

Report to: Lead Member for Children and Families

Date of meeting: 7 October 2019

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Revised Children's Services Early Help Strategy

Purpose: To report findings of public consultation on the draft Early Help Strategy for 0-19 year olds and proposed revisions to the strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Note the findings of the public consultation which took place between 20 May and 29 July 2019 and the resulting revisions to the draft Early Help Strategy.
- 2) Note the Equality Impact Assessment.
- 3) Agree to implement the revised Early Help Strategy to support vulnerable families in East Sussex and help manage the demand for statutory social care, including:
 - a. Continued keywork, group work and focussed interventions with vulnerable families at risk of needing social care interventions – aiming to maintain at least 75% of baseline levels;
 - b. Retention of a network of 16 children's and youth centres, plus provision of services in Council and other community buildings when needed;
 - c. Continued universal and universal plus 0-5 early help services where that is fully funded by East Sussex County Council Public Health and/or external partners. This will include early years family support services, which would continue to be integrated with Health Visiting services and delivery of the Healthy Child Programme;
 - d. Continued evidence based youth work with vulnerable young people;
 - e. Continued open access or drop-in youth work when it is externally funded;
 - f. Delivery of the remodelled service within the planned budget of £4.4m achieving £2.6m savings.
- 4) Agree as part of the strategy to de-designate 14 children's centres while aiming to support ongoing local early years and education services as follows:
 - a. Discussions with partners about taking over 10 of the centres will continue, and be subject to approval by the Lead Member for Resources in January 2020;
 - b. Services at Hampden Park Children's Centre would be relocated to Shinewater Children's Centre.
- 5) Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, to consider any viable proposals to take over the running of these ten children's centres, and report to the Lead Member for Resources.
- 6) Agree that as part of the strategy Rainbow and Cygnets nurseries in Bexhill will no longer be operated by the Council and that the Council will work with other providers to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, an offer of sufficient nursery places in the area.

1 Proposed early help offer

1.1 Early help is about taking action to help families tackle their problems before they become more difficult to reverse. Without early help, family problems can become more complex and serious, sometimes leading to child safety concerns, and the need for statutory children's social care intervention. By reducing children and young people's experience of family problems, early help improves their outcomes in terms of safety, education, health and wellbeing.

1.2 A draft Early Help Strategy was developed through a detailed strategic commissioning review to understand the needs of families in East Sussex and identify the best ways to build stronger families. Between 21 May 2019 and 29 July 2019 a consultation on these proposals took place with communities, service users, partners and staff. Based on the Outcomes and Equality Impact Analyses of the draft strategy, which have been revised for the consultation findings, it is proposed to offer targeted services to families at risk of needing social care intervention (at Level 3 of the Continuum of Need):

- Family keywork targeting the specific vulnerabilities that can escalate into crisis, such as parent mental ill health, substance misuse, and domestic violence – maintaining activity to at least 75% of baseline levels, including external funding.
- Focussed interventions with families at risk of needing social care intervention, where that is appropriate, to maximise the number of vulnerable families supported.
- Evidence-based and targeted family group work, where that is appropriate, to support keywork and maximise the number of vulnerable families worked with.
- Evidence-based youth work with vulnerable young people, in support of keywork.

1.3 It is also proposed to continue delivering additional universal and universal plus 0-5 early help services (at Levels 1-2 of the Continuum of Need) where that is fully funded by East Sussex County Council Public Health and/or external partners. This will include early years family support services, which would continue to be integrated with Health Visiting services and delivery of the Healthy Child Programme, and would be delivered through a countywide network of 16 children's centres and youth centres, plus Council or community buildings where needed. It will also include drop-in or open access youth work sessions where these are externally funded.

1.4 To access keywork and group services, families and professionals (such as doctors or teachers) working with families would continue to contact the Single Point of Advice, which would assess family needs and where appropriate refer for full assessment. Thorough assessment of all referred cases will continue with supervision and risk-based decision-making by experienced professionals, to minimise risks to children and young people's safety. Families not assessed as needing keywork will be signposted to the wider system of family support.

1.5 The wider system of family support offers information and services to all families. Information will continue to be available in children's centres, and the Council's digital family support information will continue to be improved. The wider system of support also includes school nurses, sources of legal, housing and parenting advice, national resources to support online safety and mental wellbeing, along with support on emotional and behavioural issues available to schools from Inclusion Special Educational Needs and Disability.

