

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
WELLBEING****DATE:** 21 April 2017**LEAD OFFICER:** GARATH SYMONDS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR  
COMMISSIONING AND PREVENTION**SUBJECT:** PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON OUTCOME  
OF SHORT BREAKS PROCUREMENT PROCESS**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Short breaks play a vital role in supporting many children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Surrey. Short breaks provide disabled children and young people with the opportunity to have fun, see their friends and try new activities. They enable families to have a much needed break from caring.

This report provides the Cabinet Member for Children and Families Wellbeing with an update on progress made to re-commission short breaks in Surrey since the last report on 22 November 2016. It is not, at this stage, seeking a decision on award of contracts and grants, which will be sought from Cabinet through a subsequent report on 18 July 2017. It does however seek the Cabinet Member's endorsement to begin a six week period of engagement with families, partners and stakeholders in relation to the impact of proposed changes to Surrey's short breaks offer. This engagement will inform Cabinet's final decision on 18 July 2017.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Cabinet Member is asked to:

- note the update on re-commissioning short breaks and the revised offer;
- endorse a period of public engagement in relation to the impact of proposed changes to short breaks services for disabled children and young people in Surrey, beginning on 8 May 2017 and running until 16 June 2017; and
- agree that final proposals in relation to short breaks innovation grants will be reviewed with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families Wellbeing for feedback prior to the start of the public engagement process.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The proposal to seek the views of children, young people and families through a period of engagement will:

- i. allow the children, young people and families who are directly affected by the specific proposed changes to short breaks following the procurement process to provide feedback on the impact of the proposed offer. This will help us identify and plan to mitigate, as far as possible, any perceived negative

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impacts of the changes on those using services; and

- ii. support the Cabinet to make a fully informed final decision about the re-commissioned short breaks offer, taking account of the views of children, young people and families on the specific changes to services identified through the procurement process.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. On 22 November 2016 the Cabinet approved a longer timeline for re-commissioning short breaks, running until to 30 November 2017. This was to allow for a six week period of consultation with the public before grants and contracts are awarded to organisations providing short breaks services.
2. Short breaks are a lifeline for many families of children with disabilities. They act as a preventative service helping to avoid family breakdown and the need for more specialist, social care interventions in the future. Short breaks provide children and young people with disabilities an opportunity to spend time away from their parents, relax and have fun with their peers. They can promote positive experiences for children and young people by encouraging friendships, social activities and new experiences. They also benefit parents and families giving them the opportunity to have a break from the demands of caring for their child with disabilities.
3. Surrey County Council (SCC) has a statutory duty to provide short breaks under the Short Breaks Regulations 2011. This legislation states that local authorities have to offer short breaks as a preventive, early intervention service; offer a range of services for parents and publish a statement of those services to parents and families.
4. Short breaks can be provided in the day, evening, overnight or at weekends and can be in a child's home, a carer's home, or at a club or specialist setting. Short breaks can range from a few hours a week to overnight breaks for those children and young people with more complex needs. They can also include Direct Payments which allow parents and young people to manage and organise their own support, and flexible short breaks such as carers' breaks.
5. In Surrey, alongside the Council's in-house provision (Applewood, Ruth House and the Surrey Domiciliary Care Service) the majority of short break services are provided through voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) organisations. These organisations are funded by SCC to deliver short breaks on behalf of the families of disabled children and young people. These services are highly valued by families and are all of excellent quality, offering a wide range of activities and well trained staff to meet the differing needs of children and young people with SEND.
6. Current commissioned services include play and leisure activities such as holiday play schemes, youth clubs and after school clubs; specialist short breaks for children with autism or complex health needs; sports including cycling, football and swimming; support services provided in the child's home or local community and overnight short breaks in residential settings or with short break foster carers.
7. As of April 2017, 837 children and young people in Surrey have been formally assessed as children in need as a result of their disability and are open to the Children with Disabilities Teams and who may access specialist short breaks (which could include residential short breaks). Over 2,000 disabled children and their families access a range of subsidised, targeted play and leisure short breaks each year to which families may have to make a contribution. These services do not

require a social care assessment and have an important early help role to play in supporting families.

8. The short breaks re-commissioning project is an integrated part of Surrey's wider strategy to improve outcomes for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), titled the SEND 2020 programme. It also supports the Council's strategic goal of promoting wellbeing. Acknowledging the value of short breaks to families in Surrey, the Council has retained the current level of core budget for re-commissioning the new services and has sought to improve on the current offer and enhance service quality.

