.
17. Professionals from the service will have a key role in identifying and supporting vulnerable children to prevent concerns escalating to a point where a statutory social care intervention is required. For example, the work of the service will include developing close relationships with schools and offering practical advice and support to teachers who are concerned that a child is at risk. This will include specialist advice around safeguarding concerns.
18. This service has a key preventative role and its effectiveness is vital to addressing capacity issues within children's social care.
19. The additional money would be used to increase the capacity within the Locality and Community Support Service, enabling it to support a larger number of professionals within universal services across Oxfordshire.
20. The additional resource would enable a service employing approximately 30 workers to be established. This would equate to around 10 workers based in each of the areas (north, central, south).

21. In addition to increasing capacity to support professionals, the additional budget would provide capacity within the service to undertake a 'community co-ordinator' role. This would entail working closely with communities to understand the needs of particular localities and the services already available, and to provide support to increase local universal provision.
22. The 'community co-ordinator' would work closely with the outreach centres, supporting the development of a universal offer within these centres. In addition, they will focus on developing sustainable services within buildings that were previously children's centres, and which remain open to provide a range of community supported services once county council funding ceases.
23. The development of this role within the Locality and Community Support Service would provide an opportunity for close collaboration with communities across the county, ensuring that all of Oxfordshire's children benefit. However, we recognise that some communities have more capacity than others to develop their own offer of universal services. The work of the community co-ordinator would target more deprived areas.
24. In addition, the council is looking at ways of developing open access stay and play sessions at its network of 43 libraries.

Example of the work of the new Locality and Community Support Service (1)

A school is concerned about a boy aged 12 who has become withdrawn; his standard of work is dropping as is school attendance. The child indicates to teachers that he is unhappy at home.

The school speak to his mother, who says her partner has lost his job and is being aggressive at home to her. She is struggling to get her son to school. She agrees she would like support.

The school talk to the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) who confirm there are no previous Domestic Abuse notifications from the Police. A worker from the Service offers advice and support to school and suggest they complete a CAF (an assessment of early support needs) with the child and his family to understand the current family situation.

The CAF identifies that mother's partner's aggression is made worse by his drinking and that she is increasingly concerned about her partner's anger.

School talk through the CAF with the LCSS who refer the mother to a domestic abuse support programme being run from an outreach centre. Her son is referred to a programme for young people. They also suggest her partner goes to the GP for support around alcohol.

Example of the work of the new Locality and Community Support Service (2)

A Health Visitor is concerned about a mother who is experiencing post-natal depression, and whose attachment with her child is poor. They talk through their concerns with the LCSS.

LCSS provide information about the open access provision through Children and Family Centres.

The Service also advises the Health Visitor to undertake a CAF to establish the level of need within the family. This identifies that mother's partner is unemployed and there is an older sibling with poor school attendance, who is known to the Youth Offending Service.

Given the level of need identified by the CAF casework is put in place for the whole family by the Family Support Service, including mother receiving support around early attachment issues.

Example of the work of the new Locality and Community Support Service (3)

A school is becoming increasingly concerned about a pupil who is arriving late with no lunch and in dirty clothes.

The Child has previously been on a child protection plan for neglect., but the plan ended when the child's situation improved significantly and remained better over a 12 month period.

The school have tried to contact parents and offered to visit them at home. However the parents have consistently failed to engage.

The school contact the LCSS who, due to the previous history and the failure of parents to engage with the school, refer the child to children's social care.

Family Support Service

25. £900,000 will be used to enhance staffing capacity within the early help elements of the Family Support Service.
26. The Family Support Service will integrate the existing children's social care Family Support Teams with the family support functions currently undertaken in Early Intervention. The service will work directly with vulnerable children and their families through individual casework and evidence based group programmes. It will embed the work of the current Thriving Families programme, which provides additional income, and will ensure plans for children are made within the context of their whole family.
27. Teams within the Service will support children where there is a statutory need to do so (children on child protection plans and children in need), and also children and families who require targeted support to prevent their needs escalating. In addition, children and families will be able to attend open access

sessions that will continue to be delivered from the eight Children and Family Centres.

Example programme of provision that could be run from the eight Children and Family Centres (indicative only)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
AM	Early Communication and Language Group. <i>Run by Family Support Service (FSS)</i>	Open Access Early Learning Session for 0-5 year olds. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Early Attachment support. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Antenatal appointment. <i>Run by Midwives</i>	Parenting group with crèche. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Parenting group. <i>Run by FSS</i>
	Child protection/ Team Around Family meetings. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Healthy Baby clinic and development checks. <i>Run by Health Visitors</i>	Infant feeding clinic <i>Run by Health Visitors</i>	Supervised contact.	Open Access Early Learning Session for 0-5 year olds. <i>Run by community group</i>	Supervised contact.
PM	Domestic Abuse Support group, with crèche. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Supervised contact	Child protection/Team Around Family meetings. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Domestic abuse support for children. <i>Run by FSS</i>	NEET drop-in. <i>Run by FSS.</i>	Youth session. <i>Run by FSS</i>
	Child protection/ Team Around Family meetings. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Post-natal depression support group. <i>Run by Health Visitors</i>	Domestic abuse support for young people. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Child protection/ Team Around Family meetings. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Healthy Baby clinic and development checks. <i>Run by Health Visitors</i>	Supervised contact.
Evening	Open access youth session. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Group for disabled young people. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Young carers group. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Parenting teenagers support group. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Reducing risky behaviours group. <i>Run by FSS</i>	

28. The additional money would be used to increase the number of staff providing early help to vulnerable children and families. This would enable the service to increase the number of families it supports who do not meet the threshold for statutory social care. Resources would be targeted to areas most in need.

29. The capacity of the service to deliver family support through outreach would be increased enabling evidence-based programmes and support to be provided from the outreach centres and the shared locality bases, in addition to that provided within the eight Children and Family Centres. Specifically, this would ensure that casework and a programme of evidence-based programmes would be delivered from the outreach centres and shared bases.

Example programme of provision that could be run from an Outreach Centre (indicative only)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
AM	Early Communication and Language Group. <i>Run by Family Support Service (FSS)</i>	Open Access Early Learning Session for 0-5 year olds. <i>Run by Community</i>	Antenatal appointment. <i>Run by Midwives</i>	Open Access Early Learning Session for 0-5 year olds. <i>Run by Community</i>	Employment Support drop-in. <i>Run by voluntary group eg CAB</i>	Open Access Early Learning Session for 0-5 year olds. <i>Run by Community</i>
	Child protection/ Team Around Family meetings. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Healthy Baby clinic and development checks. <i>Run by Health Visitors</i>	Supervised contact.	Infant feeding clinic <i>Run by Health Visitors</i>	Open Access Early Learning Session for 0-5 year olds. <i>Run by community group</i>	Supervised contact.
PM	Child protection/ Team Around Family meetings. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Domestic abuse support group <i>Run by FSS</i>	Child protection/ Team Around Family meetings. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Supervised contact	Parenting group with crèche. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Open access youth session. <i>Run by community group.</i>
		Supervised contact.		Child protection/ Team Around Family meetings. <i>Run by FSS</i>	Healthy Baby clinic and development checks. <i>Run by Health Visitors</i>	Supervised contact.
Eve	Open access youth session. <i>Run by community group.</i>		Supervised contact.	Open access youth session. <i>Run by community group.</i>	Reducing risky behaviours group. <i>Run by FSS</i>	

Development of two shared locality bases

30. In addition to the eight main Children and Family Centres, it is proposed to retain two additional buildings from which the new 0-19 service will offer support and group programmes to vulnerable children and their families.
31. These will provide an additional centre in Oxford, located in the current East Oxford Early Intervention Hub/Children's Centre in Cowley, and in Banbury at the current East Street Children's Centre. These would not function as additional Children and Family Centres, but would provide a shared base for the delivery of services from the main centres of Blackbird Leys and Banbury.

