

DECISION REPORT – CABINET DECISION

12 February 2018

Development of a Family Support Service Phase 1 for Somerset

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Christine Lawrence (Public Health & Well-Being) and Cllr Frances Nicholson (Children & Families)

Division and Local Member(s): All

Lead Officer: Julian Wooster, Director of Children Services and Trudi Grant, Director of Public Health

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	Seen by:	Name	Date
	County Solicitor and Legal Services	Honor Clarke/Tom Woodhams	22/01/18
	Monitoring Officer	Julian Gale/Scott Wooldridge	17/01/18
	Corporate Finance	Kevin Nacey	17/01/18
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	22/01/18
	Commercial & Business Services / Procurement	Richard Williams	22/01/18
	Property	Claire Lovett	31/01/18
	Senior Manager	Trudi Grant Julian Wooster	17/01/18
	Local Member(s)	All	Members Information sheet – 17/01/18
	Cabinet Member	Christine Lawrence (Health & Well-Being) Frances Nicholson (Children & Families)	17/01/18
	Opposition Spokesperson	Jane Lock (Children and families) Amanda Broom	18/01/18
	Relevant Scrutiny Chairman	Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey for Scrutiny Adults and Health Cllr Leigh Redman for Scrutiny Children & Families,	19/01/18 29/01/18
Forward Plan Reference:	Plan Ref: EP/17/11/06		
Summary:	This report and its sister paper sets out the approach to developing and implementing 'early help hubs', now renamed Family Support Service, which will include multi-agency services operating in local communities across Somerset.		

In 2016 full council adopted the Somerset Children & Young People's Plan 2016-2019 (CYPP) which included a priority to 'establish early help hubs in local communities offering multi-agency integrated services that identify and support children and families who need additional help and can intervene quickly'.

The CYPP also includes agreed actions to develop proposals for the future use of children's centre buildings in the context of an 'integrated early help offer'.

The development of the Family Support Service aims to:

- Achieve better outcomes for families; engaging hard to reach families and providing services where they need them
- Provide more effective services; reducing duplication and providing more community based support and guidance
- Provide consistent and coherent services for families in order to tackle health and social inequalities
- Protect frontline services by reducing management and business support functions, and overhead costs associated with buildings
- Respond to the end of the government Troubled Families grant in 2020, and the reduction in DoH grant for public health

The Family Support Service will be developed over three phases.

Phase 1 (2018/19) addresses the development of the Family Support Service and the delivery of a co-ordinated and coherent "early help offer" utilising technology and a wide network of local community venues such as families' homes, schools, health centres, village halls and children's centre buildings; this paper addresses the recommendations to deliver this objective.

Phase 2 (2019/20) will address the integration of Public Health Nursing (health visitors and school nurses) with Somerset County Council's (SCC) getset service; this is addressed in the sister paper to this report.

Phase 3 will consider the integration of additional child and adults services to achieve a holistic 'think family' model.

Initial proposals were consulted upon in Autumn 2017 and included the development of an integrated Family Support Service and how the service could be enhanced by using technology, as a source of access to information and advice, as an alternative contact method, (but not replacing face to face contact.) and providing a wide network of places in local communities delivering early childhood services. The service would make use of venues appropriate to the support being offered, such as in families' homes, schools, health centres, village halls and children's centre buildings

