

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 13 April 2017	For decision by: Cabinet Member for Children and Schools
Report title:		Grant award to children's centre providers	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All wards	
From:		Strategic Director, Children's & Adults Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet Member for Children and Schools notes the progress in implementing a new model of managing the delivery of Children's Centres in Southwark during 2016-17.
2. That the Cabinet Member for Children and Schools approves grants to lead agencies for the delivery of the Children's Centres programme for the 2017/18 financial year, as set out in paragraph 45.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Children's centres are places where families with children under five can access a range of services and information and get help and advice from health, education and social care professionals. Their core purpose is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in child development, school readiness, health and life chances.
4. A report setting out a new model of children's centres delivery in Southwark was considered by Cabinet in June 2016, with the Cabinet approving grants to lead agencies for the delivery of the Children's Centres programme in line with this model for 2016-17.
5. Since April 2016 Southwark's 16 Children's Centres have been managed by five lead agencies; 3 localities are managed by Southwark schools and one by a partnership between two voluntary organisations. The rationale behind the new model related to the publication of a revised Ofsted Framework for Inspection of Children's Centres, and a shift in national policy for Children's Centres from providing predominantly universal services to delivering more targeted interventions alongside services for all. There were also local concerns about inconsistency, variable quality and duplication of services across Children's Centres previously delivered in different ways by 16 different providers.
6. In November and December 2016 a review was carried out to assess to what extent the changes made are meeting the identified priorities as laid out in the consultation. These broadly relate to improvements in workforce development, service delivery, multi-agency collaboration, casework with vulnerable families and economies of scale delivering better value for money.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Benefits of the model

7. The model is based on a hub and spoke arrangement with one lead body per locality co-ordinating staff and services across the reach area. This approach focuses on delivering universal and targeted services where they are needed in the community, using spaces that

are accessible to children and families. In each locality there is one Strategic Development Board, one lead manager and a single staff team; this replaces the range of different arrangements in place previously.

8. All four localities have reorganised existing staff teams and recruited to vacant positions ensuring there are structures in place that are suited to the needs in each locality. All Children's Centre staff across Southwark now have consistent, high quality job descriptions relating to their particular role. All structures have Leadership roles, family support, early years and administration functions in place to ensure a well balanced team with the requisite skills to deliver the programme.
9. Most localities have maintained existing services during the 6 month transition period whilst restructuring, and are consulting with local stakeholders regarding service development over the coming year. Most lead bodies have ensured planning of services are now targeted in the areas that need them and they have addressed issues around duplication so that where this was happening days or times of activities have been adjusted to allow access throughout the week and across the locality to as many children and families as possible.
10. There has been a focus on developing an integrated approach to working with vulnerable children with the Early Help service. All referrals for families requiring work with complex-needs are allocated via a weekly meeting attended by Children's Centre Managers, Early Help Managers and Social Workers. This relationship is developing but a common approach to early intervention is emerging, with support workers from all teams now using the Family Star Plus as the primary tool for supporting parents in improving outcomes for their children. Southwark is actively developing support services that improve outcomes at the earliest point, underpinned by good quality partnerships; this is in line with the requirements of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2013).
11. All localities are in the process of establishing Strategic Development Boards, one locality is still in the planning stages, the rest have held at least one meeting and have these planned for the year on a termly basis. Strategic cross-sector engagement has been good with a range of senior health and social care managers attending. Boards are themed and will have short life working groups attached to carry out operational delivery of plans.
12. Changes to who is leading on service delivery has led to some issues with utilising Children's Centre buildings housed in schools or buildings where the main provider of the school/service is no longer the provider for the Centre. Advice from properties in relation to this and the potential expansion of the Academy programme is for Southwark to protect its Children's Centre space and ensure it is being used for purpose. There has been a recent reminder from the DfE that any buildings funded by Sure Start grants are subject to clawback if this rule is not adhered to.
13. Southwark now provides an annual data pack for all Children's Centre localities broken down by reach areas so they can use this to help plan targeted services where they are needed most. We are also working hard to replace the Synergy database with the latest upgrade which will provide improved reporting functions in order to measure service outputs. The system will also use barcode technology so families can have membership cards allowing them to access services across the borough easily; the second phase of this project will be to link these to library membership.