Proposals for the use of the £1m one-off transition funding

32. In February 2016, Council agreed to create a pump priming fund of £1m. This was to assist community groups to develop proposals for Children Centre's that will not receive longer term funding from the council. A cross party group of members has been established and community groups will be invited to submit business plans to this group.

Equalities Implications

33. See Service and Community Impact Assessment in Annex 2.

Financial and staffing implications

34. These proposals amend the budget set out in the Report to Cabinet on 23 February 2016, increasing the budget available for the new service model from £12 million to £14 million from 2017-18.
35. The budget and Medium Term Financial Plan agreed by Council in February 2016 requires a saving of £0.8m to be delivered in this service during 2016-17. The timescales outlined in this report mean that the changes will not be in place to deliver this saving. The Directorate is committed to managing vacancies across services during 2016-17 to avoid an overspend.
36. As set out in paragraph 10 above, the additional £2 million would be allocated as follows:

Proposed budget allocation	£m
Staffing within Locality and Community Support Service	1.0
Staffing within Family Support Service (early help)	0.9
To establish shared locality bases	0.1
Total retained budget available	2.0

Redundancies

37. While these proposals will increase staffing levels within the new service, the level of the savings required will result in significant levels of redundancies. While exact numbers, and the specific posts affected, cannot yet be confirmed,

it is estimated that over 200 staff employed by Oxfordshire County Council, and within Children's Centres managed by schools, are likely to be affected. The county council will support staff to seek alternative employment opportunities with the local authority; however, these are likely to be limited as all Directorates are implementing savings plans. The Council has included a provision in 2015-16 to meet the anticipated cost of redundancies.

38. Given the anticipated level of redundancies, current staff are anxious about their future employment. There is a risk that any further delays in progressing the implementation of the new service could result in current early intervention services being unable to continue to provide support to children and families as skilled staff look for employment opportunities elsewhere.

Legal implications

39. Cabinet decided on the 23 February 2016 to reorganise Early Intervention/ Children's Centres as described in paragraph 6 above. The current proposals for spending the £2m retained funds and the £1m transition funds will enhance the provision determined upon by Cabinet on the 23rd February.

Meeting legal responsibilities

40. It is believed that the model of service adopted on the 23rd February meets the requirements placed on the local authority as set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and statutory guidance. It follows that the proposals for spending the further sum of £2m and £1m one off funding will produce a model which will also meet those requirements. The requirements would include the following:

- *take steps to identify parents and those expecting a baby in their area who are unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services available and encourage them to use them*

41. The Service will continue to receive notifications of all new born children and will work with health professionals to identify all those that are vulnerable and ensure the appropriate support is provided.

- *ensure there are sufficient Children's Centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need*

42. In developing the new Service, the priority has been to maximise the number of staff available to provide services, including outreach, to children and families; maximise the use of the proposed Children and Family Centres; and minimise the proportion of the budget spent on buildings. By doing this the new Service will be able to meet the needs of vulnerable families across Oxfordshire.

- *A network of Children's Centres accessible to all families with young children in their area*

43. It is intended that the eight proposed Children and Family Centres will be located across Oxfordshire in the most deprived areas of the county. However,

through a partnership with health services which deliver a universal offer, including antenatal and post-natal support, families across the county will have access to services delivered from the Children and Family Centres. In addition, sessions will be run from each Centre which will be open to any family wishing to attend.

- *Children's Centres and their services within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport*
 - *demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively*
44. The methodology used to identify the locations of the Children and Family Centres includes an assumption that the main settlements within Oxfordshire were likely to be the most appropriate locations for the Children and Family Centres because of their geographical spread and accessibility in terms of transport links. This was tested by a further calculation that took into account travelling time to the proposed Centres and minimised the average distance between each Centre and families 'in need'.
45. Further, the new service will provide outreach across Oxfordshire and a mobile bus service, meaning that children and families will not have to travel to the Centres in order to receive service.
- *With local commissioners of health services and employment services, consider how best to ensure that the families who need services can be supported to access them*
46. Strong partnership working is a key part of the new model of service. Health services provide a universal service from antenatal support onwards. Their role is to identify vulnerable families and ensure families receive the appropriate support. Through our model of integrated working, workers from the new service will work closely with health professionals, so families receive the right support at the right time.
47. Support around employment forms a key part of the Trouble Families agenda. By integrating this provision into the new service, families will continue to receive advice and support enabling them to take advantage of employment and training opportunities.
48. The Locality and Community Support Service will provide a co-ordinated response to identifying and directing resources towards vulnerable families. The ambition is that this team will be multi-agency and work in communities alongside universal services – particularly schools, early years settings and Health – to identify vulnerable families as soon as problems first emerge and ensure the family receives appropriate support. Where targeted/specialist support is required, referrals will be made into the appropriate service.
- *target Children's Centres services at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes through, for example, effective outreach services, based on the analysis of local need*

49. The new service will target those children and families in greatest need and prioritise the available resources for them. Services will be provided from the Children and Family Centres, whose location in the most deprived areas of the County was determined through a needs analysis, and by outreach services that will offer both 1:1 and group support at venues across the Oxfordshire.
- *ensure that opening times and availability of services meet the needs of families in their area*
50. Staff within the new service will operate extended hours to ensure support is available to children and families when they most need it. In addition, the new service will have strong links with the Emergency Duty Team and other county council teams to ensure appropriate support is available across the week.
- *not close an existing Children's Centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children's centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient Children's Centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of Children's Centres;*
51. Children's physical and mental health and emotional well-being will continue to be supported by universal services provided by health, education and other professionals. The Locality and Community Support Service will develop strong links with universal providers within the local area, enabling vulnerable children to be identified and, where necessary, targeted services put in place to support them.
52. Services provided by Children's Social Care will remain available to protect children from harm and neglect. There will continue to be a clear referral process into safeguarding services to ensure children are protected.
53. Ensuring that children are ready for school is a key function of Children's Centres and this will remain a priority in the proposed new model of service. Through the targeting of services to those most in need, support will continue to be available to children to prepare them for starting school. Through the continued provision of support throughout childhood, the service will prepare vulnerable children to take advantage of the opportunities offered by education, training and recreation.
- *take into account the views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient Children's Centre provision*
54. Local families and communities have been invited to give their views through the public consultation process. These have been taken into account in shaping the new service, and where concerns have been raised, we have adapted features of the new model to mitigate these.

- *take account of families crossing local authority borders to use Children's Centres in their authority. Families and carers are free to access early childhood services where it suits them best*
55. Due to financial and service pressures within the county, the Children and Family Centres will provide targeted and statutory services to children and families living within Oxfordshire. Where universal providers such as health are delivering services from the new Centres, some of these services may remain accessible to families living within other local authorities where it is appropriate for them to do so.
- *take into account wider duties under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and under the Child Poverty Act 2010*

These duties will be met by targeting services to children and families the local authority has a statutory duty to support. Local authorities' duties under Part 2 of the Child Poverty Act 2010 are repealed with effect from 16 May 2016. However, it is believed that the services proposed in this report will play a role in attempting to reduce child poverty

Implementation

56. Following the decision by Council and the need to seek agreement for proposals for the retained £2 million, the timetable for implementation has been revised. The current timetable for implementation is as follows:

24 May 2016	Report to Cabinet
On-going	Work with child care settings around sustainability
June - mid July 2016	Staff consultation on the staffing structure for the new service
Mid-August 2016	Staff recruitment process begins
November 2016	Confirmation of posts within new structure
By March 2017	Integrated service commences within new Children and Family Centres, shared bases and child care settings
On-going	Work with interested groups regarding continued use of buildings not funded by the Service

RECOMMENDATIONS

57. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) **develop eight outreach centres and two shared locality bases, in addition to eight Children and Family Centres;**
 - (b) **agree that the Locality and Community Support Service is expanded to enhance its preventative elements and enable it to**

- support universal provision within the eight outreach centres, and other centres that remain open through community support;
- (c) agree that the Family Support Service is enhanced, enabling the delivery of casework and evidence based group programmes from the eight outreach centres; and
 - (d) ask officers to commence a staff consultation on the staffing structure for the new Service.

