

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 26 MARCH 2019****REPORT OF: MR TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****LEAD OFFICER: DAVE HILL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING****COMMUNITY VISION OUTCOME: PEOPLE****SUBJECT: FAMILY CENTRES: DELEGATED AUTHORITY REQUEST****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

On the 29 January 2019, Cabinet agreed to three recommendations on the new Family Centre Model:

1. Endorse the remodelling of the remaining Children's Centres to create Family Centres as part of a wider Family Service to support families with children aged 0-11 that are the most vulnerable.
2. Agree to the reduction in number of Children's Centres in Surrey from 58 centres to 21 centres and satellite sites, to be located in areas where children are most likely to experience poor outcomes. At least one main centre in each district and borough supported by the use of satellites, outreach workers and community venues.
3. Agree to reduce the number of mobile Family Centres in Surrey from two to one in order to reach areas where there are small numbers of vulnerable children and families.

The Cabinet report is [available on the council's website](#). Full results from the consultation are [available on the council's website](#).

In order to do this new contracts will need to be issued for the new service, however, due to a number of different arrangements occurring at different times, depending on the circumstances in that area, flexibility is required on the timing of decision making to award contracts. Planning around set monthly Cabinet dates for the decisions at different stages may delay this process and have an impact on meeting the transformation targets. Delegated authority for decision making to award contracts is being requested to the Executive Director for Children, Families and Learning in consultation with the relevant Lead Cabinet Members.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that authority is delegated to the Executive Director for Children, Families and Learning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, to award contracts to lead providers in each borough or district for the provision of Family Centres for up to 5 years.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Delegated authority, for decision making is being requested to award the contracts, to the Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning to ensure that decisions can be made flexibly and quickly so that contracts can be awarded at the different stages where required, in order to implement the Family Centre Model effectively and ensure that transformation targets can be met.

**Family Centre Implementation**

1. Following Cabinet approval, the Council is developing 21 Family Centres and 9 satellites, located in areas where children are most likely to experience poor outcomes. The aim is to focus resources on front line staff to support vulnerable families and thereby reduce the amount of money spent on buildings and leadership and governance.
2. We are working with existing Children's Centre providers to develop local proposals / solutions to become lead providers in their borough/district for the agreed locations of Family Centres. Once local solutions in the districts and boroughs are agreed, we can award the new contracts.
3. In those areas where a local solution with existing providers is not achievable, we will be initially discussing the options with the district and borough councils and where necessary we will carry out a formal tender process to establish a new provider in those areas. The timeframes for decision making on contracts for these two stages will be different from those where a local solution is agreed.
4. There are a number of different processes occurring at different times, dependent on whether there is a local solution, alternative options with district & borough councils or whether we need to proceed with a tender process. Flexibility is therefore required on the timing of decision making to award contracts.
5. Delegated authority for decision making to award the contracts will ensure that decisions can be made flexibly and quickly so that contracts can be awarded in each district or borough as the lead provider is identified.

**CONSULTATION:**

6. A public consultation was carried out for the Family Centre Model and taken into account and responded to in the previous Cabinet report (29 January 2019). No further consultation is required for the purpose of implementing the previous decisions.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

7. New contracts to agreed lead providers will need to be awarded at different stages dependent on whether there is a local solution within existing providers, borough and district solution or a tender process. Therefore three distinct workstreams are being planned, determining the timeframes for each of the three options, i.e. local solution, borough and district solution or tender process. Local discussions have been taking place to support the existing providers and district and boroughs during this proposals stage. This also identifies any issues arising that may require flexibility in timescales per individual district and borough. This necessarily requires flexibility on decision making for awarding contracts. If we plan around set monthly Cabinet meetings, this will delay the timescales, due to building in a number of different Cabinet meetings and will have implications for delay on the transformation target for 2019/20. Delegated authority would provide the flexibility required.
8. It is acknowledged that there may be a potential for uncertainty amongst residents regarding the different timescales for opening times, changes to and closures of centres across the districts and boroughs. Once lead providers have been agreed and timescales have been firmed up across the districts and boroughs with the new providers, clear communications around timescales will be issued/updated regularly.

## **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

9. The Council's Final Financial Strategy confirms the new model for Family Centres will achieve a £1 million saving in 2019/20 with a full year saving of £3.4 million anticipated from April 2020. The model is expected to be introduced between April and September 2019. Any delays would risk the savings level being achieved.
10. The maximum contract award over three years per contract will not exceed £3 million.

## **SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY**

11. A procurement exercise must be undertaken in compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Procurement Standing Orders, when selecting and awarding such Contracts.
12. The value of such contracts should not exceed £1m over one financial year or £3m over three years. Approval should be sought from both the Lead Member and Executive Director before any contracts are awarded between £0.5 million and £1 million.
13. When awarding contracts, consideration must be taken to achieve the anticipated savings in both financial years. Any diversion from this will need to be absorbed as part of the Children, Families, Life Long Learning and Culture Directorate.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER**

14. The Council is under a general duty in Section 1 of the Childcare Act 2006 to "...improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between young children in their area...". Furthermore, under Section 3(2) of the Act, the Council must "...secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner which is calculated to—(a) facilitate access to those services, and (b) maximise the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and

young children.” The proposed new arrangements for Family Centres are intended to enhance service offerings in compliance with these duties.

15. The Council must comply with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 in relation to the proposed contract awards. Legal Services and Procurement have been working closely to ensure that the various proposed routes to market are compliant with the Regulations and the Council’s own Procurement Standing Orders. As a new service will be provided by a mix of public sector and non-profit organisations, the Council has engaged the services of Bevan Brittan LLP to assist in the preparation of the contractual terms and conditions that will underpin the arrangements. The staff re-organisations are complex and the Council will be indemnifying the providers for their costs in making the required changes.
16. Cabinet will note that they are being asked to delegate authority for individual contract award decisions for each district or borough. Contract award decisions may then be made at differing times depending on the particular circumstances in each area. In making this delegation, Cabinet must determine that the proposed contracts are the most appropriate course of action for the Council. In making this decision, Cabinet should be cognisant of their fiduciary duties to Surrey residents in managing the Council’s limited financial resources.

#### **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

17. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out for the Family Centre Model and was taken into account and responded to in the previous Cabinet report (29 January 2019).

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

18.
  - a. Proposals for existing provider local solutions due 12 March 2019; recommendations on proposals notified to agreed lead providers 18 March 2019.
  - b. Contracts issued and signed for lead providers with local solutions – early April 2019.
  - c. Tender process to take place, where no local solution and no district/borough solution April – mid – May 2019.
  - d. Contracts signed following tender process with new providers – June 2019.

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