REPORT FOR DECISION



DECISION MAKER:	CABINET				
DATE:	Wednesday 21 January 2015				
SUBJECT:	Alternative Services Under 5's				
REPORT FROM:	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People				
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Chambers, Assistant Director (Learning and Culture)				
TYPE OF DECISION:	KEY DECISION				
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	This paper is within the public domain				
SUMMARY:	This paper summarises the outcomes from the consultation carried out between September and December 2014 on the proposals to develop an alternative model of delivery for Bury's Children's Centres. It also highlights the changes that have been made to the proposals as a result of the consultation. The report confirms the need to save £820,000 from the Children's Services budget for 2015/16. This will be delivered through moving the service to a targeted provision for the most vulnerable families delivered through 5 Children's Centre hubs in Bury East (Little Oaks), Bury West and North (Woodbank), Prestwich (Sedgley), Radcliffe (Coronation Road) and Whitefield (Besses).				
	In addition to the hubs, it is proposed, following the consultation, that there will be 3 spoke provisions linked to the hubs in Bury East (Redvales), Prestwich (Butterstile) and Radcliffe (Stepping Stones). This will help meet the needs of the children and families in the most deprived areas of Bury.				
	There will be an increasing number of Outreach workers deployed to work within each hub area and improved supervision of these workers through the identification of a small number of Senior Outreach workers.				
	The importance of joint working with partners has been highlighted during the consultation and it will be an important feature of the work of each hub that families are signposted to universal and targeted provision that is being delivered in each hub area by all key partners.				

	Five of the remaining Children's Centres will be converted to provide 2 year old nursery provision for the most deprived children. There is currently a considerable shortage of this provision in Bury and this has been raised as a concern by the DfE and Ofsted. Schools which at present host 4 of these 5 Centres will be encouraged to take on the 2 year old offer as part of their school provision.				
OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	Cabinet is recommended to note the report and accompanying paper and the report's proposals				
	Options:				
	_	ree that the proposals go forward for full nentation			
	2. To not agree that the proposals go forward for full implementation				
	Recommen	ndation: Option 1			
IMPLICATIONS:					
Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:		Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework?			
		Yes			
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:		The revised proposals outlined in this report seek to address issues raised in the recent consultation exercise.			
		The proposals entail the creation of 2 additional "spokes". These will be fully funded from subsidy originally set aside to convert sites for 2 year old provision; this subsidy is no longer considered necessary.			
Statement by Executive Director of Resources:		The amended proposals made in the report still comply with the cuts target set for the Children, Young People and Culture Department. The use of alternative premises to deliver Children's Centre activities is in line with the objectives of the Council's Asset Management Plan.			
Equality/Diversity implications:		Yes			
Considered by Monitoring Officer:		(see paragraph below) Yes			
considered by Fiornitoring Officer.		A lawful consultation process has been undertaken with users and partners, with revisions to the original proposals being made as a result of the representations			

	received.
	The proposals have been drawn up in the context of unprecedented cuts in local authority expenditure and the Courts have held that decisions on the allocation of scarce public funding are primarily for democratically elected bodies. It also is important that decisions are carefully considered and that due regard is given to the Council's Equalities duty. The Council must have "due regard" to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions regarding the provision of services. Due regard means that Members must understand the public sector equality duty and consciously apply it to the facts in this report, when considering and reaching any decisions or implementing any policies. Due regard must be had to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. The Council must also advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The protected characteristics defined in the Act are: age; gender reassignment; pregnancy/maternity; race; religion, belief; sex and sexual orientation. An equality analysis has been undertaken, annexed to the report, in accordance with the
	Council's public sector equality duty in Section 149 Equality Act 2010.
Wards Affected:	All
Scrutiny Interest:	· ···

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR:

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Cabinet Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet/Committee	Council	

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 This report follows one presented to Cabinet on 3 September 2014 which outlined a proposed re-design of the way Bury's Children's Centres are organised and operated.