JIM LEIVERS

Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

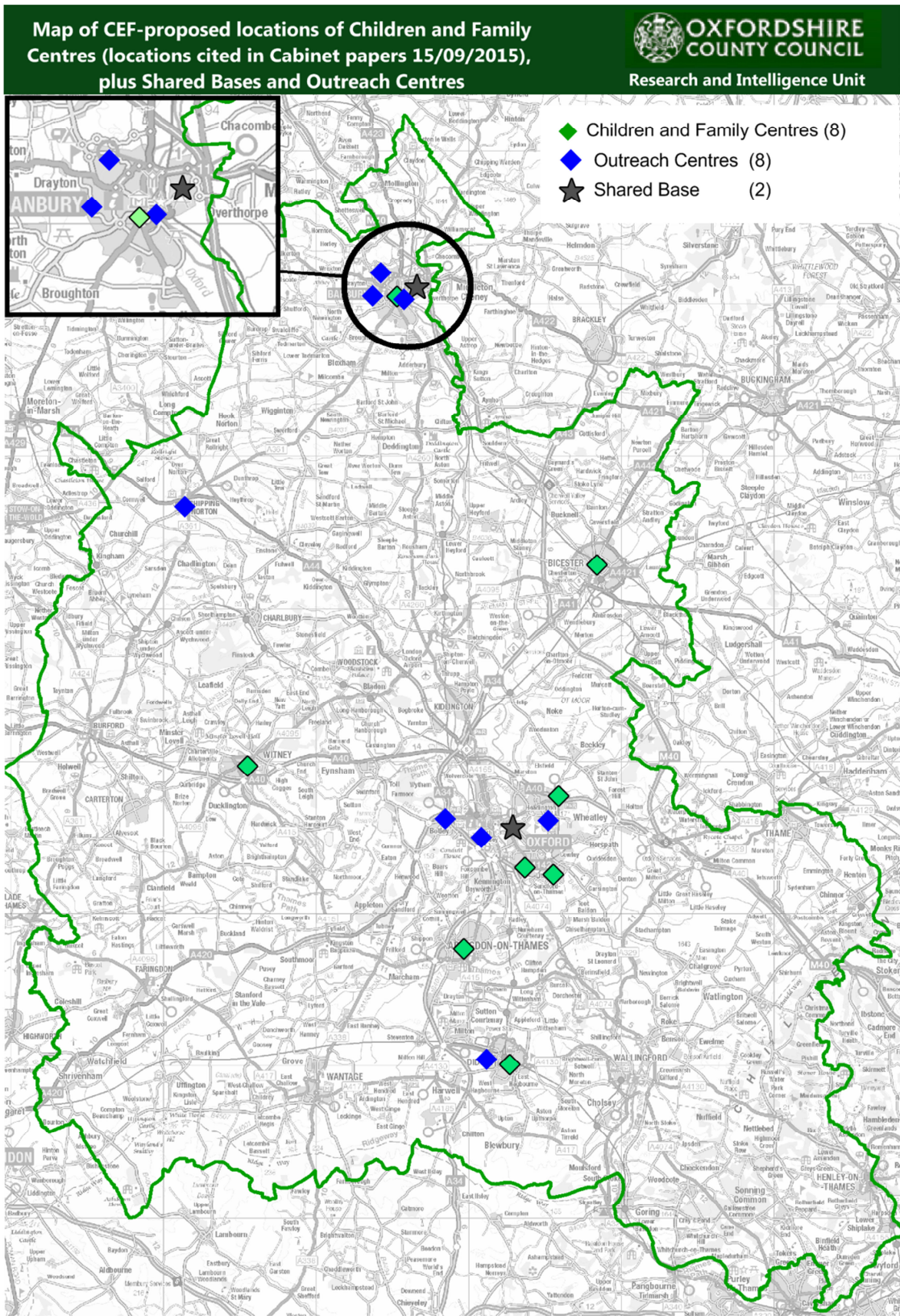
Report to Cabinet on 15 September 2015, Future arrangements in Children's Social Care

Report to Cabinet on 23 February 2016, Proposed future arrangements for Children, Education and Family Services

Contact Officer: CLARE ROWNTREE, Strategy Manager, Children's Social Care
Tel: 01865 323102

May 2016

ANNEX 1: MAP SHOWING LOCATIONS FOR DELIVERING SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



ANNEX 2 - SERVICE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(Please note this is attached as a separate document)

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DRAFT Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

This document will be refined following the public consultation

Directorate and Service Area:

Children, Education & Families

- **Early Intervention Service**
- **Children's Social Care**

What is being assessed:

Future arrangements in Children's Services

Responsible owner / senior officer:

Jim Leivers, Director for Children, Education & Families

Date of assessment:

May 2016

Summary of judgement:*Background*

This assessment has been undertaken in order to understand the impact on different groups of people in Oxfordshire of the proposal to integrate the Early Intervention Service with Family Support Teams within Children's Social Care, while at the same time making significant budget savings.

The impacts of three options for implementing this new model of provision were explored and subject to public consultation between October 2015 and January 2016. All options maintained a focus on preventing the needs of children, young people and families from escalating and ensuring that those who are most vulnerable receive targeted support. Feedback from the consultation and engagement with service users and partner organisations informed the final proposal for implementation which was agreed by [Cabinet in February 2016.

However prior to Cabinet in February, County Council agreed a budget that reduced the level of savings required from Early Intervention from an anticipated £8 million to £6 million. This assessment has been updated in light of this and proposals that will be considered by Cabinet on 24 May 2016 on how the additional £2m would be used in the new service.

This assessment is based on the final proposal to Cabinet which is builds on the feedback and issues previous gathered from the public consultation.

Summary of assessment

The proposal will largely impact children, young people and families, as the revised proposed option for implementation includes fewer Children and Family Centres and limited open access services. There is also a risk that families accessing targeted support will be stigmatised. Significant analyses of local need, deprivation and

accessibility have informed the proposed locations of Children and Family Centres and the outreach provision. Impacts will be mitigated by the creation of a Locality and Community Support Service to support and enhance universal service provision, and by working with partners to enable them to deliver services from the Centres. In addition, limited open access services will be provided from the Children and Family Centres.

It is proposed that the £2 million is spent in direct response to issues raised by the public consultation, namely concerns around the loss of preventative support and the accessibility of the new service. This retained money will increase early help and preventative work as well as help to increase the amount of locations from which outreach is delivered.

In addition work is underway to guide and advice communities that are interested is establishing their own services. This would further mitigate the reduction in open access services. This is being delivered through a Community Initiative Framework as part of Oxfordshire Together.

The proposed staffing reductions are significant and likely to impact on staff morale. Staff will be kept informed and consulted as service changes are implemented and encouraged to access staff support service. A workforce development strategy will map the current skills base and identify opportunities for development.

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

This assessment has been undertaken in order to understand the impact on different groups of people in Oxfordshire of the proposal to integrate the Early Intervention Service with the Family Support Teams within children's social care, while at the same time making budget savings of £6 million.

The new model of service focuses on targeting the most vulnerable children and families whilst continuing to work closely with our partner agencies. The new model will retain preventative work through the provision of support to professionals working with vulnerable children, and through targeted to support to families with multiple needs who do not require statutory social care input. A limited amount of universal, open-access services will also be provided at centres to reduce the risk of stigmatisation that could be associated with attending at Children and Family Centre. In addition, the service will work with local communities to support them to develop universal services within the local area.

