	<p align="center">Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee</p> <p align="center">23 June 2014</p>
<p align="center">Title</p>	<p>Early Years Review – PSR Proposal and Public Consultation</p>
<p align="center">Report of</p>	<p>Lead Commissioner, Family and Community Well-being</p>
<p align="center">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p align="center">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p align="center">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A – Outline Business Case</p>
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Summary

This paper sets out the background and findings from the early years review, outlines the case for continued investment in early years and summarises the approach to public consultation.

The recommendations made as part of the outline business case and approved by Cabinet on 2 April 2014 were;

- To develop a hub and spoke model for children’s centres as part of the Full Business Case.
- A single organisation to manage all of the centres as part of the new hub and spoke model and that in the first instance this is the Council.
- Full integration of health visitors and children’s centres to create a consolidated early years service.
- Childcare is continued to be offered as part of the core children’s centre model.
- To centralise the Early Years Standards and Childcare Support teams and align them to the early years service.

The new model will be more efficient and allow the achievement of £700k savings included in the medium term financial strategy. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it will enable Barnet to better focus on increasing early years standards for all and better identify and support the most vulnerable families in the borough.

A formal public consultation on the proposals is planned to take place from 24 June 2014 to 12 September 2014.

Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee approve the commencement of consultation on the proposals for early years as laid out in this report.**
- 1.2 That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee note that following this period of consultation, a full business case for changes to the early years system will be presented to the Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee on 15 September for final approval.**

Why is this report needed?

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 In June 2013 the Council began a review of early years services in Barnet, aimed at helping the council and its partners identify how it can improve early years provision across the borough in order to improve outcomes for children and families in Barnet.
- 1.2.2 The Early Years Task and Finish Group ran alongside the review and reported to Cabinet on 25 February 2014. The recommendations agreed were incorporated into the outline business case, approved by Cabinet on 2 April 2014. This paper summarises and develops this business case but does not include the same level of detail – the full document is attached as appendix A.
- 1.2.3 Early intervention and prevention has increasingly become a policy priority on the national agenda. The growing interest in early intervention reflects widespread recognition that it is better to identify problems early and intervene effectively to prevent escalation than to respond only when the difficulty has become so acute as to demand intensive and expensive action.
- 1.2.4 The government is currently undertaking a review of childcare and has recently released a number of policy documents and consultations. There were two high profile childcare papers in 2013 - More Great Childcare (January 2013) and More Affordable Childcare (July 2013). Recommendations made as part of the outline business case have considered the implications of these and other national policy changes.

- 1.2.5 There are an estimated 26,074 children under five in Barnet, with a projected increase to 27,637 by 2018. The most significant growth is in the Colindale, Golders Green and West Hendon wards.
- 1.2.6 The public sector spends approximately £30million on early years services in Barnet. Of this, around £18million comes from the Designated School Grant (DSG) to fund childcare settings who provide the free 15 hours of early education for eligible 2 year olds, and all 3 and 4 year olds. Spend from LB Barnet base budget in 2013/14 was £5.5m. The council's medium term financial strategy has delivered a saving of £500k in 2014/15 and there is a planned further budget reduction of £700k in 2015/16.

1.3 Childcare in Barnet

- 1.3.1 Childcare is either purchased privately by parents or provided as part of the Free Early Education (FEE) funding which comes directly from the dedicated schools grant (DSG).
- 1.3.2 All 3 & 4 year olds are eligible for up to 15 hours of free early education for up to 38 weeks per year.
- 1.3.3 In addition, Free Early Education for 2 year olds (FEE2) offers 15 hours of high quality childcare provision per week to the 20% most deprived two year olds. From 1 September 2014 the entitlement will then extend to fund the 40% most deprived two year olds.
- 1.3.4 There are 16,703 registered childcare placements in Barnet, spread across a range of providers including day nurseries, maintained sector nursery classes and registered childminders.
- 1.3.5 It is widely acknowledged that high quality pre-schooling is related to better intellectual and social/behavioural development for children and in particular has been proven to reduce the number of children having special educational needs.
- 1.3.6 The following key findings were made about childcare as part of the early years review;
- There is currently sufficient childcare in Barnet and much of this is of a high quality.
 - The majority of parents are satisfied with their childcare options.
 - The quality of provision is weaker in the most deprived areas of the borough.
 - The standard of childcare in Barnet is worse than the majority of the council's statistical neighbours.
 - The quality of provision offered by child minders is more likely to be weaker than that of other providers both locally and nationally.
 - Demand will soon significantly outstrip supply in some areas.
- 1.3.7 A wide range of support is offered for early years education and childcare providers from various teams within the council and by commissioned organisations.