1.6 The revised strategy offers a single service for families with children aged 0-19 years. The service would provide joined-up support to families with children aged 0-5 with universal Health Visiting services and the Healthy Child Programme. Children's Services Early Help would be part of a seamless child safeguarding system with multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and social care services. It will operate a single information system. It will connect with processes for children and young people's emotional wellbeing and school behaviour.

1.7 Evidenced-based practice will be applied and improved evaluation of outcomes. An emphasis on professional practice training and development for staff will continue. Continuous improvement of processes will maximise the time spent with families, and optimise communication with partner organisations also working with vulnerable families. Partnership working will continue to maintain a coherent and integrated system. Contribution to the work of East Sussex Children and Young People's Trust to improve the outcomes of children and young people vulnerable to poor outcomes will continue, and to the Local Safeguarding Partnership to protect children and young people from harm.

1.8 The feedback from public consultation has been used to add to and revise the Equality Impact Assessment, Outcomes Analysis and Early Help Strategy. Following public consultation, the strategy has been revised as follows:

- Due to concerns regarding the two Bexhill nurseries, the Council has agreed to provide this service until September 2020, at a cost of £0.02m, to minimise the disruption experienced by children and families. After September 2020, nurseries in Bexhill would no longer be operated by the Council, which would instead work with other providers to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient nursery places in the area.
- Working with partners to maximise external funding to increase the availability of parenting support or parent peer mentoring groups and schemes.
- Seeking to maximise income from hiring out rooms in children's centres and assessing the potential to charge for some activities.
- Strengthening still further our approach to working with volunteers.

2 Supporting information

Legal background

2.1 The provision of early childhood services is part of the Council's general duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to improve the wellbeing of young children, and to reduce inequalities between them in the following areas:

- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being.
- Protection from harm and neglect.
- Education, training and recreation.
- The contribution made by them to society.
- Social and economic well-being.

2.2 In addition to this general duty, the Council is required to make arrangements to secure that the early childhood services in its area are provided in an integrated manner calculated to facilitate access and maximise the benefit of those services. In order to contribute to fulfilling these duties, the Act requires councils to make arrangements so that there are sufficient children's centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need and defines a children's centre as a place or a group of places 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.

2.3 In relation to services provided by children's centres, the Act places a further duty on councils, commissioners of local health and Jobcentre Plus to consider whether the early childhood services they provide should be provided through children's centres in the area. The Lead Member will note that the core purpose of children's centres is described by the statutory guidance to the Childcare Act 2006, to which the Lead Member must have due regard, as being to improve outcomes for young children and their families and to reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in terms of:

- Child development and school readiness.
- Parenting aspirations and parenting skills.
- Child and family health and life chances.

2.4 In addition to the duties under the Childcare Act 2006, the Children Act 2004 places upon the Council (and its partners) a responsibility to discharge its functions in such a way that it safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. The Children Act 1989 also requires the Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and, so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

Public consultation approach

2.5 Between 21 May and 29 July 2019 the County Council consulted with service users, communities, partners, and staff on the draft strategy. The draft strategy aimed to support the most vulnerable families within the available resources and reduce child safety concerns. The draft strategy proposed to prioritise children's safety, target resources, tackle the specific issues that cause people to need help from social workers, build in flexibility to take-up new funding opportunities, work in partnership to ensure the best combined support to vulnerable families, and connect with ongoing projects to develop community resilience.

2.6 As part of the consultation, the County Council sought expressions of interest from other early years or education providers in relation to taking over 14 children's centres and Rainbow and Cygnets nurseries in Bexhill.

2.7 The consultation sought feedback on the draft strategy, evidence in relation to the underpinning strategic commissioning review, information on potential equality and other impacts of proposed changes to services, and ideas on how to manage those impacts. It also sought expressions of interest from early years and education providers in relation to the 14 children's centres and 2 nurseries in Bexhill.

2.8 Feedback was invited via online survey and/or email and/or on paper. The survey included three free text questions to enable comments on any topic. The consultation was publicised via the media, social media, and the Council's website. Early Help staff were encouraged to bring the consultation to service users' attention. Paper copies of the survey were available in children's centres and on request. An email address and phone number were available in case of query. Letters went to parents and carers of children enrolled in the two County Council operated nurseries in Bexhill. Externally run nurseries operating in 3 children's centres affected by the proposals were also contacted.