The new model comprises a number of different elements:

- I. Locality and Community Support
- II. Family Support for children aged 0-19 and their families
- III. 8 Children and Family Centres and mobile bus
- IV. 2 Shared Locality Bases
- V. 8 Outreach locations

VI. Outreach services

The assessment considers how the changes brought about by this proposal may affect the people of Oxfordshire – with particular emphasis on groups with the protected characteristics listed below – and how this can be mitigated.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low;
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person’s disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- gender
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

Context:

Ongoing cuts to central government funding mean Oxfordshire County Council has to make savings. The council is currently in the process of making approximately £290 million of savings. In February 2014 the budget agreed by Council included savings of £3m in Early Intervention to be achieved by 2017-18. Further savings of £3m were agreed by Council in February 2015, making a total of £6m to be achieved by 2017-18.

As a result of national austerity measures to reduce public sector spending and the level of national debt, further cuts are anticipated to the level of funding passed to local government in future years. Proposals to make additional savings of £50million by 2019/20 were put forward for consideration and public consultation in October 2015. However, the provisional local government finance settlement, announced in December 2015, indicates that Oxfordshire County Council will need to save closer to £70million by 2019/20.

Early Intervention currently comprises a range of services delivered through 44 Children's Centres and 7 Early Intervention Hubs. These include open access sessions such as stay and play and youth sessions, as well as targeted programmes and casework that address identified needs. In addition, the Youth Engagement and Opportunities team support education, employment and training opportunities for all 16-19 year olds, and 19-25 year olds who are vulnerable. Oxfordshire's Thriving Families programme is delivered through the Early Intervention Service, providing intensive support to families that have been identified as being in need through the national Troubled Families Programme.

The scale of the budget reductions mean that the current model for providing Early Intervention services is unsustainable. In order to deliver an effective service in the future, it is proposed to integrate the Early Intervention service with Children's Social Care.

Through this integration, the council will be able to achieve the level of savings required whilst providing an effective, safe and coordinated service that meets our statutory obligations. However, the range of support provided by the new service will be reduced, as will the number of locations from which it is delivered. This will have an impact on people across Oxfordshire.

Proposal:

In order to achieve the £6 million savings necessary, a new service will be created by integrating the Early Intervention Service and Family Support Teams. The new service builds on the county council's preferred option and incorporates a number of issues raised during the public consultation.

The new service will comprise of a number of different elements:

- 1) Locality and Community Support
- 2) Family Support for children aged 0-19 and their families
- 3) 8 Children and Family Centres and mobile bus
- 4) 2 Shared Locality Bases

5) 8 Outreach locations

6) Outreach service

Locality and Community Support Service

The aim of the Locality and Community Support Service is:

To provide advice and guidance to universal services, including schools, health services and voluntary and community groups to enable them to support vulnerable children, young people and families within their community;

To identify emerging needs and safeguarding concerns within the locality

To be the first point of contact for universal services who have concerns about a child and are considering making a referral to statutory services;

To monitor and oversee the effective implementation of CAF/TACs within the locality;

To develop a good working knowledge of support services in the area and identification of appropriate resources.

This new service will build on the work previously carried out by locality co-ordinators and the current well-respected model of locality support. The service will have identified workers who link with universal services, including schools, early years settings, health and other community based provision, to enable concerns to be shared and advice and guidance given in relation to children and young people where there may be child protection issues.

Workers from the service will offer support and advice to any professional who has concerns about a child and coordinate support for vulnerable families within the community. This will include supporting the completion of an early help/CAF assessment to identify the nature of concerns within the family. Where concerns cannot be managed within the community, workers from the service will take the lead in escalating concerns into the new Service.

The Locality and Community Support Service will be organised into three area teams (North, Central and South), with workers being based across the Children and Family Centres located in their areas. The Service will be managed by Team Manager, with Senior Practitioners and Locality Workers based within each of the three areas (North, Central and South). All staff will be experienced child protection and safeguarding professionals, with the Senior Practitioners being qualified social workers. The intention is to develop the Locality and Community Service into a multi-agency service. Discussions are on-going with partners regarding this.

The additional resources available due to the reduction in the savings required will enable a service of 30 workers. This would equate to approximately 10 workers in each area of the county. This increases the capacity of the Locality and Community Support Service to support professionals working in universal service and by extension the early help and preventative support provided to children and young people.

In addition to increasing capacity to support professionals, the additional budget would provide capacity within the service to undertake a 'community co-ordinator' role. This would entail working closely with communities to understand the needs of

particular localities and the services already available, and to provide support to increase local universal provision.

The 'community co-ordinator' would work closely with the outreach centres, supporting the development of a universal offer within these centres. In addition, they will focus on developing sustainable services within buildings that were previously children's centres, and which remain open to provide a range of community supported services once county council funding ceases.

The development of this role within the Locality and Community Support Service would provide an opportunity for close collaboration with communities across the county, ensuring that all of Oxfordshire's children benefit. However, we recognise that some communities have more capacity than others to develop their own offer of universal services. The work of the community co-ordinator would target more deprived areas.

Further, this role could help to explore the potential of developing open access stay and play sessions in local libraries.

The local authority believes that the creation of this service provides a significant preventative service, enabling vulnerable children to be identified, and support put in place, before concerns escalate. The development of this service increases investment in the support the county council currently provides to universal services.

Family Support Service

The new Family Support Service will integrate the existing Children's Social Care Family Support Teams with the family support functions currently undertaken in the Early Intervention Service, including those of the current Thriving Families and Youth Engagement and Opportunities Teams.

The aim of the service is:

- To provide timely support and interventions to vulnerable families to address safeguarding concerns and reduce risks to children and young people
- To provide case work to children, young people and families requiring statutory and targeted support, including responding to crises within families
- To offer a range of group programmes to children, young people and families who meet the threshold for the service
- To deliver and co-ordinate services within the designated Children and Family Centres, shared locality bases and outreach centres
- To provide both casework and group programmes through outreach to venues other than the Children and Family Centres including the shared locality bases and outreach centres

The service will provide direct case work with both children and their families, taking a whole family approach to planning and support. This approach will embed that of the current Thriving Families programme and will ensure plans for children are made within the context of their whole family, enabling appropriate support to be put in place for each individual.

In addition to case work, the service will offer a standardised evidence based range of group programmes. These will be designed to address the key risks and issues affecting families, including domestic abuse, parenting skills, school readiness and employment and training support. The service will only provide programmes where there is strong evidence of their positive impact for children and/or families.

The group programmes will be targeted at vulnerable families. However, the Family Support Service will also offer open access sessions within the new Children and Family Centres. This will include stay and play sessions for under 5s and their carers, and youth sessions for young people.

The additional money available as a result of the £2 million reduction in the cuts to the budget would enable more staff to be employed specifically to provide early help to vulnerable children and families.

The Family Support Service will be based and operated from the Children and Family Centres. However, workers from the Service will provide an extensive outreach service, meeting children and families at other venues, including their home, school and other locations close to where the family live, to provide individual support. In addition, the group programmes will be offered from venues other than the Children and Family Centres in order to ensure families do not have to travel extensive distances to attend them.

Teams will develop strong links with the services in the local vicinity, in particular schools, health, and voluntary and community services. In addition, there are opportunities to further develop this service to broaden the range of professionals working within the teams. Discussions continue with partners regarding this.