- 1.2 The re-design is necessary because of the need to find budget savings of £820,000 out of a budget in 2013/14 of £2,785,000 a 29.4% savings requirement as part of the Council's 2015/16 Budget proposals. This has to be delivered from April 2015.
- 1.3 The proposed re-design of Children Centre provision involved:
 - The creation of 5 Hub and 1 Spoke Children's Centre
 - The allocation of resources to the hubs according to a formula based upon the number of Under 5's in each hub area who live in the 40% most deprived wards
 - The delivery of a targeted service to children and families most in need of support rather than the delivery of universal services to all children and families
 - The de-designation of 8 Children's Centres and the conversion of 7 of these into provision for children eligible for 2 year old free Nursery places
- 1.4 Cabinet agreed that the proposals in the report should go forward for full consultation. A detailed Consultation Plan was drawn up and was implemented between Monday 15 September 2014 and Monday 15 December 2014. The period of consultation was extended by a week following a request by the Scrutiny committee.

2.0 Consultation Process

- 2.1 A wide range of methods were used to collect the views of Children's Centre users and partners involved in Children's Centre provision. These included
 - Parent/carer drop-ins at all 14 Children's Centres
 - Specific meetings with parent groups
 - Meetings with all Children's Centre Advisory groups
 - Meetings with school leaders at schools which are commissioned to provide Children's Centre provision or which are co-located with a Children's Centre
 - Presentation and question and answer sessions at each Township Forum
 - Staff briefing
 - Presentation and question and answer sessions at Bury Safeguarding Children's Board, Bury's Health and Well-Being Board, and the Children and Young People's Trust
 - Meetings with Midwives, Health Visitor leads and Adult Education leads
- 2.2 An on-line consultation form was drawn up at the start of the consultation and this was supplemented during the consultation period by the use of a Survey Monkey which covered the same set of questions. There were in total 359 responses either through the on-line questionnaire or the Survey Monkey.

3.0 Consultation Outcomes

3.1 A summary of the main themes emerging from the consultation is included as a background paper to this report along with a statistical analysis of the responses through the Survey Monkey process.

- 3.2 The role that Children's Centres in Bury have played in promoting and delivering services that have supported families and children across Bury has been rightly celebrated through the consultation process. In particular, the valuable role that Centres have played in prevention and early help has been recognised.
- 3.3 There was strong concern that supporting fewer Children's Centres would make the delivery of improved outcomes more difficult to achieve. However, it has also been recognised that, in finding the savings identified above, the Council needs to ensure that the most vulnerable children and families are protected and that targeted services are promoted over universal provision. This was a theme that came out of the Township Forum meetings where the Council's budget savings for 2015 were also debated.
- 3.4 The consultation showed that improving the health of U5's was rated as the highest priority amongst respondents followed by effective early intervention, and then school readiness. Improving economic prospects was seen as the lowest priority of the four presented.
- 3.5 In relation to the way that resources should be allocated to centres, the most favoured method from the consultation would be by the number of U5's in an area followed by the areas with higher health risks and the use of Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings. The least favoured was by areas with the lowest number of "school ready" children.
- 3.6 Very strong arguments were presented during the consultation in relation to the location of the proposed Children Centre hubs and the number of Children's Centres that Bury should maintain. 60% of those who responded neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed choice of the hub site and just over a third disagreed or disagreed strongly with the choice of the proposed hub site. Over half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with reducing the number of centres. By closing a number of Children's Centres, families will become isolated, particularly if other services are also not provided within a locality.
- 3.7 Against this, data presented during the consultation showed that in 2013/14 Bury's Children's Centres attracted 64.5% of the families with U5's in their reach area but only 43.2% of the families with U'5's in the 40% most deprived wards. This shows that having a building itself does not guarantee that a Children's Centre will have an impact on the most vulnerable families.
- 3.8 The reduction in the number of management and administrative roles that accompanies the reduction in the number of Children's Centres being maintained has not been extensively criticised during the consultation. Less than a third of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with these proposals. The freeing of resources to enable an expansion of front-line staff, including a substantial increase in the number of Outreach workers, has been broadly welcomed, especially in those areas with the most U5's in deprived circumstances. It was raised during the consultation that the linking of this with the planned expansion of heath visitors will create a very strong field force across Bury to support vulnerable families.
- 3.9 There have been concerns in the consultation that the model of one-to-one support from an outreach worker is not always a favoured one for many families who would prefer to be involved in a group rather than have home visits. From the survey responses, 52% neither agreed nor disagreed with this

proposal with just over 30% disagreeing. One-to-one support has an important role to play and the current work of Children's Centre outreach has illustrated this with some very good case studies in each centre showing how families have moved forward with such support.

