

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

27th July 2015

SUBJECT:	Early Years and Children's Centre Review: Outcome of Consultation
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	Director of Children's Services
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr Tony Smith
KEY DECISION?	Yes

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Wirral Early Years and Children Centre Review presented to Cabinet on 11th September 2014 made recommendations about the development of a new model of service delivery, supported by an outcomes framework to ensure that Wirral's youngest children have the best start in life, evidenced through their readiness for school.

The Review was prompted by the need to save £1.5 million from the Councils' Early Years and Children's Centre budget, reducing the budget to £3.080 million. The Review also recognised that the service had not been reviewed since 2002, although the resources available to deliver this service have in recent years reduced significantly. The service also required a radical shift in thinking to meet current policy and legislative requirements.

Since this Review has been published there has been even greater emphasis placed on improving children's readiness for school through, the Council Plan: A 2020 Vision, Wirral's recent designation as a Vanguard site to deliver joined up health and care services and the recently published Ofsted Early Years report, which particularly emphasises narrowing the gap in outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This Cabinet report is operational in nature; it requests that Cabinet reviews the feedback from the consultation about the proposed changes and authorises officers to take a series of steps to ensure the service is in a stable and financially viable position. It will provide a platform for future developments to meet ambitious outcomes for our youngest children and their families, as summarised at point 6.0 of this report.

- 1.2 The decision made by Cabinet on 11th September 2014, that officers should commence consultation on a proposed new model for delivering early years services was called-in under the Council's scrutiny arrangements which resulted in the consultation being published for public feedback on 16th February 2015. The

consultation closed on 27th March 2015, and this report provides Cabinet with the feedback received.

- 1.3 This report makes a number of recommendations to Cabinet about the delivery of early years and children's centre services. This includes the approach to delivering outcome focused provision in an integrated way with partners in local communities through: three hubs, six satellite buildings and services commissioned through the two nursery schools.
- 1.4 This report recommends that a weighted funded model is adopted which takes account of levels of deprivation and need across pre-determined reach footprints within constituency areas, that this supports a flexible and well trained workforce and that services are commissioned and delivered across a range of different disciplines, including the voluntary community and faith sector.
- 1.5 The recommendations informed by the consultation findings will deliver the agreed savings of £1.5million. However, there will be slippage in 2015/6 which at this stage is likely to result in a shortfall of £1.2 million. This position will be kept under close review.
- 1.6 Cabinet are asked to consider the consultation feedback which informs the revised delivery model and to authorise officers to commence implementation of the model.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Between April and August 2014 a strategic review of Early Years and Children's Centres was undertaken, which was overseen by a core group of cross organisational representatives. This Review considered a local approach to securing and delivering improved outcomes for young children and their families in Wirral. It was driven by the requirement to make financial efficiencies and was informed by national developments. Amongst the findings from the Review was that the services being offered required transformation and that strategic engagement and sign up from a range of partner organisations was considered fundamental to collectively make a difference to our youngest children and their families.
- 2.2 The Early Years and Children's Centre Review was presented to Cabinet Members in September 2014 with four key recommendations developed from the review findings:
 - Targeting the offer – Children's Centres to play a key role in providing targeted early help to those families who need it, to reduce the number of children referred to social care and increase those more ready to learn when they go to school, which will be evidenced by improvement in EYFS outcomes and a narrowing of the gap in achievement and attainment.
 - Integration and Collaboration – Develop better working relationships and stronger partnerships with other key services and organisations that provide early childhood services.
 - Outreach model – develop outreach services to operate across constituency areas based on levels of need. In addition, an early year's support team would

be established that would deliver the wider elements of the early year's offer that meets the local authority statutory duties for early years.

- Children's Centres – a new approach to delivery through one main Hub in each Constituency area that delivers the full core purpose offer and one outreach or satellite centre. It is anticipated that the remaining buildings be utilised with partners and therefore offer reduced, though more flexible, children's centre services based on local need.