The Family Support Service will be organised into three area teams, each managed and overseen by a senior manager reporting to a Deputy Director. Teams will consist of managers, practice managers, social workers, family workers and family support workers bringing a range of experience and expertise to work with children and families. Team Managers will have responsibility for a number of different teams, with the majority of workers supporting children and families where there is a statutory responsibility to do so. However, a number of workers will focus on the provision of targeted support to families identified through the early help/CAF assessment process. Practice Managers will have day to day responsibility for the management of case work with families, with the other team members providing direct support to children and families and delivering group programmes.

The development of the integrated service will increase capacity to support the most vulnerable children and focus resources on children in need to prevent a further escalation of their needs.

Children and Family Centres

Eight Children and Family Centres will be created, providing a base for a service for 0-19 year olds and their families. These Centres will be based in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire as follows:

- Oxford - Blackbird Leys
- Oxford - Rose Hill/ Littlemore

- Oxford - Barton/Sandhills
- Banbury
- Didcot
- Abingdon
- Bicester
- Witney

In addition to the eight Children and Family Centres, a mobile bus service will deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community, as they are less likely to attend the main Centres.

Supporting the main Children and Family Centres in Blackbird Leys and Banbury will be two additional 'Shared Locality Bases'. These are not additional Children and Family Centres, but would provide shared bases from where the service will be able to provide support and group programmes.

An outreach service will be provided to all parts of Oxfordshire which will help those families who most need intensive support. This will be provided in two ways. Firstly workers from the Family Support Service will travel to meet children and families at other venues, including their home, school and other locations close to where the family live to provide 1:1 support. In addition, targeted group programmes will be offered from alternative venues such as local community centres, which will include the more rural parts of the County, in order to ensure families do not have to travel extensive distances to attend them. This will ensure we offer support to vulnerable families and children on a county wide basis.

The additional money would be used to increase the number of staff providing early help to vulnerable children and families. This would enable the service to increase the number of families it supports who do not meet the threshold for statutory social care. Resources would be targeted to areas most in need

The capacity of the service to deliver family support through outreach would be increased enabling evidence-based programmes and support to be provided from the outreach centres and the shared locality bases, in addition to that provided within the eight Children and Family Centres. Specifically, this would ensure that casework and a programme of evidence-based programmes would be delivered from the outreach centres and shared bases.

In addition, a network of eight outreach centres will be developed. These, along with the two centres that will become shared locality bases and Rose Hill Children and Family Centre, all currently provide childcare and are being supported to become financially self-sufficient by April 2017. Through the new service these buildings will become a base for outreach and the delivery of evidence-based programmes as follows:

North area

- The Sunshine Centre, Edmunds Road, Banbury
- North Banbury Centre, Hardwick School, Banbury
- Britannia Road Centre, Grove Street, Banbury
- The Ace Centre, Burford Road, Chipping Norton

Central area

- Slade Children's Centre, Titup Hall Drive, Wood Farm, Oxfordshire County Council
- Grandpont Children's Centre, 47 Whitehouse Road, Grandpont, Oxford

South area

- Elms Road Children's Centre, Elms Road, Botley, Oxfordshire County Council
- Stephen Freeman Children's Centre, Freeman Road, Didcot

The local authority will also work with these settings to support the delivery of some universal services from the buildings, this could include health visiting services.

Evidence / Intelligence:

The proposal has drawn on evidence from a range of pilots, research and commissioned work both with Oxfordshire and elsewhere. This has included the work of Oxfordshire's Thriving Families team, the North Oxfordshire Neglect pilot, service-level data, research regarding how other Local Authorities have approached their savings pressures, and conversations with key stakeholders.

Further details of the evidence base can be found in the report to Cabinet on 15 September 2015, Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care. (available on the Oxfordshire County Council website).

An extensive engagement programme was carried out to ensure that all relevant stakeholders were represented and able to have input into the development of the proposal and options for implementation. The engagement work included a variety of different events with children and young people, parents/carers, council staff, schools, health professionals, the police, voluntary and community organisations, city and district council executives and local political leaders. The information gathered at these events helped to inform the development of the model and shape the consultation options.

For full details of engagement activity see the Engagement Report.

Service performance data, deprivation indices and demographic growth projections were also considered in the development of the proposed new service and the selection of proposed service locations.

The statutory purpose of Children Centres and the rationale for establishing Early Intervention Hubs were also considered alongside how subsequent government policy changes and their effect on current services. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for Early Intervention Hubs, guidance on Children's Centres was revised in April 2013 to clarify what local authorities and statutory partners must do when fulfilling their statutory responsibilities for early childhood services. This includes a duty to ensure there are sufficient Children's Centres to provide evidence-based interventions for families in greatest need of support and that the centres are accessible to all families with young children in Oxfordshire.

A copy of the statutory guidance for local authorities can be found in Annex 3 of the Report to Cabinet, 15 September 2015: Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care. (available on Oxfordshire County Council website).

Developing the new service

With a significant reduction in the Early Intervention Service budget (from £16 million to £10 million) of which the single largest component is staffing, various models were tested to ensure that the optimum level of resource would be available within the new integrated service. Through this approach the council will be able to deliver the most comprehensive service provision possible, within a significantly reduced budget and without being dependent on the number or location of properties to run the service from.

Different staffing structures have been explored in order to develop a team capable of delivering county wide services with the best balance of skills, enhanced statutory provision and retention of preventative services, as well as support for providers.

The creation of a Locality & Community Support Service was felt to be key to supporting health, schools and other community services to support vulnerable children and families and prevent their needs escalating to the point where they require statutory social care. In addition, the Family Support Service will work with some children and their families who do not reach the threshold for statutory social care services. These children and families will be identified through an early help/CAF assessment and will include, for example, families affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health concerns, including post-natal depression, children who are going missing from home and school, and families where there is criminal activity.

Selecting the locations for Children and Family Centres

The process for determining the proposed locations for the new Children and Family Centres was as follows:

- i) Define the total number of Children and Family Centres within Oxfordshire
- ii) Define the broad geographical spread by assigning a total number of Children and Family Centres to three broad areas within the county (three service areas - north, central, south)
- iii) Determine the 'ideal' locations of the proposed Children and Family Centres within each service area

The approach built on that undertaken by the Cabinet Advisory Group and used the following data sets:

- Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- Prior home locations of children who became looked after by Oxfordshire County Council between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
- Home locations of Children who were subject to child protection plans between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
- Home locations of families identified in the wider Phase 1 Thriving Families cohort;

- Oxfordshire County Council child population forecasts 2014-2019.

In order to determine the 'ideal' locations within each service area an assumption was made that the main settlements within the county were likely to be the most appropriate locations for the Centres because of their accessibility in terms of transport links, their geographical spread, and that localised deprivation tends to be concentrated in urban areas. This assumption was tested using an algorithm that considered the location of 'need' using the data sets described above. These indicators were weighted by population forecasts to give a better indication of where need is likely to be located in the coming years.

Potential locations were tested by the algorithm to determine whether each increased or decreased the distance between Centre and family 'in need'. Locations were finally chosen based on a mix of factors: settlement size, deprivation (IMD), and other indicators of need.

Since the previous report to Cabinet on 15 September 2015, updated Index of Multiple Deprivation data has been released. The methodology set out above has been re-run using this updated data and the 'ideal' locations identified were broadly similar.

Full details of the methodology used are available with the Report to Cabinet 23 February 2016.

Public Consultation

As part of the consultation process we encouraged communities to come forward and let us know about the impact of withdrawing or reducing Early Intervention services in their area. To shape the consultation we took advice from the Institute for Consultation.

The consultation itself included public meetings, focus groups and other outreach work with other individuals and groups affected by the proposal. The results of the consultation helped to inform the detailed proposal for the future service, to be considered by Cabinet on 23 February 2016.

Key issues highlighted by the public consultation have been incorporated in to the revised proposed model and in to the proposals for the retained £2m.

