	For:	(x)
	Executive	
	CLMT	
UTON	Meeting Date: 24 <sup>th</sup> August 2	2015
LUTUN	Report of: Sally Rowe -	
BOROUGH COUNCIL	Corporate Director, C&L	

Commissioning, C&L

Report author: Bridget Cameron

- Interim Head of Integrated

# Agenda Item Number: 8

Subject: Children's Centres Review	Consultations:	(x)
-	Councillors	
(For Executive Only)	Scrutiny	
Lead Executive Member(s): Councillor Hussain	Stakeholders	
Wards Affected: All	Others	

# Recommendations

- 1. The Executive is recommended to support the request to hold a public consultation that focuses on current and future delivery of Children's Centre services regarding:
  - How far families are prepared to travel to access children's centre services;
  - Access hours/times e.g. times of day/evenings or weekends;
  - What additional services might be missing that are felt would be useful within the centres;
  - Whether there needs to be 'more of' any particular service from a family's/community's point
    of view within the centres;
  - Any support/help families need in accessing services i.e. Interpreter and Translation services, services and support being available in different languages/media;
  - Any definitive or proposed amendment to premises i.e. through the reduction in budget to the 'premises, activity and other' cost budgets;
  - The proposal to deliver services through a single children's centre lead organisation model with preferences and reasons being sought for whether there should be:
    - One locality delivery model that covers the town;
    - Two locality delivery models i.e. north and south;
    - Three locality delivery models, i.e. north, central and south;
    - o Four locality delivery models, i.e. north east, north west, south west, south east.

These proposals would also include descriptors to allow families and the community to see what these proposed models would look like in practice and give their reasons for their preferences.

2. The Executive is also recommended to support staff consultation that would need to take place regarding the change in structure, associated staffing reduction and restructure.

#### Background

#### Statutory duty

- 3. 'Sure Start Children's Centres statutory guidance' published in April 2013 provides a statutory definition of a Children's Centre.
  - "A Sure Start Children's Centre is defined in the Act (the Childcare Act 2006) as a place or a group of places:
  - which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way;
  - through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and
  - at which activities for young children are provided."
- 4. The document continues: 'It follows from the statutory definition of a Children's Centre that Children's Centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas... A Children's Centre should make available universal and

targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers and fathers) and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere. Local authorities must ensure that Children's Centres provide some activities for young children on site.'

- 5. The core purpose of Children's Centres is '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; and
  - child and family health and life chances.
- 6. Where, in discharging their duty in Section 5E of the Act, [Childcare Act 2006] local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus decide to make early childhood services available through Children's Centres, they should do so in ways which enable Children's Centres to achieve their core purpose.
- 7. The core purpose relates directly to the wider duties local authorities have (under section 1 of the Act [Childcare Act 2006]) to improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between young children in the area.
- 8. Section 1 of the Act places a duty on local authorities to:
  - Improve the well-being of young children in the following areas:
    - o Physical and mental health and emotional well-being
    - o Protection from harm and neglect
    - o Education, training and recreation
    - o The contribution made by them to society; and
    - o Social and economic well-being.
  - Reduce inequalities between young children in those areas; and
  - Make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner which is calculated to:
    - o Facilitate access to those services; and
    - Maximise the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children.
- 7. Children's Centres are key to making this happen. Local authorities should commission Children's Centres to achieve this core purpose as a key component of their strategy to improve the well-being of young children. They will need to satisfy themselves that there is evidence of the effectiveness of activities undertaken to achieve the core purpose.
- 8. The core purpose puts an onus on a cross-sector approach and effective local partnerships, particularly between social workers, health visitors and Children's Centre outreach workers, so that vulnerable families are supported into appropriate interventions. Centres will also work with a range of other partners to help them deliver this core purpose, for example, other early years' providers, Jobcentre Plus, GP consortia, information and advice organisations, schools and voluntary and community sector organisations."