- 2.3 An underlying principle of the review and the consultation feedback was an acknowledgement that the value of the service lay in the skills and experience of the people who deliver services and not just in the buildings themselves.
- 2.4 This Review took place against a backdrop of inadequate practice within the service (brought into sharp focus through the inspections of the Birkenhead Children's Centre Group in May 2014 and subsequently the West Wirral Children's Centre Group in January 2015). Significant issues were raised for the Council around performance monitoring of activity in the Children's Centres, use of data to shape and improve service provision and leadership and governance. The lessons from these inspections, as well as the improvements and recommendations from the more recent re-inspection of Birkenhead (April 2015), have been carefully considered when developing this model.
- 2.5 The proposals within the Review have sought to present a viable delivery model which takes account of the finance, resource and policy challenges facing early year's services, including those to come from changes to government guidance and regulatory frameworks.
- 2.6 The Review outcomes are intended to facilitate a responsive and joined up approach with partners working with and through children's centres to deliver education, care and health services locally to young children and their families and to ensure that all available resources are used collectively to drive up standards and outcomes. Section 4 of the Childcare Act, 2006 has particular relevance in placing a duty on commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus to work together with Councils in their arrangements for improving the well-being of young children and their families and securing integrated early childhood services.

Since this Review was undertaken there have been a number of local and national developments, most notably the production of the Wirral Council Plan: A 2020 Vision which contains 20 outcomes for 2020. This Plan includes the ambitious outcome that children are ready for school:

We must make sure that every child is equipped with the emotional, social and developmental skills to be ready to start school and to learn. We achieve this through a range of early interventions, engagement and support for families within our communities.

Delivering the Council Plan will prioritise and build on the work undertaken so far; it will set out a broader policy context to secure improved outcomes for current and future generations of children. This work is being driven and supported by local politicians and will determine a mechanism for continuous improvement and ongoing change.

The development of integrated services with partners will also be supported by Wirral's designation as a Vanguard site, to deliver integrated health and care services to meet need as early as possible in local communities; *ensuring children have the best start* in life is a key outcome in Wirral's successful Vanguard bid.

Finally, Ofsted published their Early Years report on Monday 13 July 2015. This report noted that:

While it is encouraging that outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds are rising in line with their peers, there is no sign of the gap narrowing in any substantial way.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Extensive and inclusive consultation on a proposed model of delivery was undertaken from the 16th February to 27th March 2015. All stakeholders, including service users, wider residents and partners were able to feed into the process through a range of methods, including participation at public events, online by completing the consultation feedback form (which could also be completed as a paper version with support available if needed).
- 3.2 This engagement activity resulted in 934 consultation questionnaires being received and over 300 service users, residents and other stakeholders attending and contributing to consultation events.
- 3.3 A full overview of the consultation methodology is presented in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 In addition to the consultation feedback, two petitions were received, firstly from Wallasey with 375 signatures and West Wirral with 657 signatures. These petitions opposed the proposed changes to the service, receipt was acknowledged and the feedback they provided has been considered as part of this consultation process.

4.0 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND RESPONSE

This section of the report provides an outline of the main themes of the feedback conveyed through the consultation events, the questionnaire and various other communications and representations which were received. A fuller summary of the main themes of the feedback is available in Appendix 1 of this report. More extensive responses from the consultation feedback are published on the Council website. A full copy of all responses, redacted where appropriate, is available in the members room.

- 4.1 The following sections outline the high level themes from the consultation events, feedback forms and stakeholder events that required consideration for the future early years and children's centre service offer.

4.1.1 Targeting the offer

There was consistent agreement with the proposal that children's centre services target early help to those families that need it the most, with nearly 70% of

respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This was further reinforced by comments from feedback forms, which also noted that attention must be given to avoid stigmatisation of families for accessing a targeted children's centre services and that the universal and community focus of the service is not lost. Much will depend on the needs analysis that must be done on a thorough, inclusive basis to ensure the reach of the service and improved outcomes for families are maximised

4.1.2 Integration and Collaboration

Over 60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to develop more integrated arrangements with other services and organisations that provide services for children and their families. Comments were also received in this area, focussing on ensuring that opportunities for improving the service and outcomes were maximised through partnership working.

4.1.3 Outreach Model

There was support to retain staff over buildings and that staff should deliver outreach services where they were needed and use the buildings differently. 46.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal for staff to work as an outreach team across a constituency area. Key issues for consideration in the development of a new model included ensuring that outreach supported the ambition to deliver services tailored to local needs, and to ensure that wherever possible relationships built up by staff over time were not lost.

