

Subject:	Sure Start and Children's Centres Budget Strategy		
Date of Meeting:	12 November 2012		
Report of:	Interim Director for Children's Services		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Budget Council meeting in March 2012 proposed budget reductions of £640,000 in Sure Start for 2013/14. Initially the proposal was to reduce funding for Children's Centres by £500,000 and to consult on significant changes to the Children's Centres in the city. This paper outlines an alternative strategy to reduce the impact on Children's Centres.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the revised budget savings proposals for Sure Start going to full Council to maintain the city's network of Children's Centres.
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees to local consultations to change the status of Westdene and Preston Park Children's Centres from designated to link sites and to no longer employ receptionists in linked sites (Saltdean, Coldean, Goldstone).

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Children's experience in their early years has a strong influence on how well they do at school, their health and achievements in later life. Early help and intervention is crucial to support families out of the cycle of poor outcomes (Marmot, Field, Allen, Tickell and Munro). The Council has a statutory duty to improve outcomes for young children and reduce inequalities in achievements.
- 3.2 Overall outcomes for young children are good with results for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, breastfeeding and obesity better than the average for England. However Brighton and Hove still has a high number of children entering the child protection system. Children's Centres and other Sure Start services focus on early prevention to improve outcomes for these children.

Children's Centres (proposed net saving of £239,000 - 11%)

- 3.3 Children's Centres are managed as part of a citywide, integrated structure which brings together council and health services for children. There are 15 designated Children's Centres and 5 linked sites. Designated Children's Centres are inspected by Ofsted. Ten Children's Centres have been inspected so far with 5

judged outstanding and 5 good.

- 3.4 Children's Centres provide both universal and targeted services. Health visitors deliver the Healthy Child Programme, and midwives see all pregnant women. Council funded services are increasingly focused on the most disadvantaged children. Both health visitors and early years visitors have taken part in a transformational training programme to ensure they can deliver evidence based interventions.
- 3.5 Children's Centres were established in three phases starting with the most disadvantaged areas. The resources for Children's Centres are based on the local level of need. The two phase 3 Children's Centres in Westdene and Preston Park offer a limited range of services. In reality they act as additional venues for Hollingbury & Patcham and Hollingdean Children's Centres so the proposal is to consult on changing their status from designated to linked site. This means they would be inspected by Ofsted together with their linked Children's Centre. It will not change the level of existing services.
- 3.6 There are five existing linked sites to main designated Children's Centres which improve access for parents: Coldean and Bevenden (linked to Moulsecomb), Saltdean (linked to the Deans), Goldstone (linked to Hangleton) and Fairlight (linked to City View). The linked sites established in Phase 2 included part-time receptionist posts. This was not the case for Phase 3: Fairlight, Westdene and Preston Park. The proposal is to consult on no longer funding receptionist posts in Coldean, Saltdean and Goldstone.
- 3.7 The main change to the budget proposal is to reduce the Children's Centre saving from £500,000 to £323,000. This is 11% of the total cost of £2,881,000. Part of the saving will be achieved by the Value for Money programme contributing £50,000 towards Early Parenting Assessment Programme. There are also plans to charge services for their use of Children's Centres. The actual reduction in Children's Centre funding is therefore £239,000. The Children's Centre budget underspent last year. This was due to a combination of factors including alternative funding for childcare places for two year olds, more accurate information on premises costs and running cost savings. Based on analysis of the budgets this year £160,000 can be found without any reduction in services. The proposal to reduce reception posts will save another £34,000. The proposal is to find the remaining saving of £45,000 by not filling vacant posts.

Nurseries (Proposed saving of £75,000 – 12%)

- 3.8 The budget proposals include reducing the subsidy by £75,000 by increasing occupancy as a result of the increased funding for two year olds, reviewing staffing structures and reviewing fees to include higher charges for children under 3 to reflect higher staff ratios. More details will be included in the annual Fees and Charges paper.

Childcare Sufficiency and Quality (£134,000 – moving £59,000 to the Dedicated Schools Grant and saving £75,000). Graduate Leader Fund (£50,000 into the DSG)

- 3.9 The Council has a statutory duty to provide information, advice and training to private, voluntary and independent early years and childcare settings for both early years and school age childcare. The Early Years Foundation Stage which sets the standards which all the early years providers must meet, states that the

daily experience of children in early years settings and the overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

- 3.9 Brighton and Hove has a very successful strategy for improving the quality of childcare provision. In Brighton and Hove 86% of early years providers (childminders and group settings) are rated good or outstanding compared with 73% in England. The Early Years strategy includes:
- Advice for all providers (including childminders) on the EYFS including safeguarding and the new requirement to complete a two year old developmental check. Targeted support for providers based on annual quality reviews, focussing on providers with disadvantaged children and/ or satisfactory Ofsted inspections.
 - A quality assurance programme (Quality Improvement in Learning and Teaching). A new Healthy Early Years Years (HEY) programme is also offered covering healthy eating, exercise and personal and emotional development.
 - Specialist support for children with special needs and children with English as an Additional Language.
 - Training and bursaries for the childcare workforce including the Graduate Leader Fund (see appendix 1), support with sustainability and business advice.

3.11 The Early Years strategy is funded by a combination of the Dedicated School Grant and the Early Intervention Grant. In order to protect Children’s Centre services savings have been increased in this area including moving education related funding (£59,000) into the DSG for the management and administration of the two year scheme and for the Graduate Leader Fund (£50,000). Savings of £75,000 will include reducing sustainability grants because of the increased occupancy and funding for disadvantaged two year olds and providing more information for childcare providers on-line.