# The current position

# Children's Centre delivery in Luton

- 9. Prior to April 2012, Luton had 23 separately managed and designated Children's Centre sites in the town. This model was reviewed during 2011 and, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012, a new 'merged model' of 7 hub centres and 16 satellites was introduced that retained all 23 delivery sites comprising:
  - Two local authority managed centres:
    - Redgrave Northwell ward
    - o Hatters Dallow ward
  - Four school governor managed centres:
    - Meadows Lewsey ward
    - o Community Link Leagrave ward
    - Building Blocks Biscot ward
    - o ABC Farley ward
  - One voluntary organisation managed centre:
    - East Luton Round Green ward

- 10. The centres also deliver services from additional locations up to 23 sites across the authority. In these locations services are provided to better meet local need, although these could be only one session or service per week.
- 11. The current 7-hub model has realised demonstrable improvement through increased participation and engagement of families taking up services and support provided in Luton's Children's Centres. This model has proven successful in terms of reducing costs, deploying more staff at the front line working with families and reducing duplication.
- 12. Luton Children's Centres are currently delivered through an operational model of partnership between the Council and the voluntary sector. The voluntary sector partner is the Luton Pre-School Learning Alliance (LPSLA). The Council meets the costs of the elements of Children's Centres that are required adequately to meet the basic requirements of the statutory duty. The current balance of contribution from each of the parties to the overall budget for Children's Centres of £3,396,000 for 2015/16 is £1,845,000 from the Council and £1,551,000 from funding raised by the Luton Pre-School Learning Alliance for direct delivery of Children's Centre services.

#### **Drivers for Change**

- 13. Since the Children's Centres were restructured new guidance has been produced by the Department for Education, published in April 2013 (quoted above), that local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus must have regard to when carrying out duties relating to Children's Centres under the Childcare Act 2006. This updated guidance requires 'local authorities and 'relevant partners' to work together to deliver integrated early childhood services' emphasising the closer links to midwifery, GPs and health visitors with every centre having access to a named health visitor. Opportunities should also be furthered for links with Jobcentre Plus, early education and childcare providers (including childminders and schools) and through links with Social Workers and Stronger Families' co-ordinators with a link to a named Social Worker.
- 14. Children's Centres need to be embedded even more firmly in the Council's Early Help Strategy and to better evidence the impact that efficient Children's Centres services are having on the lives of families in Luton.
- 15. The Chief Executive and Leader of the Council's commitment to support the Flying Start delivery model in Luton will require Children's Centres and the Flying Start programmes to work together to develop the Early Years Core Offer and the Children's Centres Core Offer that, in turn will deliver both the Children's Centre Core Purpose (statutory) and the Early Years Strategy in Luton.
- 16. The Children's Centres' Reflection Day (9<sup>th</sup> July, 2014) brought together existing Children's Centre managers, lead agencies, partner organisations and relevant stakeholders to consider how Luton's Children's Centre services should/could be more effectively and efficiently delivered in the future. Responses and ideas included:
  - Review buildings and review of community centres
  - Source additional funding
  - Hire buildings by the hour
  - One Children's Centre organisation rather than many
  - Fewer Hubs
  - Children's Centres lead on a parenting strategy for 0-11 year olds
  - Maintaining the focus on need
  - A core offer for all centres and additional services based on reach area
  - Refine customers i.e. either 0-5s or 0-3s
  - Locality teams with borough-wide co-ordination of targeted/specialist services
  - Mobile delivery of some services
  - Community run, social enterprise, link to CCG procurement

#### **Goals and Objectives**

# Consistency of approach and equity of service

17. The current model, with management by local authority, schools and a voluntary organisation results in a varied Children's Centre delivery approach across the town in certain aspects. For example, through the different parenting programmes used, or the extent to which centres use outreach workers in their delivery models.

- 18. Key outcomes for the proposed review/remodelling of the Children's Centres in Luton are:
  - To ensure there is an agreement about what a good Children's Centre in Luton should look like and what it should deliver, including which of the aspects of the Early Years Core Offer Children's Centres will deliver directly and which they will have an indirect role in (e.g. through use of premises or as part of a partnership/group approach). This links directly with the Flying Start vision.
  - To have a consistency of approach and equity of service across the town regardless of where families live.
- 19. Within the Children and Learning Tracker for 2015/16 a saving of £1m has been identified against Children's Centres delivery. If the Children's Centre budget were to be reduced by this £1m, the current model of 7 hub lead agencies, comprising a total of 23 delivery sites, would no longer be sustainable.