4.1.4 Children's Centres

The highest level of agreement for the proposal for a hub and satellite outreach model came from respondents in the Birkenhead constituency (37%) with the strongest level of disagreement coming from the Wallasey constituency area (41%) closely followed by the West Wirral area (39%) and South Wirral (34%) where responses indicated that centres remain unchanged. Within South Wirral 40% disagreed with the named hub at Eastham, with feedback from group events consistently indicating that the centre at Bromborough should be considered. Key points for consideration included; concerns regarding the cost and accessibility of transport, views about the appropriateness of the proposed sites, and a perception that the proposal could lead to outright closure of sites.

4.1.5 Impact of the proposals

In relation to ongoing access to early years services in the context of the proposed changes to a hub and satellite model, 20% of respondents indicated that the proposals would have no impact, 26.8% felt they would continue to use the service but less often and just over 25% would continue to access services even if this was at another centre or through an early years provider and outreach in the community

5.0 REVISED DELIVERY MODEL

5.1 Following full consideration of the responses received from the consultation, petitions and the current financial context for the service, a revised delivery model for early childhood services to children pre-birth to five years, as well as prospective parents is set out below:

5.1.1 Targeted outreach:

- Staff Teams will be developed for each constituency area to deliver effective outreach working based on need and within the available budget.
- The approaches to outreach will be based on a more targeted offer where there is evidence of 'what works', supporting engagement, participation and access to a range of universal and targeted services. This will necessitate working flexibly and persistently to facilitate parents to engage and receive support they need to make relevant positive changes, to improve their own and their child's outcomes.
- Staff will deliver from a range of sites that could include: family homes, children's centres, schools, and a range of community venues. In addition, they will work alongside partners, being more responsive and focussed to service and community needs rather than the pressure currently presented to ensure building opening times despite need or usage.
- Take up of services is focussed on targeting early years and support to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families in particular, to ensure an increase in take up of the two year olds entitlement by eligible families

5.1.2 Partners working through children's centres:

- We will work closely with families, communities and all relevant partners across the public, voluntary, community and faith sector, including childcare providers to secure the best possible outcomes for our youngest children and their families.
- Early years and children's centre services will better align with partners; in particular health delivery seeing a joint service offer that avoids duplication, creates clear pathways for intervention and improved outcomes.
- Children's centres will continue to work in the context of a universal offer as a point of access for information and support for all families, with targeted support being offered to those families most in need of a service.
- Links with key initiatives across Wirral will be enhanced, such as with the Community Hub Schools, Vision 2018 and the Vanguard model.
- A memorandum of understanding will be drawn up with each key partner notably health visiting and midwifery services and job centre plus. Internal local authority partnerships will be strengthened in order to identify sooner and more seamlessly, those families with a child under 5 who need support the most, for example, social care, housing needs and economic development.
- Close working arrangements with health visitors are currently being developed to support the rollout of the 2 year old integrated review. This will greatly improve early identification of need and enable the development of service responses and direct support for families.

5.1.3 Hub and satellite children's centres:

- It is proposed that Council provision for children pre-birth to 5 years and their families will be co-ordinated (alongside partners) through three hub children's centres, six satellite buildings and commissioned services from two nursery schools.
- The hubs and satellites, also shown in Appendix 2 are as follows:
 - Birkenhead: Hub would be Brassey Gardens Children's Centre and satellites would be Birkenhead and Tranmere (Cathcart Street) and Rock Ferry Children's Centres
 - Wallasey: Hub would be Seacombe Children's Centre and satellite New Brighton Children's Centre
 - West and South Wirral: Hub would be Pensby Children's Centre and satellites would be West Kirby, Bromborough and New Ferry Children's Centres
- This will ensure sufficient geographic coverage across all constituency areas within the available budget, ensuring there is a named children's centre for each child under 5.

Appendix 3 provides a brief description of the role of: Hub and Satellite Centres Extended School/Services, Targeted Groups, Targeted work and Outreach.

5.1.4 Use of Data

- There will be improved use of data, in particular population level data through public health in order to focus planning across all constituency areas, target outreach services appropriately and develop community partnership to extend and shape provision in non-target areas
- The systematic and routine sharing of health data, child protection and education data (at population and individual child level, such as live birth data) is key to joint working and plans are in place to enhance and enable this.

