

REPORT TO:	Children & Young People Scrutiny Sub-committee 27th September 2022
SUBJECT:	Insourcing of South Locality Children's Centre Delivery
LEAD OFFICER:	Debby MacCormack, Early Help Service Manager Early Years, Children's Centres and Parenting
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Maria Gatland Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Shelley Davies Director of Education
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item is contained in the Sub-Committee's agreed work programme.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	The Children & Young People Sub-Committee is asked to: - 1. Receive the update on the Children's Centre Contract award for North and Central, and the insourcing of the South Locality Children's Centre Delivery 2. Consider whether there is assurance that there is sufficiency of children's centre provision to meet local need.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Croydon Best Start is a holistic approach to early intervention and prevention to ensure babies, children, mothers, fathers, and carers receive the support they need, as early as possible in a child's life, or as concerns emerge, ensuring onward referral or signposting to the services required.
- 1.2 Established on the principles of co-design and partnership working, the shared Best Start outcomes remain central to our ways of working across an early year's partnership to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.
- 1.3 This paper outlines the circumstances relating to insourcing the South Locality Children's Centre service delivery, through the Hub and Spoke model which was consulted on and agreed at Cabinet on 26 July 2021.
- 1.4 There is a need to avoid a gap in Child Development and School Readiness services delivered in the South of the borough. This issue has arisen due to the

failure to attract suitable bidders following two procurement cycles for the South Locality Children's Centre Hub and Spokes.

1.5 These are statutory services to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for very young children and therefore could result in a judicial review if services are not provided.

2. Children's Centre procurement strategy

2.1. The tender opportunity for the Children's Centre Hub and Spokes Locality model opened on 31st August 2021 and ran for 40 days closing on 10th October 2021.

2.2. The procurement ended with a successful bidder for North and Central, however no bidder was identified for the South Locality. After careful consideration, the decision was taken to re-tender for these services and current arrangements were further extended with the existing South Children's Centres.

2.3. The second procurement opportunity opened on 7th February 2022 and ran for 30 days closing 6th March 2022. A market warming event was held on the 4th February 2022 and attracted 10 suppliers. Only 1 submission was received which failed to meet the minimum threshold score of 2.

2.4. Upon making Upon making enquires why they had not responded to the tender opportunity their feedback concluded:

- 'Lack of clarity around building costs, and access to sites during holiday periods',
- 'TUPE and related liabilities within a very tight budget envelope'
- 'I offer training in early years language and communication but wasn't sure how best to apply',
- 'Internal capacity prevented us from putting together a competitive bid in the required timeframe'

2.5 There were two consistent themes which emerged from both procurement opportunities:

- Lack of clarity around building costs, and access to sites during holiday periods',
- 'TUPE and related liabilities within a very tight budget envelope'

2.6 To mitigate future risks of failing to attract a suitable supplier to deliver Child Development and School Readiness services in the South of the borough (particularly those living in areas of high deprivation) and increasing the inequalities for very young children and their families, it was recommended and approved by the Executive Mayor to insource the provision and deliver services in-house.

3. Insourcing of South Locality Children's Centre Delivery

- 3.1. Croydon Best Start is a holistic approach to early intervention and prevention to ensure babies, children, mothers, fathers and carers receive the support they need, as early as possible in a child's life, or as concerns emerge, ensuring onward referral or signposting to the services required.
- 3.2. The service model for delivery is a Hub and Spoke model which was consulted on and agreed by Cabinet on 26 July 2021 with a reduced budget and procurement commenced for new providers in August 2021.
- 3.3. The delivery model has been implemented in the North and Central Localities from 1 January 2022 by a commissioned provider after successful award of the contract. No provider was awarded for the South Locality delivery, and after consideration the decision was made to re tender for the services in February 2022 and existing delivery arrangements were further extended for south children's centre services.
- 3.4. To mitigate future risks of increasing the inequalities for very young children and their families living in the South of the borough (particularly those living in areas of high deprivation) it was recommended the delivery of Child Development and School Readiness services delivered through a South Locality Children's Centre Hub and Spokes model are insourced and delivered in-house. The children's centre programme is subject to financial savings, it has not been possible to continue to extend contracts within the revised funding. The schools commissioned to deliver the services were not able to tender to deliver services for families in the south of the borough.
- 3.5. Woodlands Children's Centre will be the hub, services will be delivered from the centre Monday to Friday and include delivery from partner agencies, including Health, Parenting, Speech and Language, support for new parents and transition support.
- 3.6. The spoke centres, Byron, Fairchildes and Purley Oaks will be open one or two days a week delivering services that are needed by local families. There is a limit on the number of days services can be delivered at the centres due to the cost to the service and availability.

