

LEAD MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Children and Families, Councillor Sylvia Tidy, on 7 October 2019 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes

Councillors Charles Clark, Davies, Elford, Ensor, Field, Shuttleworth and Webb spoke on item 4 (see minute 10)

7 DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 22 JULY 2019

7.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019.

8 REPORTS

8.1 A copy of the report referred to below is included in the minute book.

9 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

9.1 Councillor Charles Clark declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in item 4 as a member of Rother District Council

9.2 Councillor Field declared a personal non prejudicial interests in item 4 as the Chair of Battle Pre-School and as a member of Rother District Council.

9.3 Councillor Webb declared a personal non prejudicial interest in item 4 as a member of Hastings Borough Council.

10 REVISED CHILDREN'S SERVICES EARLY HELP STRATEGY

10.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services regarding the findings of the public consultation on the draft Early Help Strategy for 0 – 19 year olds and proposed revisions to the Strategy together with comments from the Early Help Reference Group and written representations from Councillors Beaver and Ungar.

10.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED 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; and

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.

Reason

10.3 The revised strategy will 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 will 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.

10.4 Children's Services will 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 will 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 will 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 will continue to be integrated with Health Visiting services, and will 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.

10.5 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.

10.6 In order to help build stronger families in East Sussex within the revised budget envelope the Lead Member agreed the 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.