Alternatives considered / rejected

Alternative proposal	Decision
Locating a Children and Family Centre in each of the nine Council Localities	It was suggested that in order to ensure good spread of services across the county we should consider locating at least one Children and Family Centre in each locality. The localities are made up of County Council divisions. This approach was discounted as none of the indicators used to

	investigate areas of greatest need support it. The localities only reflect administrative boundaries.
Keeping Early Intervention and Social Care services separate	<p>Maintaining division between complementary services would likely result in multiple handover points for families and families having to repeat their information each time. Through a single management structure it would be possible to have a comprehensive view of the needs of people within each area, and services can be targeted most effectively as a result.</p> <p>Additionally, a multi-function team is more efficient financially. It is able to deliver both the preventative and social care services, and provide greater coverage than multiple separate teams that have to cover the same areas.</p> <p>Feedback from the engagement process demonstrates broad support for an integrated service.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above this proposal was rejected.</p>
Childrens' Centres and Early Intervention Hubs remain separate	This proposal was rejected on the same basis as above.
No enhanced support for universal providers	<p>Feedback from engagement activities supports the view that maintaining strong links between universal providers and the local authority is crucial to the success of the model. All the options consulted on included the creation of a Locality and Community Support Service to work with universal service providers to identify families at risk and co-ordinate the provision of services that prevent needs from escalating.</p> <p>As such, this proposal was rejected.</p>
Retaining all current intervention and prevention programmes	<p>Current provision of programmes is not equitable across Oxfordshire, with some programmes only being available in specific Children's Centres where staff who are trained to deliver them are based. The programmes delivered by workers in the new service will be available across the county, so that they can be targeted at those who require them most.</p> <p>There is national evidence that supports the effectiveness of certain programmes. Focussing on these services will enable Oxfordshire County Council to deliver the programmes that are most likely to be effective and result in positive outcomes for users.</p> <p>For these reasons this proposal was rejected.</p>
Charging for certain services	Feedback from the engagement process indicated that there may be willingness to accept charges for certain services. Charging for certain services may generate income that can be used to enhance or expand service provision in other areas.

	<p>However, the costs of administrating a charging model indicate that this would not be a practical option to implement.</p> <p>For the reasons described above this proposal was rejected.</p>
Option two - Limited universal services	<p>Under this option the provision of universal services would be provided or commissioned by the local authority. Capacity for this would be created by reducing the outreach provided by the service to all part of the county.</p> <p>The dual budget and service pressures within Children's Social Care, mean that the county council must focus its resources on those children and families it has a statutory duty to support. This will be done by targeting services towards the most vulnerable children and families and ensuring resources are prioritised for these groups. Maximising the capacity for the service to provide outreach to vulnerable families across the county needs to be maintained and take priority over the provision of universal services.</p> <p>For the reasons described above this proposal was rejected.</p>
Option three - Universal services through community investment	<p>Under this option £1million would be made available to the voluntary and community sector for the provision of services to children and families. The resource would be found by reducing the number of Children and Family Centres from 8 to 6, resulting in no Centre in either Abingdon or Bicester, and a reduction in the Service's capacity to deliver outreach and group programmes across Oxfordshire. Maximising the capacity for the service to provide outreach to vulnerable families across the county needs to be maintained and take priority over the provision of funding to the voluntary and community sector.</p> <p>For the reasons described above this proposal was rejected.</p>

Impact Assessment:

Impact on Individuals and Communities:

Overarching impacts

The proposed option involves reducing the provision of open access services. This will have a negative impact on Oxfordshire's children, young people and families, who will experience reduced access to, and availability of, universal services. Their access will be further limited by having fewer Children and Family Centres, meaning many people will have to travel a greater distance to access Centre based services which may reduce community cohesion.

Despite the proposed reduction of open access services, the provision of targeted, evidence based programmes of support for families through the Family Support Service will achieve better outcomes for those in greatest need. Furthermore, an integrated service that combines preventative work with social care, delivered via Children and Family Centres and a network of outreach locations, will have a positive impact on families across the county by providing greater coverage and more consistent contacts within the service for families.

Some specific overarching risks that have been identified are:

Risk	Mitigation
People using targeted services are stigmatised	The proposal includes the provision of open access within the eight Children and Family centres which would reduce the risk of stigmatisation. Opportunities to work with partners to provide other services from Children and Family Centres, e.g. health services, will be explored to assist with de-stigmatisation.
A reduction in the number of Children's Centres may affect children, young people and families accessing services provided by partners at current sites	The council has been engaging with partner organisations, and partners are being kept informed of developments to ensure that their service plans reflect necessary changes and their services continue uninterrupted as far as possible. The creation of the shared locality bases and outreach centres, increases the locations from which partners could continue to deliver services.
The impact of closing centres that families are reliant on for support will have a negative effect on those children and families	As part of the transition to the new model of integrated working, staff and the public are being kept up to date with developments and will be signposted to other forms of support available.
Reducing open access services may limit opportunities for children, young people and families to develop informal networks	The revised proposal includes the provision of open access within the eight Children and Family Centres A Locality and Community Support Service will continue to work with universal support providers, such as schools and voluntary/community sector organisations, to enhance or supplement their provision. Families will continue to be signposted to other groups and activities operating in their area to help them develop informal networks. In addition, the council is looking at ways of

	developing open access stay and play sessions at its network of 43 libraries.
The reduction in early intervention services will have an impact on the Oxfordshire community as a whole. The long term costs of providing services to families in crisis will be higher than providing preventative services which will have an impact on resources for all agencies	Early intervention support will be targeted at those families in the most need to reduce the number of families reaching crisis point.
The reduction in early intervention services and subsequent increased pressure on the social care services will increase the safeguarding risk to children and young people	The revised proposal for an integrated service of Early Intervention and Children's Social Care will target services to those in greatest need. This includes including children where there are safeguarding concerns.

Impact on groups with protected characteristics

Reducing the number of Children and Family Centres may temporarily or permanently affect the provision of other services that currently operate from some of the Children’s Centres, such as health clinics and breastfeeding support. This will impact on children, young people and families currently accessing these services from sites not included in the proposed list of locations for Children and Family Centres.

Some specific impacts on groups with protected characteristics may be:

Risk	Mitigation
Pregnancy and maternity Reduced access to support for pregnant women and new mothers could increase prevalence of mental health concerns	The Health Visiting service, commissioned by Public Health, will continue to monitor the mental health of pregnant women and mothers with children up to the age of 5 and refer to appropriate support services where a mental health need is identified. The Health Visiting service also delivers a level of breastfeeding support as part of health visitors’ regular contact with new mothers. The creation of the shared locality bases and outreach centres, increases the locations from which partners could continue to deliver services.
Gender	

<p>The reduction in services available will have an impact on women and men who will suffer as a result of the reduction in universal services.</p> <p>A reduction in preventative services and universal services will impact on women who may be more at risk of post-natal depression and domestic abuse</p>	<p>Universal services will continue to be delivered by partners such as health, who will deliver their services from the Children and Family Centres, shared locality bases and outreach centres.</p> <p>The Health Visiting service, commissioned by Public Health, will continue to monitor the mental health of pregnant women and mothers with children up to the age of 5 and refer to appropriate support services where a mental health need is identified.</p> <p>The Children and Family Centres, shared locality bases and outreach centres will be able to provide a base for the delivery of groups to support women experiencing post-natal depression and domestic abuse.</p>
<p>Age The identification of health concerns in young children as a result of contact with trained staff in Children and Family centres, and/or, as a result of parents and carers comparing their child's development to other children in Children and Family Centres, may be affected by a reduction in centres providing an opportunity for concerns to be identified, particularly children who are not covered by the Health Visiting service</p>	<p>The Health Visiting service will continue to monitor the progress of children up to the age of 5 and refer to appropriate support services where concerns are identified.</p> <p>The creation of a Locality and Community Support Service, which supports all professionals working with children, provides a route for emerging needs and safeguarding concerns to be identified among children of any age.</p> <p>This service will provide specialist co-ordination and support to ensure the needs of these children are met.</p>
<p>Disability Families where there are disabled parents and/or disabled children where travelling is expensive and challenging will be affected by the need to travel further to access services.</p> <p>The cumulative impact of savings made from supported transport budgets may also increase the risk of limited accessibility.</p>	<p>Children and Family Centres are proposed to be located in larger conurbations that are well served by accessible public transport. The service will provide an outreach service across Oxfordshire to target identified needs across Oxfordshire, meaning children and families will not have to travel to the main centres to receive a service.</p>