4. Current Position

- 4.1. The Children's Centre Staff Teams are currently based within the schools below
 - Oasis Academy Bryon (Oasis Trust): Byron Children's Centre
 - Fairchildes Academy: Fairchildes Children's Centre
 - Purley Oaks Primary School: Purley Oaks Children's Centre
 - Gilbert Scott Primary School: Woodlands Children's Centre
- 4.2. TUPE consultation commenced with the teams on 30 June 2022 apart from Purley Oaks, as two members of staff have left, and one has moved to a new role.
- 4.3. The teams will move into the Council from 1 September 2022.

- 4.4. Arrangements have been negotiated with the current schools so services can be maintained in spoke sites for the first half of the term, September – October 2022. This will allow stability for families and the staff team whilst the service is realigned to be fit for purpose to deliver services through the hub and spoke model. The staff structure will need to fit within the available funding envelope available which is £317, 683 p.a.
- 4.5. Currently there is a pressure on this budget of £97k due to the extensions of contacts to 31 August 2022 and potential redundancy costs.
- 4.6. The current staff team are delivering services on one day a week at Purley Oaks Children's Centre, this is being met within existing staffing resources. This is also being supported by other areas of the service through temporary deployment of a team member and administrator to enable safe delivery of services. A realignment of staffing is required for services to be delivered with a consistent staff group.
- 4.7. A programme of services for the south is published and attached for information
- 4.8. Over this half term, team members will be talking with families about future service delivery in the spoke sites
- 4.9. Services have been maintained through the summer holidays including a full range of Chatterbox groups (Speech and Language support)

5. Partnership Working

- 5.1. Throughout the pandemic, Health Visiting and Midwifery services were not able to deliver services within children's centres. Health services are now planning for services to be resumed within centres, child development appointments are offered routinely at centres and the services will be planned to enable this to continue and develop so babies and young children can be introduced to and benefit from early childhood services
- 5.2. Chatterbox speech and language sessions are run across the locality in partnership with the speech and language team and will continue.
- 5.3. Commissioned Best Start Partners will be running sessions within the centres.
- 5.4. We are exploring the opportunity to work in partnership with libraries to be able to provide early years support and activities in and around libraries.

6. Family Hubs

- 6.1. Croydon has been identified as one of 75 Local Authorities eligible for funding to develop a family hubs programme due to the level of deprivation within the borough, this includes being eligible to bid for Family Hubs funding to deliver key components of the Start for Life offer, delivered through Family Hubs by March

2024. The council is in the process of signing up and early delivery is expected by March 2023.

6.2. The Best Start for Life policy paper outlines the Government's vision for local authorities, working with local partners to publish their Start for Life offer providing universal and universal+, health and care services delivered through Family Hubs and that meet the needs of specific community groups.

6.3. The development and implementation of Family Hubs in Croydon will integrate services for families throughout the first 1001 critical days and will impact how Maternity, Health Visiting and Children's Centre provision is delivered in the future. The Family Hub transformation offer opportunities for improved integration and joint delivery of child development and school readiness service, maximising the available workforce to have a greater impact on children's outcomes.