# **Proposal**

- 20. A single Children's Centre lead agency with up to 4 delivery locality model is proposed that will:
  - deliver the £1m savings,
  - · ensure consistency of approach and equity of service,
  - have the least detrimental impact on children and families in Luton.
  - offer greater flexibility and efficiency in the use of existing and future premises and resources, and
  - be most likely to achieve good or outstanding ratings in Ofsted inspections of Children's Centres.
- 20. The proposal being brought to Executive at this point in the process is to go out to consult on options i.e. 1 children's centre lead agency with up to 4 delivery localities. The final proposal will be shaped with the results of the consultation.

# Do nothing option

21. The current 7 hub and 16 satellite model has resulted in improvements in both registrations and participation and broader consistency in Children's Centre services across the town. The drivers for change, cited above in paragraphs 13-16, provide sufficient reason to review the current model. Given the intention to reduce the budget for Children's Centres by £1m, it is not possible to continue to realise these savings without making changes to the delivery model.

Model	Advantages/Opportunities	Disadvantages/risks
Do Nothing	<ul> <li>Can continue to work with current model to improve outcomes</li> <li>No disruption to service delivery</li> <li>No adverse publicity for LBC over Centre closures</li> <li>No need to consult</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Budget savings not attainable if existing model is to remain sustainable</li> <li>Duplication likely to continue and efficiencies harder to achieve.</li> </ul>

22. It is **not recommended** to 'do nothing' as this retains the costs as they, not realising the £1m savings and does not take consideration of the additional drivers for change.

# Option 1

- 23. The Council's minimum statutory duty with regards to the delivery of Children's Centres core purpose is estimated to require £1,197,400 with an additional existing commitment required for premises, activity costs and other costs estimated to be £547,000 i.e. a total budget of £1,744,400.
- 24. This model, if developed as Luton's model would result in minimal universal services being delivered through a single central Children's Centre lead organisation i.e. 1 session per week/2 sessions at most. This may meet statutory minimum but would result in the majority of universal provision happening online through a virtual model similar to the Family Information Directory.
- 25. Although meeting the statutory duty for the authority, the budget would not meet the increasing population's diverse needs in Luton. This model makes the assumption that families can afford, and has access to, computers and are able to read/write in English in order to use the services, with the predominant focus being on targeted families where frontline services would concentrate.

Model	Advantages/Opportunities	Disadvantages/risks
Statutory minimum	<ul> <li>Significant reduction in budget above that required with the £1m savings</li> <li>Focus is on targeted families</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Minimal universal services with most of these universal services being delivered online – there is a statutory duty that Children's Centres deliver universal services (though unclear what this should look like locally)</li> <li>Online services would be available as a self-serve with search options being available for families to find out more; makes an assumption families can read and write English, know what they are entitled to and can then follow up via phone or email.</li> <li>Assumption that families have computers or access to them;</li> <li>There is a set up cost to design and transfer information with relevant links to sites/details that can help families access services</li> </ul>