<p>Religion or belief The use of religious buildings to provide services could isolate people of different religions or with no beliefs who may not be able to access certain religious buildings, leading to a lack of social cohesion and increased isolation</p>	<p>The council will work with communities with the intention of keeping local centres available for community groups, such as town councils, voluntary or charity groups, to provide universal services.</p>
<p>Race Families from non-British national or ethnic origins may not feel comfortable accessing a specialised service and specialised services, may not be available in all geographical areas. This could lead to a lack of social cohesion and increased isolation. Children from non-English speaking families may not be school ready if they are not able to access universal services to enhance their language development</p>	<p>The council will work with communities with the intention of keeping local centres available for community groups, such as town councils, voluntary or charity groups, to provide universal services.</p>

Impacts on areas of deprivation

The proposed option should not have a negative impact on those living in areas of greatest deprivation, as the proposed Children and Family Centre are located in these areas.

The eight proposed Children and Family Centre locations cover the six highest ranked settlements for child deprivation, where 73 per cent of children under 5 live (based on 2011 Census data). These locations would also provide a Centre in every district/city area.

From these locations the Family Support Service will work with the most vulnerable children and families, specifically targeting children in need, those on child protection plans, looked after children and those identified as vulnerable through an early help/CAF assessment.

However, the reduction of council-funded universal services under the proposed option is likely to have a negative impact on the wider community, and vulnerable families who do not live in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire. These families will benefit from the outreach service and other forms of universal support provided by alternative agencies who will be supported by the Locality and Community Support Service.

Risk	Mitigation
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<p>Vulnerable families in less deprived areas of the county may struggle to access targeted support because the Children and Family Centres are based in areas of greatest need.</p> <p>Early identification of these families may be affected by a reduction in universal services, meaning they do not receive support when they most need it.</p>	<p>A comprehensive analysis of local need has been completed, taking into account a wide range of indicators to determine the most appropriate Children and Family Centre locations. The proposed locations are centred around the areas of greatest deprivation.</p> <p>The proposal includes an outreach service that will enable vulnerable families in less deprived areas without a Centre to access targeted family support services. The Locality and Community Support Service will also support agencies that provide universal services across the county, and ensure that vulnerable families are signposted and referred to targeted support when it is needed. In addition, support will be given to communities to develop the universal offer available within their locality.</p>
<p>Concerns that relate to a specific locality will not receive appropriate support</p>	<p>Outreach work will be provided by the service, meaning that children and families do not need to travel to the main Centres to receive support.</p>

Impact on rural communities

The loss of Children’s Centres in rural locations will negatively impact rural communities and may contribute to rural isolation, as people in these areas will have to travel further to access centre based services. Data collected by existing Children’s Centres shows that more than 50 per cent of all Centre users currently walk to the existing sites, although almost one third drive.

Rural communities will rely on the outreach network for access to targeted family support services.

Risk	Mitigation
<p>Children, young people and families in rural communities will have to travel longer distances to access support, as it will not be based locally to them. Families who do not have cars will need to use public transport which is likely to be indirect and will take longer. There may be an economic impact on rural communities who will have to travel further to access support services.</p>	<p>The proposed option includes targeted outreach to deliver support to families in rural locations.</p> <p>Children and Family Centres are proposed to be located in larger conurbations that are well served by public transport, providing various modes of access for rural communities to centre based services.</p> <p>In addition to this the additional two shared locality bases and eight outreach centres will mean that some children and families will not have to travel as far to access services.</p> <p>The mobile bus that is used to deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community will be retained to continue to deliver services to these</p>

	communities that are less likely to attend the main centres.
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Impact on Staff:

The majority of the current budget is spent on staffing. To achieve the required savings, the proposed option includes a significant reduction in staffing levels and changes to the staffing structure, and the location and structure of family support services. These changes will also require a shift in culture and practice.

A reduction in the staffing establishment will inevitably have a negative impact on staff morale, and for some employees the process itself is likely to cause anxiety. This could affect levels of concentration, motivation and absenteeism.

A staff advisory group has been established to allow staff a voice to air concerns, feed into the programme board and to input into the new service delivery model. In addition, formal staff consultation and a structured communications programme will ensure all staff are kept up to date and encouraged to be part of the restructured service, taking up the opportunities for the newly created roles.

The integrated Family Support Service requires that a significant proportion of staff within the service are qualified social workers. As a result, staff within the current Early Intervention Service who do not have a social work qualification will be most affected by the changes.

Risk	Mitigation
A reduction in available funding for staffing will lead to a significant number of job losses and increased unemployment.	Staff will continue to be kept informed of progress with service changes, including the restructure of posts within teams. Staff will be encouraged to access staff support services where applicable. Outplacement support will be offered to staff
Staff are not sufficiently qualified in the social work led integrated Family Support Service.	A workforce development strategy is being developed to map the current skills base and identify opportunities for development.
Staff morale is low due to a reduction in the staffing establishment, affecting concentration and motivation, absenteeism.	<p>The staff consultation will run in the Summer 2016 and all members of staff will be encouraged to participate</p> <p>Staff will continue to be kept informed of progress with service changes, including the restructure of posts within teams. Managers are being briefed regularly to help support their staff.</p> <p>Staff will be encouraged to access staff support services where applicable.</p> <p>Staff will be referred to Penna outplacement</p>

	support if they are not successful in obtaining a role in the new structure. This service supports staff to apply for internal vacancies, consider career development opportunities and redundancy.
Staff who are redeployed as part of the restructure may have to travel longer distances to reach their place of work.	The county council have a redeployment policy

Impact on other Council services:

Children's Social Care currently use Children's Centres and Hubs across the county to facilitate supervised contacts for families. A reduction in centres will reduce the amount of available space to carry out this duty. Alternative locations and arrangements will need to be made.

No other impacts on council services have currently been identified, but there is an option to explore potential opportunities with other services including (but not limited to) libraries and the fire service.

The proposals for Early Intervention Services will be considered in conjunction with savings proposals for other service areas to ensure there are no unintended consequences for Oxfordshire's residents, or on other council services.

Risk	Mitigation
Reduction in available space to facilitate supervised contacts. Children and families will need to travel longer distances in order to attend contact.	Children's social care to identify alternative locations for contact to take place. The Children and Family Centres, shared locality bases and outreach centres will have some capacity to host supervised contact.

Impact on partners and providers:

Providers

The proposed model has a reduced finance with which to commission services. However, there may be opportunities to commission external providers where a specific area of need has been identified.

The council has maintained contact with current external providers regarding the proposal and will continue to keep them informed of developments through active engagement.

Impact on partners

Many of the current Children’s Centres are used by other service providers, such as Oxford Health, as venues to provide their services from, e.g. clinics run by health visitors and jointly run parental support classes. The closure of existing centres will impact on partners as they will be required to find alternative venues from which to deliver services.

Whilst it is still the council’s intention to provide joint-use facilities within the new service, we acknowledge that there will be fewer centres from which these can be provided.

The council is in conversation with partners who currently use existing sites for their services and will continue to keep them informed of developments through active engagement.