- 3.10 The proposal to convert sites no longer used as Children's Centres to provide free nursery places for disadvantaged families was not strongly supported in the consultation but 47% neither agreed nor disagreed. 45% disagreed nor strongly disagreed with the proposals. This was closely linked to respondents' opposition to closing a particular Children's Centre.
- 3.11 The need to promote 2 year old provision however remains a strong priority in Bury. Information provided by the DfE as at 30 September 2014 showed a total of 503 children were claiming their 2 year entitlement against the DfE target of 1151. This equates to 43.7% of our target and places Bury 24 out of 24 North West LA's in terms of meeting demand. The latest November 2014 release of DfE eligible families contained a new target of 1146 families. The LA's current data suggests that Bury has places for 648 children or 56.5%. This shows an improving situation but the gap is still large.
- 3.12 In discussions held with schools which have hosted a Children's Centre on their site, there is interest from Head Teachers and Governors in having a 2 year old Nursery provision as a replacement for the Children's Centre provision. Only 2 schools expressed their opposition to this as they wished the Children's Centre to be maintained. All the schools, however, wished to explore further the funding of such a two year old provision before agreeing to the development.
- 3.13 There has been an overwhelming response from users of services in relation to the important role health professionals play, from the very early stages of pregnancy through to the developing years for young children and the valuable support offered in preventing problems escalating further. The planned increase in the number of health visitors who will be deployed through Public Health will link well with the increase in Outreach workers proposed as they will be able to work jointly with targeted families.
- 3.14 During the consultation, it was recognised that the schools which have been commissioned to deliver the Children's Centre provision in Bury up to now have been very effective in delivering universal and targeted provision and have built up a wealth of local knowledge and understanding of the communities in their reach areas. However, the demand of delivering a largely targeted offer over a whole township or over two township areas is a very challenging one and the Local Authority needs to take closer control over this vital early help service in order to deliver better outcomes for the most vulnerable families.

4.0 Recommendations following Consultation – Children Centre Hubs

- 4.1 The essential work of Children's Centres from April 2015 should focus on providing early help to targeted families in four key areas:
 - Improving the health of U5's
 - Improving U'5's school readiness
 - Reducing the risk of poor parenting and mistreatment
 - Promoting the economic prospects of families

- Targeted support will always be offered following good, effective assessment to ensure the appropriate approach or intervention is offered.
- 4.2 The direction of travel for Children's Centres from universal to a more targeted service has been further reinforced by the Ofsted inspection of the Radcliffe Cluster of Children's Centres carried out in Summer 2014 and the inspection of the Bury South Cluster in December 2014.
- 4.3 It is recognised that some universal provision will need to be offered through Children's Centres in order to help identify families in need of support. It is acknowledged that universal provision has a crucial role in preventing the onset of problems, reducing escalation and building community cohesion. In many cases, this will be facilitated and delivered through partners including GP's and health providers, adult learning providers, job-seekers support, housing support, financial advice, and will take the form of information and advice, facilitation of peer supports and networks, volunteering opportunities, as well as sessions specifically linked to improving outcomes. Such sessions may include:
 - Improving the health of U5's antenatal clinics, link Health visitors
 - Improving school readiness -Stay and play, lending libraries, Book start
 - Effective early intervention in safeguarding tips for parenthood, support for 2 year take up
 - Promoting the economic prospects of families work clubs, CV building
- 4.4 The use of the Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings as a means of allocating resources is a valid decision as deprivation is closely linked to poor health outcomes, a lack of school readiness and a high level of safeguarding referrals. The method proposed is to identify within each of the reach areas the number of children under 5 living in LSOAs which are among the 40% most deprived nationally. The results are used to determine weights which can then be applied to the allocation of resources.
- 4.5 Based upon December 2013 data, the allocation of resources between Children's Centre hubs would be as shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Township and Current Children's Centre provision	Weights derived according to proportion of U5's population in 40% most deprived LSOAs
Bury East	
(Redvales, Little Oaks, Moorside)	42%
Radcliffe	
(Coronation Road, Stepping Stones,	25%
High Meadow)	
Prestwich	
(Butterstile, Sedgley, Toodle Hill)	13%
Whitefield	
(Besses)	10%
Bury West	
(Daisyfield, Woodbank)	9%
Bury North	
(Tottington, Ramsbottom	2%