	<p>The proposals also looked to remove the “Sure Start Children’s Centre” status or designation from 16 current buildings and develop 8 into Family Centres linked to a wider community network of support to reflect the outreach and enhanced family visiting model and in line with the statutory guidance.</p> <p>This paper considers phase 1 and the best approach to develop the Family Support Service using a variety of methods including targeted outreach and individual support in family homes; universal and targeted group activity in community venues; and online provision of information, advice and signposting.</p> <p>The responses to the consultation will help with the detail of the new service. SCC believes that the proposals consulted on remain the best way to improve access, integrate support and get more from the resources available, whilst meeting the demand for childcare and nursery places.</p> <p>It is clear from the responses that there continues to be a misconception that changing the designation status would mean a reduction in service or that families would have to travel to one of the 8 Family Centres. A reduction in designated locations would not mean any reduction in the services available. Services are already delivered in family homes and in over 150 community venues across Somerset. This will continue and we would hope families would access support locally rather than needing to travel to a Family Centre.</p> <p>This paper presents the consultation responses, the Family Support Service offer and final proposals for children’s centre locations to inform the decision making regarding phase 1 of the development of the Family Support Services during 2018/19.</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p>	<p>That the Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Considers the consultation report and the council response as outlined in appendices 1 and 2 2. Agrees to proceed with the original proposals and to implement Phase 1 of the proposed integrated Family Support Service (subject to capital funding being allocated by Full Council in February 2018) and specifically : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers the Family Support Service offer providing support and services across Somerset as detailed in appendix 3, noting that the service offer is regularly reviewed and responds to the needs of the local community. • Approves the revenue funding proposals to deliver the Family Support Service, including the Children’s Centres that retain their Sure Start designation as outlined in section 1.5.3 and appendix 4.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves the development of plans for future consideration by Cabinet regarding Minehead, Wellington, Chard and Yeovil as outlined in appendix 4. • Approves the changed status of the following buildings by de-designating the following buildings as Sure Start Children’s Centres, and the proposed management changes noting that they continue to provide early childhood services as shown in section 1.5.4 below and appendix 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victoria Park, Bridgwater ▪ Hamp, Bridgwater ▪ Brock House, Norton Fitzwarren ▪ The Hollies, Taunton ▪ Wellington ▪ Bishop's Lydeard ▪ Alcombe, Minehead ▪ Little Vikings, Watchet ▪ Birchfield, Yeovil ▪ Oaklands, Yeovil ▪ Chard ▪ Little Marsh, Ilchester ▪ Balsam Centre, Wincanton ▪ The Bridge Centre, Frome ▪ The Link Centre, Coleford ▪ The House, Shepton Mallet • Agrees to delegate any further decisions regarding the operational implementation of the proposals in this report to the Director of Children’s Services and Director of Public Health, with support from the Commercial and Business Services Director. • Requests that the Director of Children’s Services and the Director of Public Health report back to Cabinet to seek approval for Phase 3 of the proposals.
<p>Reasons for Recommendations:</p>	<p>The development of the Family Support Service is a significant change in Somerset and it is critically important that partners, stakeholders, service users and the public are involved. The public consultation on initial proposals garnered nearly 850 responses and the recommendations in this report reflect the feedback received. The feedback will be further used to shape the development of the Family Support Service through Phase 2 and beyond.</p> <p>Feedback from the consultation demonstrated significant support for an integrated Family Support Service that concentrates on areas where help is most needed, improves families’ access to support and brings together the help currently available through children’s centres, early help and health teams. Feedback also supports efforts to improve the availability of easily-accessible online information, signposting and support.</p>

	<p>Overall the outcomes for children in areas of deprivation in Somerset are significantly below outcomes for children living in the county's more affluent areas. The development of the Family Support Service particularly in areas of need will improve the focus on meeting this need in a more flexible way.</p> <p>Statistical indicators show that the areas with highest deprivation measured using the IDACI are generally also the areas where outcomes for children are worst. These areas often have the highest population density of children..</p> <p>SCC must ensure the most efficient use of taxpayers' money in delivering positive outcomes for Somerset's children. Rationalisation of SCC buildings and development of new management and financial arrangements with partners will improve the utilisation of buildings and ensure they are more effectively used to support a range of frontline services and community initiatives. Eleven of the 16 buildings will provide at least 150 additional childcare places thereby helping SCC to meet its statutory sufficiency duty for early years.</p> <p>Family support services provided by SCC must be as effective as possible, and targeted at those most in need of support, whilst also ensuring wider community support for families is available.</p> <p>Reductions in government grants require efficiencies to be made by reducing expenditure on overheads, management and business support and operating costs associated with buildings to ensure frontline family support delivery is protected as far as possible.</p>
<p>Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:</p>	<p>The development of the Family Support Service approach supports the following plans:</p> <p>Health & Well-Being (HWB) strategy; the service will contribute to the shared vision that</p> <p><i>'People live healthy and independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities with timely and easy access to high-quality and efficient public services when they need them.'</i></p> <p>Children and Young People's Plan 2016-2019, specifically Programme 2 'improving the health and well-being of children and young people' and Programme 5 'providing help early and effectively':</p> <p><i>'To establish early help hubs in local communities offering multi-agency integrated services that identify and support children and families who need additional help and can intervene quickly and effectively.'</i></p> <p>Somerset's County Plan - part of the vision being to reduce inequalities wherever we can and empower people to take</p>