1.3.8 As part of the early years review the following key findings were made about the Early Years Standards and Childcare Support teams in Barnet;

- Childcare settings value the support they receive but the current approach is fragmented and confusing to providers.
- A more consistent approach to supporting childcare settings is required.
- The relationships between the local authority and local providers can improve.

1.4 Support, advice and information for families

1.4.1 A range of both universal and targeted support, advice and information for families is offered across early years services. This includes services offered through children's centres as well as health visitors, community midwives and commissioned services from local providers such as Barnet and Southgate College.

Children's Centres

1.4.2 Currently there are 13 children's centres across the borough with an additional 8 main outreach venues which operate at a net cost of £4.16m (including central team costs), reduced from £4.6m in 2013/14. The children's centres are operated by various providers, with 8 run by schools, 4 run directly by the Council and 1 run by a voluntary sector organisation.

1.4.3 The Children's core offer is to support families with;

- Early learning and school readiness.
- Child and family health and life chances.
- Parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills.

1.4.4 The Statutory guidance for children's centres states that 'Local authorities have sufficient children's centres to meet the needs of young children and parents living in the area, particularly those in greatest need of support.' The local authority must;

- Take steps to identify parents and those expecting a baby in their area who are unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services available and encourage them to use them; and
- Ensure there are sufficient children's centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need

1.4.5 Ofsted is the key arbiter of quality for children's centres. The new children's centre Ofsted framework (April 2013) has a greater focus on data and targeting, as well as a greater emphasis on adult learning and tracking progress. Children's centres must evidence that they "know" 80 per cent of the under 5s in their defined area and that 65 per cent of targeted groups are registered.

1.4.6 Universal services in children's centres include stay and play sessions, baby groups and parenting advice and information. These services are key to

engaging with families and identifying families who made need further support through the range of targeted services offered.

1.4.7 Targeted support in children's centres includes intensive support to families delivered by specialist family workers, parenting programmes, early learning sessions, young parent groups, adult education and learning and domestic violence support.

1.4.8 Children's centres work in partnership with a range of other public services and providers including health, Job Centre Plus, Barnet and Southgate College and a range of voluntary and community organisations.

Early years health services

1.4.9 A range of early years health services are offered in Barnet. Services include health visitors, community midwives and speech and language therapy.

1.4.10 Health visitors are instrumental in delivering the Healthy Child Programme, working with all parents to assess the support they need and develop appropriate programmes to help give the child the best possible start in life. Health visitors support and educate families from pregnancy through to a child's fifth birthday. Common tasks include:

- New birth visits which include advice on feeding, weaning and dental health.
- Physical and developmental checks.
- Providing families with specific support on subjects such as post natal depression.
- Offering parenting support and advice on family health and minor illnesses.

1.4.11 Through their near universal coverage and high levels of professional training health visitors are adept at identifying vulnerable families and working with them to identify the additional support they need to receive. The type of support can include:

- Referring families to specialists, such as speech and language therapists.
- Arranging access to children's centre services.
- Organising practical support - for example working with a nursery nurse on the importance of play.

1.4.12 Other health professionals have significant roles in the early years including community midwives, GPs and speech and language therapists. The way in which the various health and local authority frontline workers currently operate together across the system is variable. In some areas there are strong examples of effective joint working but this is not the case across the borough.

Findings

1.4.13 Through the Early Years Review there have been the following key findings;

- The allocated 'reach areas' (maps that divide the borough between the children's centres – required by Ofsted) do not match the children's centres that families use.
- There is the potential for a more collaborative approach.
- Improving front-line relationships with health would significantly improve the whole system's ability to identify vulnerable families early and effectively support them.
- The balance between targeted and universal services is not sufficiently planned.
- Improving outreach and proactive work would enhance early intervention.

1.5 The case for continued investment in early years

- 1.5.1 National and international evidence has shown that development in the first few years of life has a huge impact on a whole range of whole-life outcomes. Our local case history research has shown that if we get this right, over time we can expect to see fewer cases escalating to the point of a social care intervention being necessary.
- 1.5.2 There is a significant amount of national research that demonstrates the importance of early years development. This is summarised in the outline business case in appendix A.
- 1.5.3 Evidence from a range of research and best practice demonstrates that Barnet needs to develop a more integrated and co-ordinated early years commission to improve outcomes for vulnerable families and young children.
- 1.5.4 The MTF5 includes a significant saving for 15/16 against early years services. It is possible to achieve the £700k saving and develop a more cost effective and targeted early years service, reducing the number of cases reaching social care. The re-modelling of early years aims to increase the number of families reached and in particular to increase the provision of targeted services. This will mean that;
- The service will be more targeted and able to increase the number of vulnerable families it works with.
 - Integration with health visiting will improve coverage and ensure we are working with more of the most vulnerable families.
 - Increasing community involvement will increase reach and identification of vulnerable families before they are at risk of requiring social care support.
 - Improving quality across the network means we get better outcomes for families we work with.
 - Behaviour change for both staff and families, empowering families to support themselves.
- 1.5.5 Children's centre services provide our prime opportunity for early intervention work that, when effective, can and does reduce the cost of social care interventions. Support to childcare settings offering early education is key to ensuring all children, and especially vulnerable children, are supported across both the PVI and maintained sector.