2.9 In addition to the public consultation, a staff consultation was carried out to give colleagues the opportunity to have their say as professionals. All members of the Children and Young People's Trust were also contacted about the consultation. The draft Early Help Strategy has been discussed with partners from public and third sectors in a wide range of forums, along with discussions with service users through the Youth Cabinet and Children in Care Council. During the consultation period, initial expressions of interest from providers of 0-5 or education services interested in taking over the centres were invited and discussions with schools have also taken place to explore opportunities to take over centres.

Public response and findings

2.10 The Consultation Analysis is in Appendix 5. A total of 566 surveys were returned. Of the respondents, 218 or 38.5% identified themselves as users of Early Help services (some service users identified as members of the public and information about which children's centres they use was therefore not collected). Of the 218 Early Help service users, 62.4% indicated that they use one or more children's centres to which changes were proposed. However, many respondents ticked more than one site; the number of respondents who said that they only use children's centres which are proposed to close was 29.8% of the total number of service users who responded.

2.11 37 correspondents made contact by letter or email, plus 94 handwritten comments regarding High Weald Centre in Ticehurst. A petition regarding the Bexhill nurseries with 1119 signatures was submitted with supporting information. A Freedom of Information request about the Bexhill nurseries was also received.

2.12 As a result of the consultation, we were contacted by seven early years and education providers and three other partners expressing initial interest in taking over children's centres or nurseries. We also began discussions with schools adjacent to children's centres, and are entering discussions with other interested partners. Promising discussions continue about the future of 10 of the centres, in line with the County Council's aim to ensure an ongoing early years or education offer from most of the sites.

2.13 Overall, 65.9% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the strategy's priorities, while 15.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 37.6% strongly agreed or agreed that targeting support to the most vulnerable families was the best use of limited resources while 42.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 28.6% strongly agreed or agreed that it is more important to provide good, accessible services than continue to operate from all existing buildings, while 51.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 72.4% considered that proposed steps to reduce the impact of proposals were helpful or very helpful, while 10.3% considered that the proposed steps were unhelpful or very unhelpful.

2.14 Comments from all respondents most frequently expressed concerns about the local accessibility of early years family support if children's centres closed, in particular High Weald (Ticehurst), Crowborough, Seaford and Newhaven, Ringmer and Egerton Park (Bexhill). Respondents also commented on the need to identify families in need of help as

early as possible and prevent vulnerability arising, and about the value of universal family support services in familiar 'safe spaces'. The other main concern expressed was for the availability, affordability and quality of nursery provision in Bexhill if the 2 nurseries were no longer run by the County Council. As part of the consultation, expressions of interest were received from 7 early years or education providers and 3 other partners, and discussions opened with schools adjacent to children's centres affected by proposals.

2.15 Feedback about the Council's approach to the consultation was also received, including the topics and wording of questions, the financial information available and the inclusion of proposals for nurseries with consultation on the wider service. The consultation met the Council's responsibilities and has provided valuable information that has led to improvements in the strategy, as intended.

2.16 All of the feedback received during the public consultation is available within the Members' and Cabinet Rooms for Members' consideration including those received in the survey, by email, from Ticehurst residents, in the petition and supporting documents, and in official submissions from partners.

Review of evidence from strategic commissioning

2.17 All the evidence from the strategic commissioning review is included in Appendices 6-10. The draft proposals for Early Help were underpinned by a detailed needs assessment (Appendix 7). This found significant levels of family vulnerability across a broad spectrum of indicators. It concluded that over 4,000 families in the county were likely to need help to keep their children safe and healthy. Social and economic deprivation is strongly associated with need for early help services and 19 neighbourhoods in East Sussex were among the 10% most deprived in England. Evidence showed that the interrelated triggers of parent mental ill health, substance misuse, and domestic abuse cause escalating problems, leading to emotional abuse and neglect of children, and rising need for social care intervention. A quarter of child protection plans in East Sussex relate to domestic abuse, more than a third relate to parent drug misuse. Family crises lead to adverse childhood experiences that can negatively affect life chances; the some measures of local children and young people's vulnerability were above regional and national average and rising.

