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| <b>CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> | <b>Agenda Item No. 5</b> |
| <b>14 JULY 2014</b>  | <b>Public Report</b>     |

## **Report of the Director for Communities**

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### **NEW VISION FOR EARLY YEARS SERVICES INCLUDING CHILDREN’S CENTRES IN PETERBOROUGH**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update and inform the Scrutiny Committee of the progress in implementing the proposals described in the document ‘A New Vision for Early Years, including Children’s Centres, in Peterborough’.

The report will update Scrutiny on the following:

- The progress made in securing tenants for the de-designated centres;
- The process undertaken in determining appropriate tenants for the de-designated centres;
- The progress made in developing the early years universal core entitlement delivered from each of the de-designated centres;
- The new contractual arrangements for the delivery of the Children’s Centre Hubs and outreach activities with Spurgeons and Barnardos.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 For Scrutiny to note and comment on the progress so far in the delivery of the agreed ‘New Vision for Early Years, including Children’s Centres in Peterborough’.

#### **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 Cabinet gave approval for the implementation of the proposals in connection with the re-visioning of children’s centre delivery in February 2014. From the point of the decision, significant work has been undertaken to secure continued future early years delivery from the de-designated children’s centres. The main focus of the work has been to identify appropriate tenants to manage the buildings and take on the full liabilities associated with the running costs of these buildings. In addition, future tenants would have to agree to continue to offer the community access to universal early years’ services from the buildings.

To date, future tenancy arrangements have been identified for most of the de-designated centres. The future tenants for these children’s centre buildings have been identified through the applying the following criteria:

- The future financial sustainability of the proposed organisation seeking tenancy

- The organisation seeking tenancy commitment to early years services

A full options appraisal in relation to the identification of appropriate tenancy arrangements for the de-designated centres can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Following the consultation period for 'A New Vision for Early Years, including Children's Centres' cabinet agreed to reduce the £1.2m savings required by £100,000 in order to ensure that a core entitlement of universal early years services could still be delivered from the de-designated children's centre buildings. This core entitlement will consist of:

- Continued access to midwifery and health visiting services from the centre buildings
- Access to one early childhood development session per week facilitated by an early years professional from the centre buildings
- Support for mothers who are at risk of post-natal depression through the extension of the Connecting Mums project run by Peterborough and Fenland Mind
- Support for groups of parents who wish to run their own groups from the centre buildings

Midwifery and Health Visiting services have agreed to continue operating from the de-designated centres and support has been made available to ensure that these services can continue, where needed, from the centre buildings for 52 weeks of the year.

Agreements have been made with Peterborough and Fenland Mind and with the Peterborough Council for Voluntary Services to deliver programmes in the de-designated centres. Peterborough and Fenland Mind will deliver support activities for mothers who have been identified as being at risk of post-natal depression. They will deliver group programmes and individual mentoring/outreach from the Children's Centre Hubs and through the de-designated centres. Peterborough Council for Voluntary Services has been commissioned by the council to support emerging parent groups set up their own organisations and use the space in the de-designated centres to deliver programmes to parents and families in the immediate community.

The Early Years team in the Communities Directorate has been commissioned to deliver the early childhood development sessions. This will guarantee high quality delivery by a professional who is trained to Level 4 or above in early childhood development.

In addition, City College Peterborough are using their Community Learning funding to work with interested groups of parents from the de-designated centres to run family learning activities and to develop a network of family learning champions.

Contract variation discussions have taken place, and new contracts have been signed, with both Spurgeons and Barnardos, the city's contracted providers for the remaining children's centres. Both contracts identify clearly the expected outcomes in terms of supporting vulnerable families and communities within their designated reach areas.

## **5. KEY ISSUES**

5.1 Initial concerns voiced by parents during the consultation period around continuing to access early years' services locally have been mitigated through the securing of appropriate tenancy agreements for the de-designated centres. These tenancy agreements with identified tenants will secure the delivery of the core entitlement offer as identified above from each of the de-designated centres.

5.2 In the short term, because of timescales, Eye Children's Centre will continue to be managed by the council. It is likely, however, that a suitable tenant will be secured for this building in the near future.

5.3 Discussions with midwifery and health visiting services are continuing in respect of:

- Securing access to the de-designated buildings for 52 weeks of the year where needed;
- The management of new birth registration data and the use of E Start the children's

- centre information management system;
- Arrangements in relation to the lone working of health staff in the de-designated buildings;
- The IT and telecommunications support required by both midwives and health visitors.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Officers have met with the users of each of the de-designated centres and have informed them, in principle, of the name of the proposed organisation assuming the tenancy of the building.

In addition, meetings have taken place with groups of parents in Hampton and with the Save Peterborough's Children's Centres Action Group.

Peterborough Centre for Voluntary Services will shortly be meeting with parents in the communities served by the de-designated centres to provide information and support in relation to establishing parent led groups within the area.

## **7. NEXT STEPS**

Ensure communication strategy is in place and that parents in the community have access to information in relation to what is being delivered from each of the de-designated centres.

Ensure effective arrangements are in place to maintain the opening of the de-designated centres during the summer holiday period.

Secure all contractual/lease/community use arrangements with the incoming anchor tenants in preparation for full delivery in September 2014.

## **8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 8.1 None

## **9. APPENDICES**

- 9.1 **Appendix 1** - De-designated centres

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