### 26. This is an option that carries high risk.

# Options 2-5

- 27. It is estimated that, to have the least detrimental impact on children and families in Luton and be most likely to achieve good or outstanding ratings in Ofsted inspections, the budget for Children's Centres should be in the range of £2,100,000 2,500,000 per year.
- 28. Alongside the current 7 hubs and 16 satellite delivery model, up to an additional 23 premises are booked for anything from 1 session upwards each month. A separate premises review is taking place to ensure any future Children's Centre planning does not have an adverse effect on any services delivered within these 46 premises but also takes into account the current and future needs of those services working with families and children aged 0-5 years.
- 29. The proposal for options 2-5 is a single children's centre lead agency model with services delivered in up to four areas of the town. Any of these models would include consideration of the premises used and would result in the delivery of frontline services taking place in venues across the town. Venues can be worked out once the consultation shows how far families are prepared to travel. Services would be centrally co-ordinated and directed at areas of need in the town, with frontline staff timetabled to support in a flexible way.
- 30. The models below (options 2-5) would result in staff based in either1, 2, 3 or 4 areas across the town i.e. the frontline and partner staff. Staff would have a place to work from/be based in each of these models with delivery being from these sites and from other sites convenient to families in the town.
- 31. Options 2-5 could all work within Luton, however option 5 could be adjusted to align to the Health Visiting 4 locality delivery model.
- 32. No individual option is being recommended as the preferred option at this point as this must be shaped and determined by the service users, staff, public and stakeholders in the town. Advantages, disadvantages and risks of each option are described below as currently understood. These tables will be added to after the consultation for accuracy.

# Option 2

33. This option would result in a single Children's Centre lead organisation model with single overarching management of Children's Centre services.

Model	Advantages/Opportunities	Disadvantages/risks
One Children's Centre with centralised staff located in one area	<ul> <li>Consistency for monitoring and quality assuring with the single Children's Centre overarching management model;</li> <li>Can coordinate staff from a central place with frontline workers moving out from the 'base' in a managed way to groups/support across the town;</li> <li>Significant back room and management cost savings as more centralised model</li> <li>Will realise the £1m savings target</li> <li>Better enables LBC to embed in Early Help Strategy</li> <li>Better enables LBC to embed Flying Start Initiatives</li> <li>Better fit with proposed Ofsted Inspection changes</li> <li>Better able to deliver improved coordination of both universal and targeted services, flexibly, where needed, across the town</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Need a building large enough for all Children's Centre and health staff to be based in – none of current Children's Centres have this capacity;</li> <li>Potential difficulties in where to locate the hub to meet the needs and requirements of all localities.</li> <li>Need to consider continued use of decommissioned designated premises to avoid capital grant 'clawback'</li> <li>Possible perception of reduction in 'local' delivery</li> </ul>

#### Option 3

34. This option would result in a single Children's Centre lead organisation model with single overarching management of two Children's Centre service areas across the town. Services would be delivered in a number of localities based on the feedback on distance families are prepared to travel; staff would work from a base in either the north or south of the town.

Model	Advantages/Opportunities	Disadvantages/risks
One Children's Centre with staff located in two areas across the town e.g. north and south	<ul> <li>Can coordinate staff from a central place with frontline workers moving out from the 'base' in a managed way to groups/support across the town based on a north/south model;</li> <li>Provides some elements of locality feel (e.g. North &amp; South) to meet need</li> <li>Consistency for monitoring and quality assuring with the single Children's Centre overarching management model;</li> <li>Significant back room and management cost savings as more centralised model</li> <li>Will realise the £1m savings target</li> <li>Better enables LBC to embed in Early Help Strategy</li> <li>Better enables LBC to embed Flying Start Initiatives</li> <li>Better fit with proposed Ofsted Inspection changes</li> <li>Better able to deliver improved coordination of both universal and targeted services, flexibly, where needed, across the town</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Need 2 buildings large enough for Children's Centre and health staff to be based in – north and south of the authority;</li> <li>Need to consider continued use of decommissioned designated premises to avoid capital grant 'clawback'</li> <li>Possible perception of reduction in 'local' delivery</li> </ul>

#### Option 4

35. This option would result in a single Children's Centre lead organisation model with single overarching management of Children's Centre services across three areas of the town – north, central and south. Services would be delivered in a number of localities based on the feedback on distance families are prepared to travel; staff would work from a base in either the north, central or south of the town.