## **PROGRESS UPDATE ON RE-COMMISSIONING**

9. The existing contracts with short break providers will be ended on 30 November 2017 in line with decisions made by Cabinet on 24 May and 22 November 2016. This included a provision to allow for a six week period of consultation with families regarding any changes to the current offer following the tender process.
10. Preparation for the re-commissioning of short breaks services commenced in early 2016 with an online survey completed by over 220 families and a series of drop-in events attended by over 80 families, both delivered in partnership with Family Voice Surrey. The purpose at this stage was to better understand the key issues faced by children and young people with SEND and their families, who access or could access short breaks, and to inform the decision by the Council's Cabinet to re-commission the short breaks offer.
11. Since May 2016 the short breaks re-commissioning project team, working in partnership with Family Voice, have co-designed a new offer with children, young people, families and partners. This work was positively acknowledged in the feedback letter received by SCC following the joint local area SEND inspection in Surrey by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 24 October 2016.
12. To co-design the service with families and partners the team held a number of sessions for parents and carers in different locations across Surrey during June, July and August 2016. These sessions agreed an outcomes framework for short breaks and obtained feedback on current services. The team also:
  - developed the market through co-design events with providers in July 2016;
  - sought the views of children and young people with disabilities and young carers on what they wanted from services;
  - developed new ideas for future delivery of short breaks through five co-design workshops with parents and carers, providers and practitioners;
  - produced a Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy to set priorities for commissioning, service development and strategic influence with our partners; and
  - produced service specifications to deliver the outcomes that children, young people and families told SCC they wanted to achieve from having a short break.
13. A full tender process, in compliance with the requirement of European Public Procurement Legislation and the Council's Procurement Standing Orders has been

completed and the recommendations provide best value for money for the Council following a thorough evaluation process.

14. Short breaks services have been commissioned under three lots.

- Play and Leisure Services: These services provide children and young people with disabilities access to a wide range of experiences and opportunities. They are designed to enable children and young people to have fun, socialise, learn new skills and have the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers.
- Residential short break services: These services take place in settings as much like home as possible and often include overnight stays, where this is a part of a child's care plan. They provide disabled children and young people with the opportunity to interact with others as well as develop life, independence and communication skills whilst giving their families a break from caring.
- Innovation grants: These grants provide a mix of smaller projects that will further enhance the overall short breaks offer. This includes after school clubs and holiday schemes delivered from Surrey Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) special schools alongside other projects delivered by the VCFS.

15. Residential services are provided on a countywide basis. Play and leisure services are delivered across the 11 districts and boroughs. This supports access for all families to local play and leisure services and reduces travelling time for children and young people to access a short break.

16. The tender process ran from 9 January to 10 February 2017 (21 February for innovation grants). 12 organisations bid to deliver play and leisure short breaks, six organisations bid to provide overnight short breaks and 35 innovation grant proposals were received from 26 organisations (as well as a further three proposals submitted by SCC services).

17. These bids and proposals have been evaluated by a team including SCC staff, Family Voice Surrey, representative children, young people and parents as well as key partners. Through this process a range of preferred providers have been identified to offer play and leisure and residential short breaks.

18. Whilst all innovation grants proposals have been evaluated, further work is being undertaken to secure a mix of projects (within the additional flexibility afforded by a grants process) that provides good coverage of the county, offers a range of opportunities to children; young people and families, and complements the play and leisure and residential short breaks provision that is being proposed. This report therefore includes a specific recommendation that the Cabinet Member is given a separate opportunity to review the recommendations for award of grants before they are shared with the public during the engagement phase and brought to full Cabinet for decision as part of the paper planned for 18 July 2017.

## **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NEW PROVIDERS OF SHORT BREAKS**

19. The procurement process that has been undertaken has identified a range of organisations to provide short breaks in Surrey in the future. Whilst it is important to highlight that the process has generated a higher volume of hours of play and leisure provision for families for a reduced cost across Surrey, the market response for residential short breaks has been limited. Across the various lots some current

providers decided not to bid whilst others (particularly those offering residential services) increased their costs for delivery. This combination of factors does mean some changes to the current offer whilst rising costs for residential have reduced the funding that is available for other services. The impact of these changes will be assessed through the proposed six week engagement period set out in this paper. The proposed future providers are:

*i) Residential Short breaks*

<b>Borough or district</b>	<b>Provider</b>
Countywide (East Clandon)	Cherry Trees
Countywide (Chertsey)	White Lodge Centre

\*These providers will be in addition to the services provided by Surrey County Council staff at Applewood (Tadworth), Ruth House (Woking) and Surrey Domiciliary Care Service.

*ii) Play and Leisure - All SEND*

<b>Borough or district</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>% of available funding allocated</b>
Elmbridge	Autism Sussex	50%
	Disability Challengers	50%
Epsom and Ewell	YMCA East Surrey	100%
Guildford	Disability Challengers	100%
Mole Valley	YMCA East Surrey	100%
Reigate and Banstead	YMCA East Surrey	100%
Runnymede	Disability Challengers	50%
	White Lodge Centre	50%
Spelthorne	Disability Challengers	50%
	White Lodge Centre	50%
Surrey Heath	Linkable	50%
	Disability Challengers	50%
Tandridge	Disability Challengers	50%
	YMCA East Surrey	50%
Woking	Linkable	100%
Waverley	Disability Challengers	100%