2.18 Significant variation in the concentration of need across the county was identified. However, the draft strategy acknowledged that there are vulnerable families across the county, and sought to ensure they could be supported.

2.19 Detailed consideration of how best to meet local need for early help was completed in service and options analyses (Appendices 8 and 9). Proposals draw on the evidence base for the most effective early help interventions, including national studies, research on high performing councils, local data on outcomes and feedback from families and young people who've received help. In particular, they took into account an independent study which showed that 75% of family keywork in East Sussex directly prevents social care demand. This combined evidence underpinned a strategy that further targeted services to the vulnerabilities which lead to family crises and adverse childhood experiences, while addressing the Council's statutory duties regarding early years services.

2.20 In order to identify the existing centres suitable for provision of future services, a property analysis was carried out as included in Appendix 10. The Lead Member will note that the statutory guidance to the Childcare Act 2006 sets out that children's centres are as much about making appropriate integrated services available as about providing premises in particular geographical areas, however, councils should ensure that children's centres and their services are within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and

rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport. The guidance also sets out that councils should not close an existing children's centre site unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children's centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and that the starting point should therefore be a presumption against closure.

2.21 16 centres were identified as suitable to act as a network of centres for future services and for the draft proposals were considered sufficient, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need, particularly in relation to ensuring that outcomes for the most disadvantaged children would not be adversely affected. 14 children's centres were identified as less suitable for future services: Hampden Park, Old Town (Eastbourne), The Bridge (Hastings), West St Leonards, Chailey, Newhaven, Ringmer, Seaford, Battle, Egerton Park (Bexhill), Rye, Crowborough, Heathfield, High Weald (Ticehurst). In all these locations, families would continue to receive keywork services in their homes from nearby keywork hubs. Family support services would also continue to be provided in all these communities, in nearby children's centres, Council buildings or community buildings.

2.22 Consultation has also shown limited support for the targeting of services to support vulnerable families. Respondents described the value and importance of a wider offer, in order to identify existing vulnerability and special educational needs, and to prevent vulnerability arising. The strategy includes a continued offer of support for early years family support, integrated with universal Health Visiting Services. Health Visiting services will continue to complete mandated reviews on all families with children under five. Children's Services is one provider of family support in a wider system which includes, for example, health services, early years providers, schools and colleges, and voluntary sector organisations. Children's Services will continue to work in partnership with other providers, including fundraising in partnership for parent support services. A wider universal offer is not achievable within the available resources for Early Help without reducing support to vulnerable families, which detailed research in the strategic commissioning review has shown would increase child safety concerns and the need for statutory social care interventions.

2.23 Consultation findings indicate the value communities place on local, accessible early years family support services and the family-friendly 'safe space' of a children's centre to new parents and to children. Particular areas of comment were the value of support for new mothers feeling isolated and/or suffering mental ill health, support for children with special education needs, the value of specialist facilities and equipment including sensory rooms, and the importance of local opportunities for parents and young children to meet others. Concerns were expressed that families may not engage with relocated services as easily as with a permanent building. Staff and service users also commented on the suitability of specific centres. Although, it is considered that the 16 centres identified are within reasonable reach and suitable to act as a network of centres for future services, as well as being sufficient, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need, particularly in relation to ensuring that outcomes for the most disadvantaged children would not be adversely affected, it is the intention to ensure an ongoing early years or education offer from as many sites as possible through work with partners.

2.24 During the consultation, information from multiple sources about the potential impacts of removing the subsidy from Rainbows and Cygnets nurseries' universal offer, and seeking external providers was received. Respondents described the affordability and quality of current Council-run nurseries (which Ofsted has rated Outstanding). They expressed concern that this would not be maintained by another provider, and that there are insufficient alternative providers in the area. Rainbow and Cygnets are the only nurseries operated by the County Council; in other areas external providers have been supported to meet the need for early years places. The County Council is not responsible for the affordability of nursery

places in Bexhill. However, it aims to secure sufficient availability, as far as is reasonably practicable, of nursery provision in Bexhill.. The Council has agreed to operate the two nurseries in Bexhill until September 2020 to minimise the disruption experienced by children and families. After September 2020, nurseries in Bexhill would no longer be operated by the Council, which would instead work with other providers to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient nursery places in the area.