Model	Advantages/Opportunities	Disadvantages/risks
One Children's Centre with staff located in three areas across the town e.g. north, central and south	<ul> <li>Can coordinate staff from a central place with frontline workers moving out from the 'base' in a managed way to groups/support across the town based on a north/central/south model;</li> <li>Provides some elements of locality feel (e.g. North, Central &amp; South) to meet need</li> <li>Consistency for monitoring and quality assuring with the single Children's Centre overarching management model;</li> <li>Significant back room and management cost savings as more centralised model</li> <li>Will realise the £1m savings target</li> <li>Better enables LBC to embed in Early Help Strategy</li> <li>Better enables LBC to embed Flying Start Initiatives</li> <li>Better fit with proposed Ofsted Inspection changes</li> <li>Better able to deliver improved coordination of both universal and targeted services, flexibly, where needed, across the town</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Need 3 buildings large enough for Children's Centre and health staff to be based in – north, central and south of the authority;</li> <li>Need to consider continued use of decommissioned designated premises to avoid capital grant 'clawback'</li> <li>Possible perception of reduction in 'local' delivery</li> </ul>

# Option 5

36. This option would result in a single Children's Centre lead organisation model with single overarching management of Children's Centre services across four areas of the town – north east, north, south and east. Services would be delivered in a number of localities based on the feedback on distance families are prepared to travel; staff would work from a base in the north east, north, south or east of the town.

Model	Advantages/Opportunities	Disadvantages/risks
One Children's Centre with staff located in three areas across the town e.g. north east, north, south, east	<ul> <li>Can coordinate staff from a central place with frontline workers moving out from the 'base' in a managed way to groups/support across the town based on a north/central/south model;</li> <li>Likely to be able to identify 4 buildings large enough for staff to be based from and meet locality needs;</li> <li>Provides locality delivery (e.g. north east, north, south, east) to meet need</li> <li>Consistency for monitoring and quality assuring with the single Children's Centre overarching management model;</li> <li>Aligns to the Health Visiting 4 locality delivery model</li> <li>Significant back room and management cost savings as more centralised model</li> <li>Will realise the £1m savings target</li> <li>Better enables LBC to embed in Early Help Strategy</li> <li>Better enables LBC to embed Flying Start Initiatives</li> <li>Better fit with proposed Ofsted Inspection changes</li> <li>Better able to deliver improved co-</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Need 4 buildings large enough for Children's Centre and health staff to be based in – north east, north, south and east of the town;</li> <li>Need to consider continued use of decommissioned designated premises to avoid capital grant 'clawback'</li> <li>Possible perception of reduction in 'local' delivery</li> </ul>

ordination of both universal and targeted services, flexibly, where needed, across	
the town	

#### **Proposal**

- 37. It is proposed that the strategic management, challenge, quality assurance role associated with Children's Centres is brought in-house. This would mirror, to a significant degree, Luton's pre-school quality assurance, support and intervention model.
- 38. Different delivery model options are currently being considered. These include:
  - (a) Bringing the day-to-day management and delivery of Children's Centre services in-house. This would have the advantage of meeting potential changes to the future Ofsted inspections of Children's Centres where the government has described a future shift from centre-based inspections to local-authority wide inspections;

The disadvantage of this model is that local authorities are not able to access/apply for additional funding opportunities through charities, lottery funding, etc.

- (b) Going out to tender for the day-to-day management and delivery of Children's Centre services. Through an open, competitive process a single provider could be brought in to manage the centres on a day-to-day basis and deliver Children's Centre services for the borough. Bidders would need to demonstrate that they:
  - would seek additional external sources of funding that would enhance the offer to children and families in Luton adding value to the basic Children's Centre contract model;
  - that their organisation were able to receive charitable donations and has a history of successful fundraising ventures.

This would have the advantage of enabling the successful provider to bid for/access additional sources of funding available from charities or lotteries:

The disadvantage would be the impact to the timeline in carrying out the procurement and the associated new service model start date.

39. The decision regarding delivery model will be brought to executive after the formal consultation process has concluded for approval.

