

<b>CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 3a</b>
<b>3 DECEMBER 2013</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## Report of the Director for Communities

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### RESPONSE TO CALL-IN OF THE DECISION MADE BY CABINET AND PUBLISHED ON 18 NOVEMBER 2013, REGARDING CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED DELIVERY OF EARLY YEARS SERVICES, INCLUDING CHILDREN'S CENTRES

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To respond to the call-in request submitted by two Councillors regarding the Cabinet decision to approve the public consultation about the proposed changes to the way we deliver our early years, including children's centres, services.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Committee considers the call-in request and the responses set out in this report.

#### 3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report relates to the Supporting Vulnerable People priority in the Single Delivery Plan.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A paper was presented to Cabinet on 18 November 2013 seeking agreement to consult the public on a proposal to change the way early years, including children's centres, services are delivered. The proposal was developed in response to changes in the way the government fund early years services and the impact that this has had on the services available to families with children under the age of 5. Cabinet agreed to a public consultation.

#### 5. KEY ISSUES

##### 5.1 Call-in Request

- 5.1.2 On 21 November 2013 a call-in request was received signed by Cllr Khan and Cllr Murphy on the following grounds:
- (i) Decision contrary or not wholly consistent with the budget.
  - (ii) The decision does not follow the principles of good decision making set out in Article 12 of the Council's Constitution, specifically that the decision maker did not:
    - (a) realistically consider all alternatives and, where reasonably possible, consider the views of the public.

##### 5.1.3 The detailed reasons given were:

"At the briefing for members and cabinet meeting it was explained that this proposal was being driven from a need to make savings. However on 20 November when asked specifically about

Sure Start funding the Prime Minister stated that more money for children's centres had been given to local authorities."

1. Only the targeted hub option with the closure of all open access provision has been proposed to be consulted upon;
2. The statistics used seem to be out of date and a nonsense with some areas having 100% children in deprivation and some Zero;
3. Members nor the public have been given details on Central Government policy changes and how it funded services. The review carried out by PCC and other organisations has not been presented.

## 5.2 Responding to the Call-in Request

5.2.1 **Reason:** "At the briefing for members and cabinet meeting it was explained that this proposal was being driven from a need to make savings. However on 20 November when asked specifically about Sure Start funding the Prime Minister stated that more money for children's centres had been given to local authorities."

**Response:** Children's Centres used to be funded by a specific grant, this has now changed and children's centres no longer have protected funding. If the council wants to fund children's centres this has to come from the main grant settlement the council gets. The Department for Communities and Local Government has outlined that the main settlement grant will be reducing by 0.92% in 2014/15 and 8.5% in 2015/16. We are unaware of any formal announcement of new funding for children's centres.

5.2.2 **Reason:** Only the targeted hub option with the closure of all open access provision has been proposed to be consulted upon;

**Response:** It was stated in the Cabinet paper and Consultation paper that we were considering a number of alternative uses of children's centres; for example additional child care provision and school places or school facilities. The consultation paper asks for the public's views on the proposal and invites other views and ideas on how we should deliver our early years, including children's centres, services in the future; particularly in relation to the reduced funding to local authorities and the other early years services in place.

5.2.3 **Reason:** The statistics used seem to be out of date and a nonsense with some areas having 100% children in deprivation and some Zero;

**Response:** The statistics used come from the national indicator tool "IDACI" (Income deprivation affecting children index) this was used to determine which of Peterborough's Super Output Areas (SOA's) fall into the top 30% most deprived.

IDACI Measures:

- Income deprivation
- Employment deprivation
- Health deprivation and disability
- Education skills and training deprivation
- Barriers to housing and services
- Living environment deprivation
- Crime

Children's centre reach areas can consist of several SOA's – for example in Gladstone children's centre reach area, there are 6 SOA's. All 6 SOA's in this reach area fall within the top 30% most deprived IDACI ranking, therefore it is considered that the proportion of children living in the top 30% area of deprivation is 100%, as all 6 SOA's fall within this top 30% ranking.

Wittering children's centre reach area also consists of 6 SOA's, however none of these fall within the top 30% most deprived on the IDACI ranking. It is therefore considered that the proportion of children in Wittering reach area who living in the top 30% area of deprivation is 0%.

There has been changes to our demography since IDACI in 2011, but these are not significant enough to change where the highest number of children living in deprivation are; however in recognition of this we have been clear that we will operate outreach services to meet the needs of children living in deprived households, but where they are not in the high density deprivation areas.

- 5.2.4 **Reason:** Members nor the public have been given details on Central Government policy changes and how it funded services. The review carried out by PCC and other organisations has not been presented.

**Response:** In the Cabinet Paper and the Consultation paper the new government funding streams are noted:

- Free Child Care for some 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds – this has brought about 10 million pounds into the City
- Increase in Health Visitors – this will double the number in the City by 2015 to 54
- Troubled Families grant

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 If the 'Call in' is referred back to Cabinet it may halt or delay consultation with the public that have been planned.

## 7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 A full programme of consultation has been planned as noted in the Cabinet paper.

## 8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 After considering the request to call-in and all relevant advice, the Committee may either;
- a) Not agree to the request to call-in, when the decision shall take effect;
  - b) Refer the decision back to the decision maker for recommendations, setting out its concerns; or
  - c) Refer the matter to full Council

## 9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 9.1 Report to Cabinet dated 18 November 2013.

## 10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 None

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