Family Information Service (proposed saving of £16,000 – 7%)

3.12 The Council has a statutory duty to provide information to parents. The Family Information Service has re-focused to give the most support to families with the highest level of need. Significant progress has been made with channel shifting families who are able to self serve with increased web hits and a reduction in phone calls. The savings will come from a reduction in printed marketing costs.

Activity	July – Sept 2011	July - Sept 2012	% change
Calls to helpline	1764	1296	26.5% decrease
Web hits	16876	34393	104% increase

3.13 A member of the FIS team works as part of the Social Work Advice, Contact and Assessment Service (ACAS) offering information, advice and guidance to families and practitioners and to Social Workers. The FIS team are also piloting casework with Children’s Centre targeted families in Tarner, Moulsecomb and Whitehawk to support with debt, accessing benefits, food and fuel poverty, housing issues and generally accessing the help they need.

Out of School Childcare (Extended Schools Start Up) £20,000 saving proposed (11%)

3.14 The Government moved funding for supporting extended schools, including childcare funding, into individual schools' budgets in 2011/12. The Council no longer provides funding for childcare run by schools. Schools have not used their budgets to fund private and voluntary childcare providers who care for their children. The Council has therefore continued to support private and voluntary sector providers with sustainability funding (including subsidised places and grants), inclusion and support for quality. The proposed reduction is £20,000 (11% of the budget). This will lead to 20% fewer subsidised places with an impact on low income families and may affect the sustainability of providers.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 This paper informs the Committee of budget proposals for 2013/14 which will be consulted on as part of the budget consultation. Local consultations will be organised on the changes to Children's Centres.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 The financial implications are contained in the body of the report. The following table includes a summary of the proposals.

	Total saving	Other sources of funding	Net reduction
Childcare Sufficiency/Quality	134,000	59,000	75,000
Graduate Leader Fund	50,000	50,000	0
Family Information Service	16,000		16,000
Out of school childcare	20,000		20,000
CC Citywide Costs	22,000		22,000
Nurseries	75,000		75,000
Children's Centres	323,000	84,000	239,000
Total	640,000	193,000	447,000

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis Date: 9 October 2012

Legal Implications:

5.2 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to make arrangements for the sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need (a sufficiency duty); ensure that each children's centre (or group of children's centres) has an advisory board and consult where they are considering opening, closing or making a significant change to the services offered by a centre. The guidance includes a presumption against any closures.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson Date: 29 October 2012

Equalities Implications:

5.3 Budget EIAs have been completed and full EIAs will be completed early in 2013.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Children's Centres and Sure Start aim to support sustainable communities by improving outcomes for children and reducing poverty for families.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The key risk is that budget savings will reduce outcomes for children. This has been mitigated by reducing the savings for Children's Centres and focussing services on disadvantaged children.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 The Marmott Review of health inequalities made improving experiences in the early years the priority objective for reducing health and other inequalities.

Corporate / Citywide Implications

- 5.8 Children's Centres and Sure Start support the corporate priority of reducing inequality and ensuring children and young people have the best start in life.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The option of saving £500,000 from the Children's Centre budget was considered but rejected because of the impact on Children's Centre services.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Budget Council meeting in March 2012 agreed savings in the Sure Start budget for 2013/14. This report informs the Committee about the proposals for how these savings will be made.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Childcare Workforce Strategy

Documents in Members' Rooms - None

Background Documents - None

Childcare Workforce Development Strategy

The City Council has a statutory duty to provide information, advice and training to private, voluntary and independent early years and childcare settings - Day Nurseries, Childminders, Pre-Schools/Playgroups and Out-of-school provision. The EYFS (which sets the standards that all early years providers must meet) states that the daily experience of children in early years settings and the overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Qualifications

The EYFS requires that in group settings, the manager must hold at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification and at least half of all other staff must hold at least a full and relevant level 2 qualification. The Council supports early years providers by providing financial support in the form of bursaries and offering guidance about full and relevant qualifications and local approved training organisations.

Recruitment, leadership and CPD

The EYFS also requires early years providers to “ensure that regular staff appraisals are carried out to identify any training needs, and secure opportunities for continued professional development for staff”. This is supported through online information about recruitment and management and the delivery of the “Quilt staffing quality assurance module”. The Council subsidises a programme of non accredited Continual Professional Development to support the early years workforce. Providers are required to contribute to the cost to attend, with the exception of safeguarding training.

The Council also delivers the initial local authority training required by childminders to register with Ofsted and also operates a list of approved providers of paediatric first aid in the city.

Graduate Leadership

The Council financially supports early years providers to employ and retain Early Years Professionals through the provision of the Graduate Leader Fund. Research has shown that the development of young children is directly linked to the qualifications held by the early years workers around them with graduate or teacher-led early education showing the best results. Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) is a professional status for practitioners that work with children aged 0-5. They are graduate level practitioners who recognise their role in improving the experiences and life-chances of children. The aim of the Graduate Leader Fund is to assist early years providers with the financial burden of employing a graduate leader.

Future plans

The government’s response to “Foundations in Quality,” an independent review of early education and childcare qualifications, is due in November 2012. The report makes a series of recommendations, including that all practitioners will be required to have level 3 by 2022 and the development of a new early years route to QTS. Greater demand on the bursary fund is expected due to the withdrawal of Skills Funding Agency money for level 3 qualifications for students aged 24 and above.