Retaining lead agencies

14. Lead agencies for each locality are operating as follows:
 - Borough, Bankside and Walworth: 1st Place Children & Parents Centre in partnership with Coin Street Community Builders.

- Bermondsey and Rotherhithe: Kintore Way Children's Centre in partnership with Pilgrims Way Primary School & Children's Centre.
 - Camberwell and Dulwich: Dulwich Wood Children's Centre.
 - Peckham and Nunhead & Peckham Rye: Ivydale Primary School & Children's Centre.
15. Lead agencies are accountable for meeting the terms of a service level agreement specifying children's centre requirements. Where terms are not met the council can withdraw funding with three months notice.

Maintaining existing service delivery across Southwark

16. At the start of the remodelling process there were 16 separate designated Children's Centres in Southwark. In the new model there are four groups each led by one agency/partnership. However, the locality Children's Centre programme and related early years services continue to be delivered from the following buildings in Southwark that include 16 of the original Children's Centres and other facilities as follows:

Bermondsey and Rotherhithe locality

- Children's Centre at Pilgrims Way Primary School
- Kintore Way Children's Centre
- South Bermondsey Children's Centre
- Southwark Park Playroom (previously designated as part of Rotherhithe Children's Centre)
- Rotherhithe Primary School (continuing to deliver under-3s early education and childcare places)

Borough and Bankside and Walworth locality

- 1st Place Children and Parents Centre
- Bishops House Children's Centre
- Coin Street Children's Centre
- Children's Centre at Victory Primary School

Camberwell and Dulwich locality

- Children's Centre at Crawford Primary School (to become an Academy with CC buildings allocation leased back to the council)
- Dulwich Wood Children's Centre
- Grove Children and Families Centre
- East Dulwich Estate/Albrighton Centre (previously designated as part of South Camberwell Children's Centre)
- Bessemer Grange (Children's Centre facility now prioritised for provision of two year old places)

Peckham and Nunhead and Peckham Rye

- Children's Centre at Ivydale Primary School
- Children's Centre at Rye Oak Primary School
- Children's Centre at Ann Bernadt Nursery School
- Peckham Rye playroom (managed by Ivydale)
- Leyton Square playroom (previously designated as part of East Peckham Children's Centre)
- Nell Gwynn Nursery School (which will continue to deliver early education places for two to four year olds).

17. In addition services are delivered through libraries, health centres and other community venues.
18. All buildings funded by the Government's Sure Start Children's Centre capital programme remain in use for children's centres and related early years purposes, but it is proposed that we secure these more effectively for under 5s provision thus avoiding risk of Department for Education seeking to claw back funding - which it can choose to do if funded buildings cease to be used for intended function.
19. The council will top-slice associated premises costs from Locality CC budgets where applicable in order to cover its outlay in securing and maintaining Children's Centre sites.

Services

20. The review found that most services are being planned and developed with a view to improving accessibility, meeting local needs, employing evidence based practice and ensuring multi-agency collaboration.
21. Services are planned and targeted within each locality according to local need but all feature:
 - High quality play and learning sessions and interventions;
 - Outcomes focused casework using the Family Star Plus assessment and support planning tool;
 - Joint delivery with EH teams of evidence based parenting programmes;
 - A full range of health services to meet families needs, including specialist interventions;
 - Access to employment support including education and training courses;
 - Opportunities for people to gain accredited qualifications through volunteering, apprenticeships and student placements;
 - Targeted groups that meet specific local needs within each community;
 - Support for childminders and PVI early-years settings;