Options for the integration and co-location of services are being discussed as part of the development of the proposal. This could provide positive opportunities for collaboration and deliver great benefits to children, young people and families across Oxfordshire.

Risk	Mitigation
<p>The voluntary and community sector, schools and other agencies are not capable and do not have the capacity to deliver alternative universal services across Oxfordshire.</p>	<p>A Locality and Community Support Service will continue to work with universal support providers to enhance or supplement their provision.</p> <p>The county council’s Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure contract is designed to support growth and development within the sector to make it fit for purpose.</p> <p>As a ‘Social Enterprise Place,’ Oxfordshire is committed to growing social enterprise communities across the county by bringing together the local councils, universities, businesses, charities, budding social entrepreneurs and local residents.</p>
<p>Reduction in the number of Children’s Centres could lead to increased pressure on the Health Visiting service due to a reduction in available space to hold clinics and limited accessibility to additional support to refer new mothers / families to.</p>	<p>Engagement with partner organisations has started early and partners are being kept informed of developments to ensure that their service plans reflect necessary changes.</p> <p>This could provide positive opportunities for collaboration and deliver great benefits to children, young people and families across Oxfordshire.</p>
<p>A long term impact on health services due to a reduction in breast feeding which has an impact on children's long term health</p>	<p>Breastfeeding support continues to be commissioned by the county council.</p>

An increased pressure on schools to support children who start school without being school ready and to support children and families who do not reach the threshold for a service from the new integrated Children's service	The new Locality and Community Support service will provide specialist advice and support to professionals, including those from schools, and will facilitate support to vulnerable families. Targeted support on school readiness will continue be available to vulnerable children.
Reduction in external services commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council could lead to increase in unemployment within those services	The council has maintained contact with current external providers about the proposal and will continue to keep them informed of developments through active engagement.

Action plan:

Action	By When	Person responsible
Carry out public consultation on proposals	Sep-Dec 2015	Jim Leivers
Continued engagement with children, young people and families (including service users) regarding impact of proposals and possible mitigations	On-going	Jim Leivers
Continued engagement with providers regarding impact of proposals and possible mitigations	On-going	Jim Leivers
Assess consultation responses and consider whether any community groups with protected characteristics are disproportionately affected by the proposals	On-going	Jim Leivers
Update SCIA throughout consultation process as and when relevant feedback is provided	On-going	Jim Leivers
Proposal to be considered at Cabinet	23 rd February 2016	Jim Leivers
Proposal for retained £2m to be considered at Cabinet	24 th May 2016	Jim Leivers
Staff consultation	Summer 2016	Jim Leivers

Monitoring and review:

Person responsible for assessment: Jim Leivers, Director of Children, Education and Families

PSC7

Version	Date	Notes
V1	27 August 2015	Initial draft
V2	8 October 2015	Updated
V3	5 February 2016	Updated following public consultation
V4	29 April 2016	Updated to take account of retained £2m

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ANNEX 3 - OUTLINE OF LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN'S CENTRES

The Childcare Act 2006: General Duties

The Childcare Act 2006 (“the Act”) imposes a number of duties on local authorities. The general duty contained in section 1 is to (a) improve the well-being of young children in their area; and (b) reduce inequalities between young children in their area in respect of physical and mental health and emotional well-being, protection from harm and neglect, education, training and recreation, the contribution made by them to society and social and economic well-being.

A “young child” is defined by the Act as a child during the period from birth until 31 August following the child’s 5th birthday.

In discharging its functions under the Act, a local authority must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State published the “Sure Start Children’s Centres Statutory Guidance” in April 2013. A copy of this guidance is found in Annex 5.

Section 3 of the Act states that a local authority must make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in its area are provided in an integrated manner, which is calculated to facilitate access to those services, and to maximize the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children. “Early childhood services” are defined by section 2(1) of the Act. They mean (a) early years provision; (b) the social services functions of the local authority, so far as relating to young children, parents or prospective parents; (c) health services relating to young children, parents or prospective parents, (d) the provision of assistance to parents or prospective parents (employment and training) and (e) the authority’s duty to provide specified information and assistance to parents/prospective parents relating to childcare and other matters of benefit to parents, children and young people.

Section 3(3) of the 2006 Act states that the authority must take steps (a) to identify parents or prospective parents in the authority’s area who would otherwise be unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services that may be of benefit to them and their young children; and (b) to encourage those parents or prospective parents to take advantage of those services.

Section 4 states the authority must make arrangements to work with certain partners in performing the functions referred to above. These are the NHS Commissioning Board, CCGs in the authority’s area and the Secretary of State in relation to education and training.

The Childcare Act 2006: Children’s Centres and Consultation

Prior to 2010, a local authority was free to determine how best to deliver the early childhood services under section 3. However, amendments were made by the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 which introduced new provisions, including sections 5A-5E. Section 5A(1) of the Act states that arrangements made by a local authority under section 3 must, so far as is

reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of Children's Centres to meet local need. "Local need" is defined as the need of parents, prospective parents and young children in the authority's area. A Children's Centre is a place managed by or under arrangements with the authority making "early childhood services" available (see definition of "early childhood services" above), and providing activities for young children.

Section 5A(5) of the Act states that a service is "made available" by providing the service *or* by providing advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents on gaining access to the service. Local authorities must consider whether early childhood services should be provided through a Children's Centre. A local authority must take into account whether providing a service through a Children's Centre would (a) facilitate access to it; or (b) maximize its benefit to parents, prospective parents and young children: see section 5E of the Act. Section 5E(7) states that, for the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this section is to be taken as preventing a local authority or any of its relevant partners from providing early childhood services other than through a Children's Centre.

Section 5D(1) of the Act states that a local authority must secure that such consultation as they think appropriate is carried out before any significant change is made in the services provided through a children's centre (including a change to location), or before anything is done that would result in a Children's Centre ceasing to be a Children's Centre.

Statutory guidance

The statutory Guidance published by the Secretary of State is attached at Annex 4. It explains some things which the authority must do, and some which they should do – though the "should do" guidance should be departed from only where there is good reason. Chapter 2 concerns the provision of sufficient Children's Centres. Members are invited to pay particular attention to pages 9 and 10 of the Guidance. This states that local authorities should:

- ensure that a network of Children's Centres is accessible to all families with young children in their area;
- ensure that Children's Centres and their services are within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport;
- together with local commissioners of health services and employment services, consider how best to ensure that the families who need services can be supported to access them;
- target Children's Centres services at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes through, for example, effective outreach services, based on the analysis of local need;
- demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively;
- ensure that opening times and availability of services meet the needs of families in their area;
- not close an existing Children's Centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children's centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most

disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of Children's Centres;

- take into account the views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient Children's Centre provision;
- take account of families crossing local authority borders to use Children's Centres in their authority. Families and carers are free to access early childhood services where it suits them best; and
- take into account wider duties under section 17 of the Childcare Act 1989 and under the Child Poverty Act 2010.

Local authorities should consult everyone who could be affected by proposed closures of or significant changes to Children's Centres, 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
- Be clear how respondents views can be made known
- Provide adequate time for those wishing to respond
- Announce decisions following consultation publicly and explain why decisions were taken

Summary

The broad duty therefore is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that there is sufficient provision of Children's Centres to meet local need. Therefore, in considering any significant changes to or the closure of any Children's Centres, it is important that the local authority ensure it is satisfied as to (amongst other matters):

- that a proper consultation has been undertaken
- the extent of the local need
- whether there are sufficient Children's Centres to meet that need
- if it is considered that there are not sufficient children's centres to meet local need then whether it is reasonably practicable to provide additional Children's Centres

ANNEX 4

Click on link below to published Guidance:

Sure Start Children's Centres statutory guidance for local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus. April 2013

Alternatively cut and paste the following web address into the address bar on Internet Explorer:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sure-start-childrens-centres>