	<p>responsibility for their own health and well-being.</p> <p>Public Health Nursing (PHN) services are based on the principle of proportionate universalism – so the service is provided to all, with more resource being targeted to those in greater need. This approach with its focus on equity aims to tackle inequality in health and social outcomes.</p> <p>Plans to rationalise the children’s centre estate are in line with SCC’s refreshed approach to asset rationalisation approved in November 2017. The Family Support Service will benefit from, and make use of where appropriate, new delivery opportunities enabled by the One Public Estate programme and other initiatives associated with SCC asset management plan.</p>
<p>Consultations and co-production undertaken:</p>	<p>The Children and Young People’s Plan 2016-2019 was fully consulted on in its development, final agreement and approval. The plan clearly sets out the agreement to develop integrated early help hubs now known as the Family Support Services and to consider the future use of children’s centre buildings.</p> <p>In 2013/14 there was a public consultation on the use of Somerset’s children’s centres. Decisions taken in November 2013, April 2014 and August 2014 concerned the de-designation of a number of children’s centres and the development of alternative management arrangements for some.</p> <p>The vision and approach for the Family Support Service has been discussed with a wide range of stakeholders. Initial proposals were developed with the support of staff and partner organisations. Consultation and engagement will continue to ensure the effective implementation of Phase 1 and Phase 2.</p> <p>A full stakeholder and public consultation into the development of the Family Support Service was held over 10 weeks between September and December 2017. The consultation exercise was independently facilitated and undertaken according to SCC guidance with support from SCC’s Communication’s Team. See Section 1.5.1 below and Appendices 1 and 2 for more details, the full report and SCC’s response.</p> <p>Consultation and briefings with elected members, chairs of scrutiny, and opposition spokespersons were also undertaken as part of this activity.</p> <p>Through the implementation of proposed changes in Phase 1 the specific details of the aligned and increasingly integrated service offer in each area will be developed through co-production at a community level, actively engaging with children, parents and families, and wider stakeholders including the voluntary and community sector.</p>

<p>Financial Implications:</p>	<p>The CYPP is costed and shows the budgets for early help and children’s centres (getset) as £4.29m annually. Currently 30% of this funds overheads, building and management costs.</p> <p>The planned integration of getset, health visiting and school nursing teams will reduce duplication of staff activity with families through more effective planning and skill mixed teams. It will also reduce overall costs through sharing premises, management, administration and other overheads. Further efficiencies will be delivered through future phases of integration and by greater use of digital technology to support a more agile, flexible workforce.</p> <p>The Troubled Families Programme provides a core and payment-by-results grant from Department of Communities and Local Government which is due to end in 2020. This income currently (in 2017/18) funds 22% of the getset service.</p> <p>To support the effective implementation of Phase 1, alterations and improvements are required in some buildings; the Corporate Property Group (CPG) has estimated £280,000 approx. would be required. It is anticipated that the majority of the cost can be funded via existing property programmes and if necessary a capital bid will be prepared.</p> <p>Of the 16 buildings CPG is proposing alternative arrangements for, 12 of these are owned by SCC and 11 will be transferred into the ownership of a third party, such as a school or nursery to create additional early years places. Whilst not creating a capital receipt from a commercial disposal, additional early years places are created helping SCC to meet its sufficiency duty which also means less call on capital financing for new buildings for childcare or school places.</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p>	<p>The Family Support Service will support the Children Act 2004 which requires partners to co-operate to improve the well-being of children in the county, as well as discharging the Council’s functions regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.</p> <p>Legislation about children’s centres is contained in the Childcare Act 2006 supported by statutory guidance updated in 2013. Children’s centres were inspected under a dedicated Ofsted inspection framework and while the framework still exists, its use has ceased. Somerset’s last children’s centre inspections were during 2014. The government indicated it would consult on and update the children’s centre guidance for the past 2 years but this activity has yet to commence. Early help arrangements which encompass the work provided in children’s centres is legislated in Working Together guidance and included in Ofsted’s Inspection Framework of Children’s Services.</p>