*iii) Play and Leisure - Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)*

<b>Provider</b>	<b>% of available funding allocated</b>
Barnardos	25%
KIDS	25%
National Autistic Society (NAS)	25%
YMCA East Surrey	25%

*iv) Play and Leisure - Complex Health*

<b>Provider</b>	<b>% of available funding allocated</b>
Rainbow Trust	25%
Children's Trust	75%

## **SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT PROPOSALS AND TIMELINE**

20. Having identified the preferred providers across Surrey the intention is to offer children, young people and families the chance to tell us what they think of the services available in their area and to assess the impact of these changes before the

final decisions are taken. This will be achieved through an online survey and a series of drop-in sessions for families. In particular the engagement will focus on:

- a. the extent to which the proposed offer, including play and leisure, residential and short breaks innovation grants, will support better outcomes for children, young people and families, and how this can be strengthened; and
- b. whether any adjustments are needed to mitigate the impact of proposed changes on children, young people and families.

21. The table below sets out the proposed timeline for the engagement process, leading up to the start of new services on 1 December 2017:

Date	Activity
08 May 17	Six week public engagement begins following Cabinet call-in period
16 Jun 17	Public engagement ends
18 Jul 17	Cabinet decision on final changes to short breaks offer, informed by outcome of procurement process and consultation feedback
Aug-Nov 17	Mobilisation of new short breaks offer
01 Dec 17	New short breaks offer launches

#### **CONSULTATION:**

22. The short breaks re-commissioning process has been underpinned by extensive engagement with families to help identify the outcomes they want to be achieved through short breaks, the types of services that will make the biggest difference to them and the key challenges they face. As referenced earlier, this co-production work was acknowledged by Ofsted and the CQC in their recent SEND inspection in Surrey. Children, young people and families have also been involved in evaluating bids during the procurement process.
23. The decision to endorse a public engagement about changes has been supported by the Short Breaks Re-commissioning Steering Group. This group includes representatives from Family Voice Surrey, Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group and Surrey County Council.
24. The need for a period of public engagement has also been raised at the SEND Partnership Board.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

25. The re-commissioning process has led directly or indirectly to a number of proposed changes in provision, as some providers have chosen not to bid and others have put forward new proposals in response to the new specifications for services. These changes have the following implications in terms of risks:
  - a. Some services currently offered to families will change or cease, being replaced by others, which will have an impact on families. This will require close working with current and new providers to ensure smooth transitions between services.

- b. There remains a risk of legal challenge to decisions taken by Cabinet that change current short breaks provision. However, the robust approach that has been taken, including engaging families throughout this process and the ongoing Equalities Impact Assessment, will mean this risk is mitigated, with families hopefully able to see how their involvement has shaped the process.
- c. That developments within other parts of the SEND system to enable more children and young people to be educated closer to home may increase demand for short breaks services in Surrey over time.

### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

- 26. The re-commissioning process will award funding for services in line with the budget set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), addressing a historical overspend in relation to residential short breaks.

### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

- 27. The cost of the proposed re-commissioning will be met from the current approved budget and will not exceed this funding.

### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

- 28. There is a clear expectation in public law that a Council should carry out a consultation process whenever it is considering making any significant changes to service provision. An ongoing programme of consultation and engagement has taken place in relation to the proposals for a new short breaks offer and this report seeks approval for the next phase of engagement the results of which will be taken into account when Cabinet makes its final decision.

### **Equalities and Diversity**

- 29. The recommendation to run a public engagement on the proposed short breaks offer impacts positively on those with protected characteristics by:
  - i. providing families that are directly affected by any changes to provision recommended through the short breaks procurement process with a formal opportunity to comment on the impact of those changes; and
  - ii. Allowing SCC to put arrangements in place to mitigate any identified negative impacts of these changes on families, as far as this is possible within available provision and resources.
  - iii. An EIA accompanied the May 2016 Cabinet report. An EIA relating to the impact of the proposed offer has been drafted and this will be updated in line with the findings of the engagement period.

### **Other Implications:**

- 30. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	Short breaks play an important role in preventing disabled children and young people from becoming looked after and supporting those who are looked after.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	All Surrey County Council short breaks provision complies with the Council's safeguarding policy and officers regularly monitor the implementation of this policy.
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report
Climate change	No significant implications arising from this report
Carbon emissions	No significant implications arising from this report

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

31. The table in paragraph 21 sets out the proposed timeline for the public engagement process, Cabinet decision to award and the mobilisation of new services to start on 1 December 2017.

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### Consulted:

Family Voice Surrey

Short Break Re-commissioning Steering Group, including representatives from Family Voice Surrey, Surrey Children's Services, Health, Children, Schools and Families Commissioning, and SCC's Procurement, Legal and Finance Teams

### Background papers:

- Cabinet Report, Short Breaks for Disabled Children, 24 May 2016
  - Cabinet Report, Re-commissioning Short Breaks for Disabled Children, 22 November 2017
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