Future development

22. A staff performance management framework will be established across all localities, including a mandatory training plan and arrangements for cross-borough and multi-agency action learning sets; the aim is to develop a multi-disciplinary learning culture that results in outstanding services for children.
23. Although there is evidence of very strong partnership working, there is still a need to further embed collaborative practice in all areas, and at all levels of organisation to ensure this is sustainable, in particular an integrated pathway for 0-5s with Health providers.
24. Children's centre staff need to be trained and holding all their casework on Mosaic in order to ensure all early intervention with families is recorded and measured consistently and children's journeys can be assessed effectively.
25. The Synergy Connect database system should be implemented by March to ensure both the Council and localities can measure performance and sustained contact with the families most in need.
26. A brief should be developed for Property and Legal Departments to ensure the protection of Children's Centre premises.
27. A central board should be developed at borough-wide level to oversee and challenge the 4 Strategic Development Boards and ensure a cohesive Southwark-wide approach.
28. The council should agree a common branding and promotion strategy for its children's centre programme.

Quality assurance and performance measures

29. All services will be reviewed quarterly to ensure targets are met within budget and that outputs and outcomes are improved.
30. All Lead Bodies will produce a SEF and Development plan in quarter 1 of each new financial year; this will be quality assured by the council.
31. There will be an Annual Conversation which will fully review the programme in each locality to ensure high standards are maintained and the conditions of the SLA are met; this will be in quarter 3 to allow time for any changes to agreements to be made.
32. Children's Centres will produce a quarterly report to demonstrate if they are meeting Ofsted minimum requirements to achieve a Good judgement:
 - Between 80-96% of families with children under 5 are registered with a children's centre
 - Between 65-79% of target groups have sustained engagement with children's centre services (5+ contacts)
33. There will also be a quarterly report from Mosaic and Family Star data showing number of families receiving 1:1 support; and of these families the % showing improved outcomes from their starting points. The measures for this will be:
 - Number of children & families whose physical, emotional and economic wellbeing has improved as a result of 1:1 family support
 - Number of parents or carers reporting improvements in their ability to manage challenges and overcome difficulties thereby enabling their children to thrive

Policy implications

34. The Childcare Act 2006 ("the Act") places a range of duties on local authorities in relation to the provision of early childhood services (which includes early-years provision and health and social services for young children, parents and prospective parents, together with and employment and other advice for parents and prospective parents).
35. The council is under a general duty to improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between them, in relation to matters such as 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.
36. Specifically, the council is required:
 - To secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner in order to facilitate access and maximise the benefits of those services to young children and their parents.
 - To take steps to identify prospective users of services and encourage their take up.
 - To facilitate as far as possible the participation of parents and providers of services in the planning of early childhood services.
37. The arrangements for the provision of early childhood services must, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of Children's Centres to meet local need. Where Children's Centres are provided, the council and partner organisations must consider whether to provide early childhood services through Children's Centres.

38. A children's centre is defined in the Act as a place or a group of places through which integrated early childhood services are made available for young children, parents and prospective parents, including:
- Early years provision (early education and childcare);
 - Children's social care;
 - Health services;
 - Training and employment services
 - Information and advice services
39. Other requirements for the council, in relation to the organisation and management of children's centres, includes ensuring:
- That there are sufficient children's centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need;
 - Each children's centre is within the remit of an advisory board;
 - That there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children's centre provision in their area.
40. 'Sure Start Children's Centres statutory guidance' (DfE, 2013) defines 'the core purpose of Children's Centres' as being 'to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:
- Child development and school readiness
 - Parenting aspirations and parenting skills
 - Child and family health and life chances'.
41. Revised statutory guidance is due to be consulted on by the Department for Education later in 2017. One potential future direction has been signalled by an All Party Parliamentary Group's inquiry into Children's Centres which argued that centres are well placed to provide a wide range of services as Family Hubs for 0-11s, and that their offer should be broadened to position them as one-stop-shops for family support in their local communities. The 2016 report says 'Local authority leaders and public health commissioners should position Family Hubs at the heart of their Health and Wellbeing strategies. Accessing support should be normalised, supported by messaging from local leaders.'