5.1.5 Early Years Support and Quality

- The early years support team will meet the Council's statutory duties for early years including the information duty through the family information service, childcare sufficiency assessment, administration of the 2 year old entitlement and the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). There will be more focussed support to childcare providers where they are not meeting the regulatory framework set by Ofsted will be key.
- The Team will work to ensure that early years childcare provision effectively complements the children centre service to support the needs of vulnerable children and their families, in particular through monitoring take up of the 2,3 and 4 year old entitlement and the EYPP.
- The impact of children's centre services will be closely monitored and performance managed to give confidence that the outcomes for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families are being met effectively. This will build an evidence base around the impact of the approach.

5.1.6 Funding model

- 5.1.7 Informed by the views about targeting the offer in the consultation feedback and other models adopted nationally, it is proposed that a revised funding approach is implemented to ensure children and families who need services most receive a targeted offer (whilst not losing the universal community focus of the service). It is proposed that the staffing and other costs are allocated on a clearly defined basis that reflects the ambition of the service within the resources available.
- 5.1.8 The funding model has been developed using the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), which is also used locally to allocate some school funding. In addition the model will take account of the number of births and an indication of the percentage of children in an area requiring social care support. The model will bring parity and see some resources targeted to deprivation and disadvantage and some allocated universally. It will support the allocation of staffing and other costs on a clearly defined basis.
- 5.1.9 The table at Appendix 4 details a working model of how it is proposed that the available funding of £3,080,000 for the service will be allocated.
- 5.1.10 The model sets out staffing resources to reflect an allocation for universal / targeted outreach, early years home visits and early intervention family work:
- **Outreach working** ensures access to those who most need support. This reflects the IDACI tool to identify the numbers of children under 5 within the pre-determined reach areas living in income deprived households. The model uses a differentiated ratio of staff based on levels of deprivation and within a pre-determined reach footprint for each local super output area (LSOA), ie a higher ratio of staff to children in the reach area, where income deprivation is higher.
 - **The early year's home visiting** allocation is a universal strand of work based on the total number of live births within a reach area. This provides a resource allocation enabling a visit within 6 months to all families where there has been a new birth, complimenting not duplicating other professionals visiting the family and ensuring early identification of family level need.
 - **Early intervention** resources are allocated on a weighted model based on reach area, level of need and levels of referrals for social care support and wider outcomes (i.e. health and education outcomes). This is targeted support offering direct or group intervention based on an 18 hour period of intervention for families referred to the service over 6 weeks. (i.e. – 6 week package of support X 3 hours per week).
 - Building costs will be allocated to cover basic premises and running costs, this has not been set until transitional arrangements for buildings have been confirmed

5.1.7 Expressions of interest

A number of expressions of interest have been received by organisations interested in use of buildings, shared use of buildings or to work in partnership with the

Council in providing services. Further work to progress this and to support transitional arrangements, will take place alongside the corporate asset management team.

6.0 SUMMARY

This report responds to the Review of Early Years and Children's Centres. It sets out changes required to modernise the service and make it compliant with the required national standards and legislative framework. It also responds to the need to make savings of £1.5 million and to target the available resources in a way which are most likely to improve children's readiness for school.

Whilst this report recommends a reduction in designated Children Centre's, through a Hub and Satellite model; it does not propose the closure of any children's centre buildings.

It is proposed that a revised approach is adopted to deploying resources which is most likely to reach the most disadvantaged children in Wirral, this will be done through the application of a balanced funding formula based on need and the use of proven tools and models. This will result in some settings experiencing a significant reduction in council funding, most notably children's centre services delivered on the two nursery school sites. In each instance work will be undertaken through advisory boards and the school governing bodies to jointly plan how to mitigate the impact of these changes on children and families; these changes will come into effect in early 2016.

This report largely focuses on the Council resources and the reconfiguration of Council services used to meet the needs of children and their families pre-birth through to five years of age. However, as stated in the review and through consultation feedback, services and support provided to our youngest children must in future be developed and delivered through much greater integration with partners, including parents and families.