4.6 The original report proposed 5 Children's Centre Hubs and 1 spoke in Bury East. In response to concerns raised during the consultation, it is recommended that the hub and spoke model is extended to two further townships which have the next highest number of most deprived U'5's as shown in Table 1. These are Radcliffe and Prestwich. The proposed hubs and spokes are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Township	Children's Centre Hub	Spoke
Bury East	Little Oaks	Redvales
Radcliffe	Coronation Road	Stepping Stones
Prestwich	Sedgley	Butterstile
Whitefield	Besses	
Bury West	Woodbank	
Bury North	Woodbank	

- 4.7 In order to fund the two additional spokes under the revised proposals, the subsidy of £105,000 for converting sites to 2 year old provision will be used instead to support these spokes. This appears a better use of the funding as the process of conversion of sites for 2 year olds will receive a revenue grant of £12,000 as a start-up grant and the predicted surplus of income over expenditure for the converted sites will leave a surplus that would cover premises costs. An additional administrator will be funded in both hub areas at a cost of £48,000 and £42,000 will be available to support the running costs of the spoke buildings.
- 4.8 In addition to the hub and spoke centres, the LA has identified other buildings in the community in each hub area where Children's Centre activities can be delivered. This includes library provision (for example Ramsbottom Library) health provision and the former Children's Centres that are being converted for the 2 year old offer (see below).
- 4.9 As in the initial report, it is recommended that all the Hub and Spoke sites should come under the direct control of the Local Authority and the staff at these sites be employed by the Authority. The schools where the hub and spokes are located will be offered a strong role on the Advisory Boards of the hubs and the transfer of staff from school provision to LA provision will ensure that local intelligence and partnerships are not lost. The Authority will work closely with all the schools during the implementation phase to determine the best use of the resources available to meet the needs of both the Children's Centre and the school.
- 4.10 Outreach workers will be based at each of the hub sites but will be deployed across the hub area. They and programme support workers will work both on a one-to-one basis with families but also with groups in the Children's Centre hubs and spoke buildings or in other provision across their hub to help deliver targeted programmes in areas such as domestic violence, parenting courses, post-natal depression, support for children with disabilities, literacy development and so on. They may also deliver a central programme on behalf of a number of hubs.
- 4.11 In order to support the increased number of Outreach staff, 3 Senior Outreach workers will be appointed to provide supervision support in the hub areas of

Bury East and Radcliffe which have a substantial number of outreach workers. This will assist the Hub Co-ordinator in their supervision of these staff. The uplift for these posts will be funded from the resources made available in 3.6.

5.0 Recommendations following Consultation - 2 Year Old Offer

- 5.1 The initial report suggested that the Authority should seek to convert 7 of the current Children's Centres to provide a setting for the 2 year old offer. The consultation and recommendations above have now recommended that Butterstile and Stepping Stones Children's Centres should remain as Spokes in Prestwich and Radcliffe
- 5.2 It is now proposed that the following centres should convert:
 - Daisyfield located at St Stephen's CE Primary School 20 places
 - High Meadow located at St John's Radcliffe Primary School 12 places
 - Moorside located at St John with St Mark's CE Primary School 10 places
 - Ramsbottom a stand alone site 10 places
 - Toodle Hill located at Heaton Park Primary School 32 places
- 5.3 In response to school requests, a business model has been drawn up for each of the above centres and this will be shared with the relevant schools during the implementation phase of the proposals.
- 5.4 If the schools wish to take on this provision, advice that the LA has received since the consultation began suggests that they will be able to convert to becoming a 2-11 year old school through a School Organisation proposal. This will mean that the LA will not need to tender out the 2 year old places as the schools will be able to take these additional children. The Ramsbottom provision will be put out to tender as it is not on a school site.
- 5.5 The Local Authority intends to make arrangements with the schools and the spokes at Butterstile and Stepping Stones in order to enable Children's Centre hub staff to access the buildings on those sites at certain times. This would allow some Children's Centre activities to also be delivered at those locations.