Revisions to proposals following public consultation

2.25 The revisions made in response to public consultation are summarised in Appendix 1. Based on the consultation findings, changes have been made to the Strategy (Appendix 2) and plus revisions to the Outcomes Analysis and Equality Impact Assessment (Appendices 3 and 4).

2.26 The aim is to seek to secure an ongoing early years or education offer from the 13 of the 14 centres identified for de-designation. There are promising discussions with schools and other partners regarding options to take over 10 centres: High Weald, Seaford, Chailey, Ringmer, Battle, West St Leonards, Old Town (Eastbourne), Crowborough, Rye and Egerton Park Children's Centres. The intention is also to continue offering services, when needed, on a room-hire basis from The Bridge in Hastings, Heathfield and Newhaven sites. Early years family support in Hampden Park will be relocated to Shinewater Children's Centre.

2.27 In response to feedback, the strategy has been amended to include a commitment to fundraise with partners to increase the availability of parenting support/parent peer mentoring groups/schemes in relation to preventing demand for higher tier special educational needs and disabilities and social care services. In response to feedback, the revised strategy also includes a goal to maximise income from hiring out rooms in children's centres and assess the potential to charge for some activities, and to discuss these options with schools and partners taking over children's centres. A review of the approach to working with volunteers in order to improve it as appropriate has also been added.

2.28 The strategy now states that the County Council aims to secure sufficient availability, as far as is reasonably practicable, of nursery provision in Bexhill. Nurseries in Bexhill would no longer be operated by the Council, which would instead work with other providers to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient nursery places in the area, as it does in the rest of the county. This process may include sub-leasing the spaces for Rainbow and Cygnets nurseries to other nursery providers, but would not incur ongoing financial or other direct responsibilities for nursery services. If development of sufficient alternative provision in Bexhill proves impossible, it may be necessary to review closure of the nurseries.

2.29 The Outcomes Analysis (Appendix 3) includes additional risks of reductions to keywork for families and other service providers. Mitigations for reductions in youth work have been updated for new funding information. The potential impacts of changes to nurseries in Bexhill on local families have been described and the mitigation updated. The impacts of relocating children's centre services and relocating services have been added to from feedback and the mitigations also added to. Potential impacts of reductions in the crèche offer and mitigation have been added.

Transfer of children's centres

2.30 It is planned to conclude discussions with schools and other partners by December regarding options to take over High Weald, Seaford, Chailey, Ringmer, Battle, West St

Leonards, Old Town (Eastbourne), Crowborough, Rye and Egerton Park Children's Centres. The private nurseries operating from Seaford, Crowborough and High Weald Children's Centres will be involved in those discussions. It is proposed to report the detailed proposals for those centres to the Lead Member for Resources in January 2020 for approval. Partnership work will be scaled up to enable an ongoing early years family support offer e.g. continuing volunteer or community-led activities. If no proposal can be made at the point of reporting to the Lead Member for Resources in January 2020, or if any proposal is not approved by the Lead Member for Resources in January 2020, it is proposed to close the centres by 1 April 2020.

Equality and other impacts assessment and mitigations

2.31 As set out in the Outcome Analysis (Appendix 3), by offering Early Help services described in the revised strategy, Children's Services will address identified needs and the four Council priorities. The most vulnerable families will be supported to tackle triggers of social care need, preventing escalation of risks and the requirement for social care intervention, enabling families to look after their children. The economic inclusion, financial resilience and parenting capacity of vulnerable families will be improved so that families can keep their children safe and well. For young people at risk of social care intervention, school attendance will be increased and there will be extended support with online safety and young people's emotional and mental wellbeing, thereby reducing their risk of becoming victims of crime or exploitation. In addition, the wider offer, funded by Public Health, Troubled Families Programme and external funders, will be part of an integrated approach to public services based within neighbourhoods and local communities responding proactively to identified needs. The aim is to support families in East Sussex, enabling them when possible to improve their own health and wellbeing, educational attendance and outcomes, reducing unemployment and improving financial inclusion, and developing parenting skills and resilience.