Resource implications: Budget and financial issues

42. It is proposed that the budget for 2017-18 should remain at the same level as in 2016/17 last year's funding in line with Southwark's commitment to maintaining current provision.
43. The amount per locality was calculated based on the IDACI scale which measures deprivation for children based on a range of economic, housing and social issues and then ranks them in order of need. The funding for children is then weighted using this scale so that areas with the greatest need attract proportionally appropriate budgets. This formula is in line with that used for school funding allocations and was the formula used for the 2016-17 budget.
44. The budget has been allocated across four localities as follows:

Locality	Number of children under 5	Amount (based on numbers of children weighted by IDACI)
Borough and Bankside & Walworth	4500	£560,606
Peckham and Nunhead & Peckham Rye	5735	£705,745

Locality	Number of children under 5	Amount (based on numbers of children weighted by IDACI)
Camberwell and Dulwich	5815	£624,386
Bermondsey and Rotherhithe	4230	£559,606
<i>Southwark total</i>	<i>20280</i>	<i>£2,450,343</i>

45. It is proposed to retain 1% of the overall budget to support the council's central work in quality assuring the Children's Centres programme. On this basis the grants to the lead agencies for 2017-18 would be varied by 1% from their 2016-17 allocations as follows:

- 1st Place Children and Parents Centre: £436,845 (for Borough, Bankside and Walworth area in line with proportion of area managed by 1st Place).
- Coin Street Trust: £118,406 (for Borough, Bankside and Walworth area in line with proportion of area managed by Coin Street).
- Pilgrims Way Primary School: £554,010 (for Bermondsey and Rotherhithe locality)
- Dulwich Wood Children's Centre: £618,142 (for Camberwell and Dulwich locality).
- Ivydale Primary School: £698,688 (for Peckham and Nunhead & Peckham Rye locality)

Community impact statement

46. The Public Sector Equality Duty, at section 149 of the Equality Act, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard when carrying out their activities to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. The council's Approach to Equality ("the approach") commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.

47. "Protected characteristics" are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful - the characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

48. As the Children's Centres programme is focused on young children and their families, the decision to continue to resource it would be expected to have a particularly positive impact on:

- Children under the age of five;
- Parents of young children, in particular women who make up the highest proportion of parents using Children's Centre services;
- The communities amongst whom young children are concentrated. Amongst children under five in Southwark the three largest ethnic groups are White British, Nigerian and Black Caribbean, though they are used by all sections of the community.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Financial implications (CS0369/DB)

49. The proposed model remains within budget constraints for 2017/18:

Children Centres Funding	£	£
Budget 2016/17		2,449,871

Proposed allocations 2017/18		
1 st Place Children and Parents Centre	436,845	
Coin Street Trust	118,406	
Pilgrims Way Primary School	554,010	
Dulwich Wood Children's Centre	618,412	
Ivydale Primary School	698,688	
		2,426,361
Centrally retained (1%)		23,510
Budget 2017/18		2,449,871

50. However as mentioned above, consideration needs to be given to the occupancy of the sites established for the use of under 5's under the original Sure Start Children Centre programme, as any potential of clawback from the DfE will undermine the financial viability of the proposed model and will place additional burdens on the core budget.

Director of Law and Democracy

51. The cabinet member is asked to note the progress in implementing the council's model of managing the delivery of children's centres and to approve the award of grant funding to each of the lead agencies for the financial year 2017/18. This is a decision the cabinet member is permitted to take in accordance with the council's constitution.
52. The duties on the council in relation to the provision of early childhood services and the provision of those services through children's centres are outlined in the policy implications section of the report. The council has a specific duty to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner, and these arrangements must, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need.
53. In relation to the payment of grants to the specified lead agencies, the council has a subsidiary power to do any thing (which might involve expenditure or not) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions. The payment of grants, being incidental to the performance of the council's statutory functions in relation to the provision of early childhood services as described above, is therefore considered to be within the council's power.
54. The cabinet member is reminded of the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and when making decisions to have regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, (b) to advance equality of opportunity and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Update on Children's Centres Programme, Cabinet Meeting, 7 June 2016	http://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s62052/Report%20Childrens%20Centres%20Programme.pdf	Neil Gordon-Orr, ext. 55234

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

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CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
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