	<p>Buildings constructed or brought into service as children’s centres with grants under the Sure Start programme are subject to capital claw back if they are not used for the provision of early childhood services. SCC Legal Services has provided advice on the risk of claw back, and we have sought advice from other local authorities on the service offer being provided. The Department for Education (DfE) does not provide clear advice about the likelihood of claw back but has stated that it is aware of the sector’s efforts to reduce the cost base.</p> <p>There are legal implications in any new or change to existing property arrangement. These will be considered in relation to cost and deliverability of detailed proposals outlined in appendix 4</p>
<p>HR Implications:</p>	<p>There are no immediate and significant HR implications in Phase 1. The main change is likely to be for getset staff where bases for staff accommodation and for claiming travel expenses may change. Advice from HR and engagement with associated trade unions has been sought throughout the process and will continue as we work up further details on how this will affect individuals.</p> <p>As the final service model is identified and progress toward Phase 2 continues, Public Health and getset will require HR support for the formal staff engagement process and to consult with those affected staff and associated trade unions. This is detailed in the accompanying report to this paper.</p> <p>All HR activity will be compliant with relevant policy and guidance and will be supported by SCC’s HR Advisory Service.</p>
<p>Risk Implications:</p>	<p>Any delay in a decision on the future of SCC’s children’s centres could impact on the Family Support Service development and have a knock-on effect on the delivery of Phase 2. There are budget reduction and external contract dependencies associated with Phase 2.</p> <p>The development of an integrated family support service model will consider how the service should be delivered with due regard to areas of deprivation, rurality and accessibility by some of Somerset’s most vulnerable families.</p> <p>According to the children’s centre statutory guidance, local authorities must ensure there is consultation before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening a new children’s centre • Making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through the children’s centre • Closing a children’s centre; or reducing services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a Sure Start children’s centre

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation should explain how the local authority will continue to meet the needs of families with children under five as part of any reorganisation of services. The recent public consultation was planned and facilitated in order to meet this requirement. Details of the early childhood service offer available across Somerset is included at appendix 3. <p>There is a risk of the DfE Sure Start grant being clawed back if the use of the building and the impact on families has not been adequately considered. DfE have activated clawback recently in other LAs. The likeliness of this happening in Somerset has been reduced as all de-designated children’s centres will continue to be used for some kind of early childhood services, such as additional nursery places, or classroom space.</p> <p>Any significant service change will impact on the workforce and while some will welcome this, others may not. There is the potential for reduced morale and productivity and increased staff turnover, which may jeopardise the service’s ability to maintain the quality and consistency of provision. The situation will be carefully monitored through operational management, and support from HR and other specialist services will be engaged where necessary.</p>						
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Likelihood</td> <td>4</td> <td>Impact</td> <td>3</td> <td>Risk Score</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </table>	Likelihood	4	Impact	3	Risk Score	12
Likelihood	4	Impact	3	Risk Score	12		
<p>Other Implications (including due regard implications):</p>	<p>Equalities Implications</p> <p>The Family Support Service model will ensure that children and families receive effective joined-up support starting with a universal health and care offer that is available to all, through to more targeted and specialist support for those that need it.</p> <p>The increased focus on front line delivery in areas of highest need will ensure more of Somerset’s most vulnerable families are supported to achieve outcomes comparable with their peers.</p> <p>A set of high-level equality impact assessments were developed to support the initial proposals. This has been followed up by a process which looks at the detailed proposals area-by-area, and considers if there are any impacts on children, young people, families, staff and communities, and then identifies appropriate mitigation activity where appropriate. Should there be a change to location of service delivery the following considerations will be taken and considered as part of the decision making process for that move.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for change • Distance between locations/venues, including how people get there • Accessibility of new location/venue <p>Work to finalise the service specification for the Family Support Service will continue and as part of this work an EIA will be produced to identify impacts of the changes and show due</p>						