2.32 It is acknowledged that the service offer proposed in the revised strategy represents a change from current services. This reduction will be mitigated through targeted and evidence based approaches, partnership working, improved structures and processes and fundraising in support of priorities. However, it is acknowledged that there are potential risks. Vulnerable families and young people may wait longer for or not receive support, potentially leading to escalating vulnerability and poorer outcomes, and possibly in the long term to increased social care demand. If family vulnerabilities increase because there is a wait for keywork, or it is not available, there may be increased pressures for other services e.g. family support, education, health, police. Early years family support, although within reasonable reach taking into account distance and availability of transport, may be less easily accessible to some families in some locations. Reduced availability of crèches may prevent parents engaging with services, and reduce pre-school educational opportunities. If families do not engage with relocated services this may cause an escalation of need and pressure on other services in the public and voluntary sectors. Nursery places may become less affordable in Bexhill, reducing the employment/pre-school education take-up for families with lower incomes. The Outcomes Analysis describes the mitigations to these risks, including targeted and evidence based interventions, outcomes monitoring, and fundraising in partnership.

2.33 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken. In considering the proposals in this report, The Lead Member is required to have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty). Equality impact assessments are carried out to identify any adverse impacts that may arise as a result of the proposals for those with protected characteristics and to identify appropriate mitigations. The full version of

relevant completed assessment is set out at Appendix 4. The Lead Member must read the full assessment and take its findings into consideration when determining these proposals.

2.34 The final equality impact assessment has been amended to add reference to the consultation findings and the subsequent revised Early Help Strategy. The outcome of the impact assessment has not however changed.

Implementation and Financial Analysis

2.35 It is intended to implement most of the revised strategy by April 2020. Staff consultation would begin in October for changes to be made by that date. 14 children's centres would be de-designated, the intention is to seek transfer of 10 to partners by April 2020. Work with early years providers to develop nursery places in Bexhill would begin immediately, with a view to closing both nurseries for the start of the new school year in September 2020.

2.36 The evidence based, targeted approach and smart use of assets proposed in the revised Early Help Strategy can be delivered with a budget of £4.4m.

2.37 The estimated budget saving related to the proposed transfer or if necessary closure of 11 children's centres to other providers is over £0.4m, as shown below. The transfer of children's centres is not subject to SureStart grant clawback conditions if centres are transferred to providers of services for children 0-5 and this is the plan for those centres where clawback liabilities could arise.

Hampden Park Children's Centre	£	0.02
Old Town Children's Centre	£	0.00
The Bridge Children's Centre – East Hastings	£	-
St Leonard's	£	0.02
West St Leonards Children's Centre	£	0.01
Ringmer Children's Centre	£	0.01
Chailey Children's Centre	£	0.01
Seaford Children's Centre	£	0.01
Egerton Park Children's Centre – Bexhill	£	0.04
Battle Children's Centre	£	0.01
Crowborough Children's Centre	£	0.01
Rye Children's Centre	£	0.01
High Weald Children's Centre	£	0.01
	£	0.16
Saving from support staff	£	0.24
	£	0.40

2.38 As a result of the revised strategy, £2.6m savings would be achievable by Children's Services by 2020/21 (£0.98m from keywork, £0.95m from children's centres services and £0.67m from youth work services). These would be made through reductions in staffing and premises costs. The Medium Term Financial Plan includes savings of £1m from Children's Services Early Help by 2020/21. Additional savings of £1.6m were delayed from 2018/19 to ensure they were made on an evidenced basis through the detailed review.

	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	Total £m
Savings in Medium Term Financial Plan	1.6	-	1.0	2.6

Savings from proposals	*	0.6	2.0	2.6
Cumulative difference	-1.6	-1.0	-	-

* Saving temporarily mitigated elsewhere in 2018/2019

Early Help Member Panel

2.39 The Early Help Review Panel was established to provide critical challenge to the detailed review process and development of the draft strategy. It was formed of Members from the Children’s Scrutiny Committee initially, with revised membership following the establishment of the People Scrutiny Committee. It will have met 5 times between March 2018 and October 2019. The Panel will consider the revised strategy and supplementary documents at a meeting on 3 October 2019 and any comments the Panel has will be circulated in advance of the Lead Member meeting.