It is evident that there is significant money and resources invested across Wirral in our youngest children and their families. This includes for example, the 2, 3 and 4 year old offer, some of which is delivered through schools, health visiting and midwifery services, private and voluntary sector spend, services arranged, delivered and directly purchased by parents, in addition to the Council's spend. Determining how this money and these resources are collectively invested to secure the best outcomes for children and families, will form the next steps to implement The Council Plan: A Vision for 2020.

The implementation of this Review is intended to provide a secure and stable platform from which to deliver an ambitious, joint plan to ensure children in Wirral have the best start in life, evidenced by them being ready for school.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 A corporate project group has been established and has met regularly to oversee consultation feedback and progress a project plan. The group will continue to have oversight of the implementation programme.

- 7.2 The key risk for this project is in regard to the future viability of the service, in terms of both its performance and financial position, should no change to its operation be agreed. Further risks include negative Ofsted inspections, potential additional costs relating to building management and, most importantly, challenges to the ability to deliver positive outcomes for children and families.
- 7.3 There is a reputational risk from the disruption to services which will be required to achieve the necessary changes. This will be mitigated wherever possible through close partnership working. A risk log that records and assesses risk has been collated as part of the overall project plan. This is reviewed on an ongoing basis by the project group.
- 7.4 There is a risk from the plans not being fully implemented, within the specified period. This will be kept under close review by the project group and implementation will be reassessed accordingly.
- 7.5 This Review has been underway for a considerable period of time and staff will continue to be impacted by any subsequent changes arising from pending decisions that come from the review. The process to implement new staffing arrangements will require a clear plan and relevant HR processes applied and systematically followed.
- 7.6 The risk that the Department for Education (DfE) could claw back capital grant funding in respect of children's centres is mitigated through the proposed future usage of the buildings and an agreement of a deferral will be progressed with the DfE once a decision has been secured.

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Council has made a commitment that all decisions related to the budget and service design should be underpinned by comprehensive and genuine consultation with all stakeholders. The proposals and recommendations within this report come as a result of such consultation and represent a shift in position from the initial proposed delivery model, which was published for consultation.
- 8.2 The main changes are a reduction from four hubs to three, with one main hub serving South and West Wirral and an increase in satellites from four to six. This is to increase local access points for delivery and to reduce the amount of administrative overheads. In South Wirral it is proposed that there is a move from Eastham to Bromborough. Additionally, the indicative figures set out in the consultation document have been revised based on the application of a balanced funding formula based on need and the use of proven tools and models.
- 8.3 This revised position represents the model which most closely meets the needs of the local population, and has been arrived at through extensive debate with stakeholders and families, and has considered data analysis of both need and deprivation, geographic cover, and feedback received from people using the services.

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 There is a long-standing commitment to extensive consultation with local communities. The legal responsibilities regarding consultation and engagement are set out below. This consultation exercise represents a comprehensive and genuine attempt to engage with all key stakeholders within a wide service area, and to take their views on board in the co-design of a completely redesigned service offer. The redesigned proposal contained within this report, following this engagement exercise, is evidence of the open and constructive nature of this consultation.

10.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 10.1 This report responds to the Cabinet decision from 11th September 2014, with no further actions being outstanding.

11.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 11.1 During the consultation period, partners were invited to submit expressions of interest for the delivery of services through the Children's Centre buildings. A number of expressions of interest have been received and these will be further progressed in the coming weeks, following a decision being taken.
- 11.2 Engagement with organisations within the voluntary, community and faith sector has taken place and this work will continue to ensure that, where applicable, the sector is fully engaged and able to provide those services should a future commissioning need present.

12.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 12.1 The children's centre budget in 2015 -16 is £3,080,000 which includes a savings target of £1.5 million. There has been a delay in implementing this proposal in 2015 - 16, but once implemented this will be a significant and challenging reduction in funding, which will reduce council run early years and children centre provision. However, it is critical that commissioning to ensure all children have the best start in life evidenced through them being ready for school takes account of all available resources within Wirral focussed on meeting the needs of the youngest children and their families.
- 12.2 Whilst the funding is reduced, the revised funding model will bring parity to resource allocation to ensure that the ambition of the service can be realised within the available resource and ensure that those most in need of services receive them, in a timely and effective way.
- 12.3 There are currently 97 full time equivalent posts across the service; the revised model will have a direct impact on staff currently within those posts. The staffing structure to be determined from the outcome of this report will principally be aligned on the basis of need and will follow due process through full HR consultation with staff and trade unions.
- 12.4 The above numbers do not include caretaking and cleaning staff, for those children's centres directly delivered by the Council. This will be given careful consideration. The requirement for caretaking and cleaning staff will be determined following the agreement of the revised delivery model and future usage of buildings. Consultation will be undertaken as appropriate with the individuals concerned and or their respective employing organisation.