	<p>regard for any planned changes to the service.</p> <p>The SCC Equalities Officer has advised and supported the process to develop the model and proposals included in this report.</p>
<p>Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):</p>	<p>The CYPP vision and priorities have been reported to and discussed at Scrutiny regularly.</p> <p>Initial proposals for the Family Support Service were discussed with taken to Scrutiny on 28th July 2017, and the committee's feedback helped shape the public consultation exercise.</p> <p>The consultation findings and final proposal for the Family Support Service development were reported to Scrutiny in January 2018.</p> <p>The report and appendices were discussed in detail at Scrutiny and any questions were answered.</p> <p>In response to a question around the availability of early childhood support and services, it was confirmed that this decision does not reduce the number of services available.</p> <p>Commitment was sought that in Minehead, Wellington, Yeovil and Chard engagement with local communities would take place to help to define future enhanced service offers.</p> <p>Clarification was sought and provided that technology developments within the service offer would be designed to provide access, information and advice as well as alternative methods of contact as an addition to face to face contact.</p> <p>As changes are progressed the Committee felt that clear and concise information would need to be shared with all staff and service users.</p>

1. Background

1.1. National Context - the future of Children Centres

Recent national publications have advocated a move to 'family hubs', and many local authorities have been refining their early help and children's centre offer to one that is integrated, co-ordinated and flexible with a range of partner services involved across children's and adult services. Details of these publications are contained below under Background Papers but key points include:

- Department for Education research published in December 2015 on the traditional building based Children Centre model has shown that after 6 years of the Sure Start programme there is no strong or consistent

evidence about the impact of children's centres, particularly in achieving better outcomes for the most vulnerable and hard to reach families.

- Action for children evaluation work on children's centres advocated for increased integration particularly with early years education and health visiting services.
- The Family Hub model was initially proposed in 2014 by the Centre for Social Justice to provide a more integrated, preventative approach to supporting the country's most vulnerable families; offering *local nerve centres co-ordinating all family-related support including universal services and specialist help...to meet both parents' most pressing needs*.
- An All Party Parliamentary Group on Children's Centres reported in July 2016 giving 12 recommendations which focus on health and development, employment support and childcare, relationship support and supporting families with complex needs. The report advocates family hubs being at the heart of local areas' Health and Wellbeing strategies, delivering services through wider community venues from pre-birth to 105 years.
- The Children's Commissioner published a discussion paper in October 2016 on family hubs. The report advocates "building on the existing infrastructure of children's centres to provide both statutory and voluntary approaches to tackling the root causes of intergenerational poverty, family breakdown and poor outcomes for children".

Key policy reports of recent years, such as the Graham Allen review of Early Intervention, Eileen Munro's reports on child protection, and the Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) Green Paper (DfE, 2011) have all made the case for a holistic, integrated service for children and young people.

As part of the transformation programme in Somerset, examples of good practice have been, and will continue to be gathered and assessed including the DfE Innovation Programme (which includes examples of integration and the impacts achieved e.g. Family Safeguarding Teams in Hertfordshire, North Yorkshire "No Wrong Door") and the Early Intervention Foundation resources. Reported benefits include improved outcomes for children, reduced costs or improved cost/benefit ratios, and reductions in referrals and re-referrals to children's social care.

Further qualitative studies by the EIF show a range of positive effects reported by professionals involved in integrated services:

Processes

- Increased understanding, trust and co-operation between services
- Better communication and consistent implementation of services
- Less duplication of processes across agencies

Outputs

- More responsive and appropriate services

- Better access to services and increased user involvement
- More cost-effective delivery

Outcomes for children and families

- Improved cognitive and school performance
- Improved general physical health
- Enhanced social behaviour
- Improved parenting and family relations

1.2 National context – current Children’s Centres arrangements

The core purpose of Sure Start children’s centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- child development and school readiness;
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
- child and family health and life chances”.

A Sure Start children’s centre is defined in the Childcare Act 2006 “as a place or a group of places:

- which is managed by or on behalf of the local authority with a view to securing early childhood services in the local authority’s area are made available in an integrated way;
- through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and
- at which activities for young children are provided.