# **Key Risks**

- 40. The key risk identified to date is that there is insufficient response to the consultation that prevents the Council from being able to make an informed decision as a result of the feedback.
- 41. Executive is also minded to note that, should this consultation be carried out and then future budget or delivery changes are required in any way that would affect the model resulting from this consultation, the Council would need to:
  - Undertake a full public consultation on the delivery model and be aware of potential public response to this;
  - Undertake a full staffing consultation on any potential staffing restructure;
  - Adopt a delivery model that significantly reduces the number of delivery sites (subject to 'the views
    of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient children's centre provision' as
    stated in the statutory guidance);
  - Be aware of how this would impact on the Council's ability to secure the best outcomes both for the young children and families and on potential Ofsted inspections.

#### **Consultations**

- 42. Monitoring of Children's Centres budgets last year highlighted approximately 77% of centre spend being used for staffing costs within the centres with 14% (the next highest budget allocation) going to property costs. Although the review is likely to results in a reduction in the number of centres, it will not be possible to make significant savings against the Children's Centre budgets without a staffing restructure. It is anticipated that the majority of these changes are likely to be at a management and at administrative levels and TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) are likely to apply.
- 43. Luton Borough Council Human Resource Managers and Human Resource Managers representing all persons affected will be involved, with trade unions in the review with periods of consultations (formal and informal) taking place at relevant points in the process.

- 44. Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance, July 2013 states Local Authorities must consult before:
  - "Opening a new children's centre;
  - Making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through a children's centre and/or how they are delivered, including significant changes to services provided through linked sites; and
  - Closing a children's centre; or reducing the services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a Sure Start children's centre."
- 45. It is proposed that the consultation focuses on current and future delivery of Children's Centre services regarding:
  - How far families are prepared to travel to access children's centre services;
  - Access hours/times e.g. times of day/evenings or weekends;
  - What additional services might be missing that are felt would be useful within the centres;
  - Whether there needs to be 'more of' any particular service from a family's/community's point of view within the centres;
  - Any support/help families need in accessing services i.e. Interpreter and Translation services, services and support being available in different languages/media;
  - Any definitive or proposed amendment to premises i.e. through the reduction in budget to the 'premises, activity and other' cost budgets;
  - The proposal to deliver services through a single children's centre lead organisation with preferences and reasons being sought for whether there should be:
    - One locality delivery model that covers the town;
    - Two locality delivery models i.e. north and south;
    - o Three locality delivery models, i.e. north, central and south;
    - o Four locality delivery models, i.e. north east, north, south and east.

These proposals would also include descriptors to allow families and the community to see what these proposed models would look like in practice and give their reasons for their preferences. The draft consultation questions will be available at the meeting for comments.

- 46. Staff consultation would be required, formally and informally, with an informal staff consultation period between Children's Centre employers and their staff.
- 47. Following appropriate consultation, the outcomes and delivery model would need to pass through appropriate sign off processes within Luton Borough Council and shared with staff working with (or affected by) any changes to the current Children's Centre delivery model.

# Appendices attached:

Integrated Impact Assessment

# **Background Papers:**

N/A

### **IMPLICATIONS**

For Executive reports

grey boxes must be completed

all statements must be cleared by an appropriate officer

For CLMT Reports
Clearance is not

required

		Clearance – agreed by:
Legal	There are no legal implications in the report.	John Newman, Solicitor on 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2015
Finance	The financial implications are described in the body of this report. Once the consultation is completed a further report will be brought to Executive which will include detailed financial implications.	Dev Gopal Director of Finance on 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2015
Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) – Key Points		
Fauglities/	The delivery model will be based on a full	Sandra Legate

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) – Key Points		
Equalities/	The delivery model will be based on a full	Sandra Legate
Cohesion/Inclusion	consultation that will focus on distances families	Social Justice Unit on 12 <sup>th</sup>

(Social Justice)	are prepared to travel, accessibility, gaps in services/support/help families may have and the model.	August 2015
Environment	There are no environmental implications in the report.	Vivienne Haestier Strategy & Sustainability on 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2015
Health	The delivery model for Children's Centres will deliver integrated 0-5 health and local authority outcomes.	Stephen Gunther Public Health on 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2015
Community Safety		
Staffing	A formal and informal staff consultation is part of the process.	
Other		

# FOR EXECUTIVE ONLY - Options: A) reject the recommendations

- B) request further information