6.0 Partnership Support

- 6.1 The delivery of integrated support to families has always been heavily reliant on a range of partners and Bury's Children Centres have been successful in developing these relationships. This is evidenced in the range of provision currently on offer particularly from health colleagues and adult education.
- 6.2 However, at present alternative models of delivery have not been received from health commissioners or health providers despite being sought through the consultation process by Local Authority officers. Discussions will continue to be held with health representatives to identify opportunities for co-delivery of services and sharing of resources. A risk log for Health providers has been drawn up by the Local Authority and sent to relevant partners.
- 6.3 Adult Education has sent in an extensive list of programmes that could be delivered to support the key objectives, some of these new and innovative and some already existing. These will be taken forward during the implementation phase of the proposals.

7.0 Budget

7.1 The provisional costs for the proposed new service are shown below in Table 3. This now includes an element of costing for the 2 additional spokes and for an up-lift for 3 senior outreach workers. The overall cost of the service remains at a similar level to the original proposals prior to consultation.

Table 3

	Manager	Programme Support Worker	Administ rator	Outreach workers	Premises	Admin	Client & sessional	Caretaking & cleaning	Recharges
Woodbank with Elton Hub	£44,315	£33,705	£24,533	£117,796	£11,691	£11,375	£10,688	£11,379	£5000
Besses Hub	£44,315	£33,705	£24,533	£117,796	£18,880	£12,720	£11,379	£20,864	£5000
Little Oaks Hub	£44,315	£33,705	£24,533	£269,224	£21,971	£8,426	£15,874	£7,729	£5000
Redvales spoke		£33,705		£147,245	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Sedgley Hub	£44,315	£33,705	£24,533	£147,245	£12,377	£5,928	£7,827	£8,950	£5000
Butterstile spoke			£24,533		£10,713	£0	£0	£13,138	£5000
Radcliffe Hub	£44,315	£33,705	£24,533	£237,683	£13,295	£8,917	£5,562	£11,700	£5000
Stepping Stones spoke			£24,533		£13,295	£0	£0	£11,700	£5000
Sub totals	£221,575	£202,230	£171,731	£1,036, 989	£102,222	£47,366	£51,330	£85,460	£35,000

Total £1,953,903

7.2 Note that the Redvales "spoke" will be managed by the Little Oaks hub manager. The administration function will be covered by a new post of Redvales Business Development Officer, who will be responsible for the management of all activity at the Redvales site. As a significant proportion of this activity generates income, and there is potential to increase this, it is proposed that the business development post should be self financing and not draw on the Children's Centre budget. Note also that half of the cost of meeting premises cost at Besses would be met though lettings income.

8.0 Timescales for Implementation

8.1 If Cabinet approves the recommendations, there will be a full Section 188 consultation with all Children's Centre staff with implementation commencing on 1 April 2015. Arrangements to develop 2 year old provision on sites no longer required as Children's Centre hubs or spokes will commence following the Cabinet decision with the additional places delivered by 1 September 2015 or earlier if possible.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 The following risks have been identified for the proposals:

- Proposals cannot be agreed in time to achieve the level of savings required in 2015/16
- Some Children Centre Advisory boards or School Governing Bodies oppose the proposals
- Providers of nursery care cannot be secured for all the converting sites by September 2015
- Decision made to proceed with new service is challenged on the grounds that due process is not followed during consultation
- Significant public opposition to the proposals including opposition to move to a targeted rather than a universal service and/or conversion of sites to nursery provision
- 9.2 A full Risk assessment action plan, including key measures that will be taken to control or mitigate the risks was included in the Cabinet Report of 3 September 2014.