6.4. The Start for Life strands identified as part of the development of the Family Hubs offer will be funded to support the development of sustainable activities from 2022-2024. Final funding will be confirmed in the Autumn, the funded strands have been identified as;

- Family Hubs Capital
- Family Hubs Programme
- Parenting Support
- Home Learning environment
- Parent-Infant Relationships and Perinatal Mental Health
- Infant Feeding Support

7. Croydon's Early Years Strategy

7.1. An Early Years Strategy is being co-produced with residents and partners across Early Years, Croydon Council, South West London Integrated System (Croydon Place), and voluntary and community sector. Parents and carers are central to its development with over 400 responding to an initial parent and carer survey to understand what is important for families during the early years. The Early Years Strategy will guide the development of Family Hubs and Start for Life offer in Croydon, children's centre services are central to these developments.

7.2. Priorities for children have been identified in the Health and Care Plan (Better Start in Life and Maternity) and by the Director of Education for children in the Early Years to:

- Reduce the attainment gap between the average and the lowest achieving pupils in language and literacy
- Further narrow the gap between children eligible for free school meals and those not eligible
- Ensure the Integrated 2-Year-Old Review is fully embedded across the Borough

- Improve the health of children under 5 years by reducing the number of children at age 5 classed as 'overweight' or obese'

CONTACT OFFICER: Debby MacCormack, Early Help Service Manager Early Years, Children's Centres and Parenting

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Appendix 1 - Example Summer programme

Appendix 2 - Autumn Programme

Appendix 3 - [Best Start for Life Policy Paper](#)

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Appendix 1

Woodlands: Gilbert Scott Primary School,
Farnborough Avenue, CR2 8HD

Byron: St David's, Coulsdon, CR5 2XE

New Addington – Fairchildes, Fairchildes
Avenue, New Addington, CR0 0AH



The South Locality Timetable Summer Holiday Schedule

Monday 25th July – Wednesday 31st August 2022

Woodlands, Bryon, Purley Oaks & New Addington Children's Centres



WEEK 1 Monday 25th – Friday 29th July 2022





Day / Centres	Monday 25th July	Tuesday 26th July	Wednesday 27th July	Thursday 28th July	Friday 29th July
Woodlands 0208 916 0543 (B) = Booking Required	9:30-10:30 (B) Mud Kitchen an exciting, messy, and creative area to play. <i>Please call to book</i>	9:30-11.00 Stay & Play ~ 1.00 - 2.30 Chatterbox	9:30-11.00 Stay & Play Messy Activities	<i>See other centres for available services today</i>	<i>See other centres for available services today</i>
Byron 0208 763 6285 (B) = Booking Required	10.00 – 11.30 (B) Tiny Trekkers A 5 week forest school course 3-5 years ~ 1.00 – 2.00 Baby Buddies Non walking babies	10.00 - 11.30 Pond Dipping @Bradmore Pond <i>Meet at the pond 10am</i> <i>Wear appropriate clothing (wellies etc.)</i>	9.30 - 11.00 Chatterbox Designed to promote, encourage and support speech, language and communication development	Midwife Appointments ~ 9.30 - 11.00 Childminders Stay & Play 9.30 - 10.30 (B) Baby Massage A 5 week Baby massage Course Week 1	10.00 - 11.00 (B) Bookstart Corner A 4 week course Starting 29th July <i>Please call to book</i> No BBB This Week!
Fairchildes 01689 664 570 (B) = Booking Required	<i>See other centres for available services today</i>	<i>See other centres for available services today</i>	10.00 - 11.30 Stay & Play 10.00- 12.00 Mum2Mum Breast Feeding Support Group ~ 1.00 - 2.30 Stay & Play	1.00 - 2.30 Stay & Play	<i>See other centres for available services today</i>
Castle Hill is closed during the summer holidays and we are unable to deliver at Purley Oaks over the same period due to building and maintenance work at the school - <i>Please see other centres for available services</i>					




Woodlands CC: admin@woodlandsc.info

Byron CC: byronchildrenscentre@oasis.org

New Addington CC: fairchildeschildrenscentre@fairchildes.croydon.sch.uk