It is clear from the statutory definition of a Sure Start children’s centres that they are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, than about providing premises in particular geographical areas.

Early childhood services are defined as:

- early years provision (early education and childcare);
- social services functions of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents; and
- information and advice services for parents and prospective parents.

1.3 Somerset’s Early Help approach

Somerset’s Early Help Strategy 2016-2019 and Pledge outlines the partnership agreement that early help is everyone’s responsibility.

Early help services are underpinned by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board “Effective support for children and families guidance” which outlines actions that all organisations should undertake in safeguarding and supporting children.

The use of the Early Help Assessment as part of that guidance ensures partners accurately identify needs, issues and risks in families and the support needs required to address those needs.

An early help advice hub and consultation helpline via Somerset Direct exist to support early help practitioners in this work.

Somerset County Council's getset services were established in 2014 encompassing children's centre services (universal and targeted support for 0-4 year olds) and family support work for families with children aged 0-19 years. The service is countywide and delivered in family homes, community buildings and in children's centre buildings.

The service delivers the national DCLG troubled families programme which aims for key partners for example, councils, health, education, DWP, police, youth offending service etc. to work together to identify and support the most complex and chaotic families that tend to draw on a vast array of services. Historically services have worked in isolation and focused primarily on the member of the family requiring a service i.e. a child or an adult, whereas the programme advocates a key worker approach who co-ordinates appropriate support for the entire family, understanding the impact of parental issues on children and vice versa. The aim is for this "think family" approach to be embedded in the family support services model.

Getset is just one service providing early help for children and families in Somerset.

1.4 The Vision and proposed model for Family Support Services

As agreed in the Children and Young People's Plan, Somerset County Council has a vision to create 'an integrated universal health and targeted early intervention service that provides an holistic response to the needs of children and their families: where needs are met as early as possible by appropriately skilled professionals' now referred to as a Family Support Service.

Model - The proposal is for a locality approach, providing an early help and universal health and well-being integrated team for children and young people aged 0-19 (up to 25 years for children with additional needs). The teams will be made up of a multi-disciplinary core team with links to other members of a wider multiagency team to support children and families in a local area. The service will deliver evidence-based interventions and will be measured on the impact of its outcomes. This will provide support to children and families across all tiers, from universal up to tier 4 child protection.

Phase 2 of this service will include getset services currently delivered by SCC and Public Health Nursing currently commissioned by SCC and delivered by Somerset Partnership. Further phases will include other services for children and families.

The CYPP 2016-2019 articulates the wider multiagency partnership agreement to *'Establish early help hubs in local communities offering multi-agency integrated services that identify and support children and families who need*

additional help and can intervene quickly and effectively.”

A detailed service specification for the new Family Support Service is now under development and will articulate the range of support and activities that will be provided in communities working with other partners like schools, other health services, community groups etc.

1.5 Proposals for future use of Children’s Centre buildings

As part of the development of the Family Support Service there needs to be a greater emphasis on the services supporting children, families and communities and there is no requirement for staff to deliver services from council buildings to achieve this aim in the future. It is envisaged that other community assets will be utilised, and much of the service e.g. home visiting and digital advice and information, does not rely on buildings at all. This supports the statement in the statutory guidance that Children’s Centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available as about providing premises in particular geographical areas. This is particularly true for rural areas given access challenges and a need for a more flexible response to reach all communities.

Following review in 2013/14, the getset service currently delivers its services in family homes and from a variety of paid-for community venues including its 24 Sure Start Children’s Centres.

Children’s centre buildings are important community assets so CPG has made every effort to ensure they can be used to their full potential in the communities they are located in. A building by building review has been carried out taking into account how each building is currently used, the needs of families in the local area, previous cabinet decisions on changing management arrangements of some buildings, along with the Council’s statutory requirement to increase the number of good quality early years education places. Alternative SCC need for space in the various locations has also been considered and the cost of securing alternative non-SCC accommodation has been factored into the recommendations.

1.5.1 Consultation process and responses

It is vital that any change is guided by the analysis of relevant data and the views and voices of service users, staff, partners and wider stakeholders.