10.0 Equality and Diversity

- 10.1 The revised strategy for delivery of Children's Centres will provide positive support to the most vulnerable families in the borough as resources will be targeted to improve key outcomes for those families. Under the revised proposals, there will be additional Children's Centre spokes in Radcliffe and Prestwich alongside the spoke in Bury East. This will help ensure that there is sufficient Children's Centre provision in the most deprived parts of Bury.
- 10.2 The proposals to change the use of 5 Children's Centres to offer two year old childcare places will have a positive impact on the 40% most vulnerable children and families. The two year old initiative will provide a service that is inclusive to all families who meet the governments' eligibility criteria regardless of ethnicity, disability, gender, race, religion or culture.
- 10.3 The withdrawal of Children's Services as a universal provision will have a negative effect on a substantial number of children and families who have benefited from accessing universal services. In mitigation, there will still be play and stay activities at the Children's Centre hubs and there will be signposting by the Children's Centres and by the Find It For Me/ Bury Local Offer website to activities and support for U5's provided by schools and the private and voluntary sector.
- 10.4 A full Consultation process on the proposals has taken place and is described in Section 2.0. The outcomes from the consultation are summarised in Section 3.0. A copy of all the written responses received will be placed in the Members Reading Room in the Town Hall to accompany this report.
- 10.5 A Full Equality Analysis is attached to this report.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 The Cabinet Report of 3 September 2014 recommended a new model for the delivery of Children's Services in Bury based upon meeting the needs of the most vulnerable first. By focussing the work of Children's Centres on 5 Hubs and one spoke, substantial savings in co-ordination, management and administration of centres can be re-cycled to support more front-line delivery in the areas of most need in Bury. The targeting of work by the Hubs on health

improvement, school readiness, early help to prevent safeguarding issues and improving families' economic well being will also allow them to increase their impact in these important areas for an Under 5's development.

- 11.2 In response to an extensive Consultation carried out on the proposals, it is now recommended that the work of Children's Centres should be based on the 5 proposed hubs but with the addition of 2 Spokes, one in Radcliffe at Stepping Stones and one in Prestwich at Buttersile. All Children Centre activity will be directly managed by the Local Authority but schools where the hub or spoke are located will be offered a strong role on the Advisory Board of the hubs to ensure that local intelligence and expertise is captured.
- 11.3 In order to strengthen the supervision of the increased number of Outreach Workers being proposed, 3 Senior Outreach Workers will be appointed to work in Bury East and Radcliffe where there are most Outreach staff.
- 11.4 With the identification of 2 additional spokes, it is now proposed that 5 of the current Children's Centres will be converted as venues for children and families accessing childcare and support for 2 year olds. Demand for these places in Bury continues to exceed supply and this will provide up to 84 additional places from September 2015. Schools will be able to extend their age range to 2 to 11 year olds to take on the additional 2 year olds if they wish and other provision will be tendered out to other providers.
- 11.5 The revised proposals continue to deliver the required savings of £820,000 as required by the Council's budget proposals for 2015/16.
- 11.6 The Council has received an on-line petition from Children's Centre users asking the Council to keep 7 Children's Centres open. It shows concern for closing Children's Centres in the most deprived areas and the possible isolation of families that are not close to the proposed hubs.

As this report shows, in responding to the consultation, the proposals have been amended to include 2 additional spokes in Prestwich and in Radcliffe, alongside the spoke in Bury East. These are the areas with most families in the 40% most deprived wards and will substantially improve these families access to Children's Centre services. The budget does not allow further spokes to be identified in Bury West or Bury North due to the costs of maintaining additional buildings.

List of Background Papers:-

Alternative Services – Under 5's Cabinet Report 3 September 2014 (previously distributed)

A Proposed New Model for Children's Centres (previously distributed)

Alternative Services Under 5's Consultation Plan (enclosed)

Common themes and issues arising from the Consultation (enclosed)

Statistical analysis of responses from Survey Monkey (enclosed)

Equality Analysis (enclosed)

Contact Details:-

Ian Chambers Assistant Director (Learning and Culture) Ext 5720