- 12.5 The 16 designated children's centres are currently utilising 18 buildings for children's centre delivery across the four constituency areas. 6 buildings are located in the Birkenhead area, 3 are located within the Wallasey area, 3 are located within West Wirral and 4 are located within South Wirral. 2 of the designated children's centres operate from within the remit of 2 nursery schools; this report makes no recommendations about the status of nursery school provision or nursery school buildings.
- 12.6 The report advises that direct use will be made of 9 buildings as main hubs and satellites. 2 nursery schools will continue to operate as such and consideration of the use of the 7 remaining buildings will take place through transitional discussions with partners, including those who have expressed an interest in delivering services from these locations, through the consultation or via the corporate asset management team.
- 11.7 There will be slippage in the delivery of the £1.5m savings package during 2015 - 16. This will result in a shortfall in year of up to £1.2m. This position will be kept under close review. It is unlikely that plans will be implemented before February 2016.

13.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 With regard to the Authority's statutory duties in relation to children's centre provision and in particular when changes to provision are proposed, reference must be made to the Childcare Act 2006 (and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL) 2009 which inserted new provisions into the Childcare Act 2006), which states:
- The statutory duty to provide sufficient children's centres to continue to meet local need in respect of the needs of parents, prospective parents and young children in the authority's area.
 - The statutory duty to consult those who may be affected by any proposed changes before making any significant changes to the range and nature of services provided through children's centres.
- 13.2 These duties have been given due consideration both during the process of the consultation and in the proposals set out in this report.
- 13.3 Recent case law has made it clear that any consultation undertaken must be meaningful, informed and reasonable. Failure to ensure this could lead to legal challenge and any decision taken which takes into account the consultation could be undermined and open to challenge by way of Judicial Review. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 came into force in April 2009 and introduced a duty for local authorities to involve, inform and consult with their communities. The duty is wide-ranging and applies to the delivery of services, policy and decision making and means the Council must consult relevant individuals, groups, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders that the Authority considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in, their actions and functions.

14.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

Yes and impact review can be found via the following link:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-families-wellbeing>

15.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The potential changed use of buildings across the borough could bring benefits in terms of carbon reductions.

16.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

16.1 None as a direct result of this report.

17.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

17.1 That Cabinet notes the consultation process detailed within this report, and thanks Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders for their input.

17.2 That Cabinet notes the detailed consultation findings provided within this report and associated Appendix 1.

17.3 That Cabinet approves the revised delivery model outlined in this report and agrees to its implementation, including: taking the required steps to make the necessary workforce changes and redefining the use of assets.

18.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

18.1 The recommendations coming from the review process outline a new model for delivery that:

- Meets the agreed savings target of £1.5 million
- Ensures that the Council and its partners maximise the available resource for the Boroughs youngest children and their families, and that all partners including those with statutory responsibilities, work together to jointly commission and design services in pursuit of the very best possible outcomes.
- Ensures that the Council meets its statutory obligation to deliver sufficient early childhood provision as set out in the Childcare Act 2006 (and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL) 2009 which inserted new provisions into the Childcare Act 2006).
- Ensures sufficient children's centre coverage across the Borough.
- Ensures that every child continues to have a named children's centre
- Aligns the Council's commitment to early help at the earliest stages of life as a preventative strategy

REPORT
AUTHOR: Deborah Gornik
Head of Targeted Services

Telephone: (0151) 666 4330

Email:
deborahgornik@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Consultation Feedback

Appendix 2: Map of Revised Hubs and Satellite Children's Centres

Appendix 3: Explanation of the terms used to support the review / report.

Appendix 4: Indicative Model of Funding Allocations

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Early Years and Children's Centre Review	11th September, 2014