Initial discussion about the proposed development of what were then described as family hubs began with staff in getset and the public health nursing service in Spring 2017. Staff workshops explored what an integrated service model might look like and what it could achieve. These sessions enabled established good practice (such as the Healthy Child Meetings, young parent’s programmes and health and wellbeing clinics in secondary schools) to be discussed and the principles applied to other aspects of family support.

Staff across both the getset and public health nursing services were positive about the opportunities service integration offered, and actively engaged with the debate.

The vision and approach for the Family Support Service has been discussed with a wide range of stakeholders. Initial proposals were developed with the support of staff and partner organisations. Consultation and engagement will continue to ensure the effective implementation of Phase 1 and Phase 2.

To ensure the voice of service users, partners and key stakeholders is reflected in the final proposal a formal consultation was mandated by a Cabinet Member non-key decision in September 2017. Following production of initial proposals for the new family support service and the development of family centres, this formal consultation was undertaken from 25th September to 1st December 2017.

A range of engagement methods were used for the consultation, including an online questionnaire, drop-in sessions at accessible community venues, focus groups with identified target groups and briefings for staff, SCC members and key partners and stakeholder. The consultation was widely publicised via traditional and digital media, and generated significant public interest.

The consultation report and response to consultation report are provided at appendices 1 and 2. The views of our service users and wider population are reflected in these proposals, as they have experienced how the service is delivered and what has worked well and what could be improved.

The responses to the consultation will help with the detail of the new service. SCC believe that the proposals consulted on remain the best way to improve access, integrate support and get more from the resources available, while meeting the demand for childcare and nurse places.

- There continues to be a clear misconception that changing the status of specific buildings would mean a reduction in service. A reduction in buildings funded and maintained would not mean any reduction in the services available.
- Nearly 300 regular support services and activities are already being delivered in nearly 150 locations across the county, the majority of them do not use children's centre buildings. This would continue and we would look to develop what is on offer in response to the local need. This detail is shown in appendix 3.
- Nurseries that are currently operating from children's centre buildings will continue to operate and in some areas be expanded and enhanced.
- All the universal and targeted support, such as Health Visitor services, will continue in community venues and in people homes.
- The consultation has highlighted areas where further work and planning with partners is required, notably Wellington, Chard, Minehead, Bishop's Lydeard and Yeovil. SCC will be exploring these in more detail and at the community venues that are available in these areas. Appendix 4 provides more detail.
- There was broad support for the key principles of integration, focussing spend on services and the potential for greater use of online information.
- There were concerns raised about the move to eight family centres, and

how this translates into the proposals for each district, relating to a concern about a reduction in service and that families would have to travel to one of these eight centres to receive support.

Once decisions have been made by cabinet, nothing will happen immediately and we will be ensuring that the current services are able to continue uninterrupted, seeking suitable alternative venues where needed.

1.5.2 Response to the consultation and rationale for final proposals

Appendix 2 outlines SCC's response to the consultation report highlighting the most common comments and concerns, and how SCC proposes to address those through implementation of the Family Support Service.

There was a misconception that changing the status of a building would mean a reduction in service, and people were not clear what was available for children for families across Somerset. **Appendix 3 provides the detail of the early childhood services available and the venues where support will be available.** It is important to note that this offer will be under ongoing review, allowing for phased implementation of changes where required plus future developments with local partners and reviewing the offer in line with local needs.

Appendix 4 shows details of the proposals for the current 24 children's centre buildings and how they will continue to provide early childhood services. Eight of these buildings, the phase 1 family centres, will be used to co-locate the family support service staff and deliver services. These buildings are owned by SCC and therefore provide the greatest development and flexibility opportunity to create venues that appeal to older children and young people and for future phases of the integration model.

The consultation process has identified further work required to look at potential sites in Wellington, Chard, Minehead and in Yeovil.

1.5.3 It is proposed that the following eight buildings retain their Sure Start Children's Centre designation for the purposes of Department for Education registration.

- Sydenham, Bridgwater
- Highbridge
- Acorns, Taunton
- Hillside, Taunton
- Williton
- Reckleford, Yeovil
- The Key Centre, Frome
- Library Hub, Glastonbury

1.5.4 The remaining 16 Sure Start Children's Centres will have their designation removed. Appendix 4 shows how these buildings will continue to

be used for the delivery of early childhood services and outlines proposals for management and/or ownership changes.