One Council and Working with Partners

2.40 A One Council approach was taken to the strategy’s development and revision. The Review Board included representatives of all departments, and engaged with a wider cohort of stakeholders from across the Council, to help ensure that the revised strategy is the best combined offer the Council as a whole can make to families who need support. In particular, the draft strategy has been developed in close coordination with Public Health to maintain the integrated early intervention offer for children 0-5, in partnership with East Sussex Healthcare Trust. This ensures a holistic offer to new parents, while early years contact is also key to identifying families at risk of needing social care intervention. Informed by engagement with partners, the revised strategy also includes an ambition of more effective fundraising in collaboration with other early help providers in the public and voluntary sector.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The revised strategy would enable the Council to support the most vulnerable families to tackle triggers of social care need, preventing escalation of risks and the requirement for social care intervention, enabling families to look after their children. For young people at risk of social care intervention, it would increase school attendance, support online safety and young people’s emotional and mental wellbeing, and reduce their risk of becoming victims of crime or exploitation. In addition, the wider offer, funded by Public Health and external funders, will be part of a multi-agency system to support families in East Sussex to improve their own health and wellbeing, educational attendance and progress, financial inclusion, and parenting skills and resilience.

3.2 Children’s Services would continue to offer family keywork which targets the specific vulnerabilities that can escalate, at a level of at least 75% of the current baseline, if external funding such as the Troubled Families grant remains available. It would continue to offer focussed or group work interventions when appropriate, and evidence-based youth work with vulnerable young people. The delivery of additional universal and universal support would continue where that is fully funded by East Sussex County Council Public Health and/or external partners. This will include early years family support services, which would continue to be integrated with Health Visiting services, and would be delivered through a countywide network of 16 children’s centres and youth centres, plus Council or community buildings where needed. It will also include drop-in youth work sessions where these are

fully funded. There is an expectation that a drop-in or open access offer can continue, the details of which will be agreed with partners.

3.3 Having carefully considered all of the consultation feedback, the case for redirecting limited Children's Services resources from the most vulnerable families to enable a wider universal family support offer was not demonstrated. Evidence suggests that this would lead directly to an increase in demand for social care and associated costs. However, sustaining support for parents will be a priority for external fundraising with partners, and will continue to be delivered through a multi-agency system.

3.4 In order to help build stronger families in East Sussex within the revised budget envelope the Lead Member is recommended to agree implementation of the revised Early Help Strategy, including the de-designation of 14 children's centres. Nurseries in Bexhill will no longer be provided directly by the Council, which will work with other providers to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, an offer of sufficient nursery places in the area.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Children's centres / nurseries on which consultation was carried out	Postcode	Division
Hampden Park	BN22 9NQ	Councillor Colin Swansborough Eastbourne - Hampden Park
Heathfield	TN21 0XG	Councillor Rupert Simmons Heathfield and Mayfield
Old Town (Eastbourne)	BN20 8XN	Councillor John Ungar Eastbourne - Old Town
Ringmer	BN8 5RB	Councillor Philip Daniel Ringmer and Lewes Bridge
Chailey	BN8 4PU	Councillor Jim Sheppard Chailey
Newhaven	BN9 9BA	Councillor Darren Grover Newhaven and Bishopstone and Councillor Sarah Osborne Ouse Valley West and Downs
West St Leonards	TN38 8AU	Councillor Matthew Beaver Hastings - Maze Hill and West St Leonards and Councillor Charles Clark Bexhill East
Seaford	BN25 3BA	Councillor Phil Boorman Seaford North

Battle	TN33 0HQ	Councillor Kathryn Field Battle and Crowhurst
Egerton Park (Bexhill) and Cygnets Nursery	TN39 3HL	Councillor Simon Elford Bexhill South
Rye	TN31 7ND	Councillor Keith Glazier Rye and Eastern Rother
High Weald (Ticehurst)	TN5 7DH	Councillor John Barnes MBE Rother North West
Crowborough	TN6 2DY	Councillor Richard Stogdon Crowborough North and Jarvis Brook
The Bridge (Hastings)	TN34 3NW	Councillor Tania Charman Hastings - Old Hastings and Tressell
Rainbow Nursery (Sidley CC, Bexhill)	TN39 5BD	Councillor Michael Ensor Bexhill North

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 Key Changes

Appendix 2 Revised Early Help Strategy

Appendix 3 Outcome Analysis

Appendix 4 EQIA

Appendix 5 Consultation Analysis

Appendix 6 National and East Sussex Context

Appendix 7 Needs Assessment

Appendix 8 Service Analysis

Appendix 9 Options Analysis

Appendix 10 Property Analysis