- Victoria Park, Bridgwater
- Hamp, Bridgwater
- Brock House, Norton Fitzwarren
- The Hollies, Taunton
- Wellington
- Bishop's Lydeard
- Alcombe, Minehead
- Little Vikings, Watchet
- Birchfield, Yeovil
- Oaklands, Yeovil
- Chard
- Little Marsh, Ilchester
- Balsam Centre, Wincanton
- The Bridge Centre, Frome
- The Link Centre, Coleford
- The House, Shepton Mallet

1.5.5 Following the consultation exercise SCC is now exploring the potential for sites also being available in Minehead, Wellington and Chard, plus an additional point in Yeovil town centre. Detailed and costed plans will be developed for further consideration and approval.

- Minehead – The Alcombe Centre is owned by West Somerset Council (WSC) and leased by the County Council. In recognition of the feedback from the public consultation on Somerset Family Support Service and Children's Centres, both Somerset County Council (SCC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) are committed to supporting integrated family support services at the Alcombe Centre. Working with partners we would like to extend early childhood and other community services where appropriate. Proposals are currently being jointly explored and the local community and other stakeholders will be kept informed of developments
- Wellington – SCC will take forward discussions with the town council and other partners as to a future site, whilst utilising existing venues to ensure no disruption in service for families
- Chard – SCC will maintain the current provision within Chard but will work with partners to develop better facilities, potentially through the One Public Estate Programme.
- Yeovil – through the One Public Estate programme, SCC is exploring a hub model in the town which the Family Support Service would form part of.

1.6 The process of achieving change and timeline for delivery

A full implementation plan will be finalised, subject to approval of the recommendations of this report, for delivery of the changes during 2018/19, dependant on legal and property requirements.

Further phases of delivering the full vision of Family Support Services will then

take place from 2019 onwards.

1.7 Governance and reporting arrangements

There is a programme of transformation in place with reporting and governance arrangements through the Somerset Children's Trust (SCT), which is the strategic partnership responsible for delivering and overseeing the CYPP. Specific council decisions are overseen through the Senior Leadership Team and Core Council Board, this programme being one of 5 high priority business cases for the council.

A project board is in place with four work streams to ensure the programme of change moves forward covering systems and processes, resources, workforce and communications. These workstreams include representation from staff groups across the services with specialist technical support from finance, HR, ICT, legal and property services. This will need to be reviewed as we move through this process, including reviewing the membership of the board and workstreams.

Phase 1 and 2 of the programme is primarily focused on the integration of getset services and public health nursing, but will need to consider future proofing of the approach to potentially bring in a much wider range of services in due course to fully achieve the family hub vision.

Background Papers

Sure Start children's centre: guidance for local authorities; HMG, 2013

Early Help – future arrangements for the management and designation of Children's Centres ; SCC decisions in 2014

Evaluation of Children's Centres in England Research report; Department for Education, December 2015

Beyond the Building; Children' centres briefings; Action for Children, 2015

The Future of Children's Centres; All Party Parliamentary Group on Children's

Centres Family Hubs, 2016

Family Hubs: A discussion paper; Children's Commissioner, 2016

Somerset County Council; Key decisions on Early Help – Future arrangements for the management and designation of children's centres – April 2014 and August 2014

Somerset Children and Young People's Plan 2016-2019; SCC, 2016

Somerset Early Help Strategy 2016 – 2019

The cost of late intervention; Early Intervention Foundation, 2016

Early Intervention: The Next Steps (The Allen Review); HMG, 2011

The Munro Review of Child Protection: A child-centred system; HMG, 2011

Support and aspiration: a new approach to special education needs and disability (the SEN green paper); DfE, 2011

Children and Families Act 2014 (SEN reforms); HMG, 2014

Development of a Family Hub approach ; SCC, Cabinet Member decision July 2017

Family Support Services and use of Children's Centre buildings ; SCC, Cabinet Member decision September 2017

Somerset Family Support Service & Children's Centre Consultation; SCC September – December 2017