1.5.6 The work done in the early years has a significant longer term impact on a range of other costs in the public sector. By improving the targeted work of our early years services, there is potential to achieve further savings across the public sector, including;

Public sector area	Benefit
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced truancy costs • Reducing need for SEN support in mainstream schools • Reduced exclusions
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced unnecessary A&E admissions for under 4's
DWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of parents returning to work reducing the benefits bill (and increasing the tax base)
Local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the need for families to access drug and alcohol, mental health and domestic violence services • Reduction in SEN support at nursery through improved support in mainstream offer • Reduction in number of children subject to a funded statement of SEN

Based on Greater Manchester's business case for increased investment in early years services.

1.5.7 The diagram below attempts to visualise how interventions in the early years can change the course of the life of a family. It outlines a range of scenarios given different (or no) interventions to give an indication of how the services described above lead to longer term savings to the local authority.

Early Years

From birth through to 5 years old, Early years services help to keep a child and a family on track.

The examples in this picture show how a vulnerable family could be impacted by Early Years services, or the lack of them.

The Joneses



Without information about local Early Years services the Joneses quickly become isolated. The pressures of new family life cause stresses and with no support they must deal with this alone.

The opportunity to meet families in similar situations at a children's centre is missed so the Joneses have no informal support network to fall back on. This means that they are more likely to need costly professional support later down the road.

Community Midwives and Health Visitors provide a first, vital point of contact, identifying that the Joneses may need some help and support, they invite them to attend their local children's centre.

Even without special intervention, children's centres provide support and social networks that reduce the need for formal professional support. They provide an opportunity to catch issues early and provide effective treatment to increase self sufficiency and reduce risk of serious problems developing.

Family issues and environmental factors can knock the Joneses off course at any point, driving them towards problems further down the road. Early Years Services and interventions help to keep them on track or get them back on track.

Early Years Services have helped the Joneses form strong attachments, and have provided the opportunity for parents to gain skills that will help them find work or training. The parents are equipped to manage their children's behaviour and the family is self reliant.

The children are school ready, well behaved and have formed strong attachments to their parents.

£1169

Total cost for the Jones family's regular Stay and Play, parenting programme, annual back to work Summer Crèche and 3 additional training sessions over 5 years.

Family Support

If a specific issue needs specialist support to correct, then an 8 week family support case can be opened. This will help the Jones family correct and deal with behavioural issues, address financial concerns, increase family welfare and deal with serious attachment problems. This typically includes a Parenting programme amongst other activities.

If more than 8 weeks is required then the child may receive a CAF assessment for further needs.

£2128

- + correcting serious bad behaviour and enabling parents to cope.
- + developing strong healthy attachments
- + equipping families to deal with complex relationship difficulties
- + encouraging self reliance and reducing the probability of expensive social care needs and support.

Stay and Play

The Stay and Play sessions offer an opportunity for Mr and Mrs Jones to meet other parents in similar situations.

Meanwhile speech therapists and other specialists are able to identify where issues with development or attachment may be occurring and offer support in an informal setting.

£2

- + increased support network
- + early identification of language issues
- + early identification of attachment issues

Parenting Programmes

Parenting Programmes help develop the Jones' ability to attach to their children, and to deal with and correct bad behaviour. They also provide guidance on a healthy home and nutrition.

As the specialists at the Stay and Play sessions identified that the Jones family needed help with attachment, this programme prevented them from growing increasingly distant from their children and ending up on a much more negative road.

£536

- + correcting bad behaviour and enabling parents to cope.
- + developing strong healthy attachments
- + equipping families to deal with learning difficulties
- + increased self reliance and reduced likelihood of further support needs.

Without the correct interventions it is possible for the Joneses issues to go unaddressed. This results in escalating problems and drives them towards serious issues later on.

£1832

1 Child's persistent truancy per year



£720

1 child's emotional learning support over 5 years

£21,268

Annual cost of a typical first offense YOS case

Without general support, guidance, early identification of issues, targeted training and specialist support services the Joneses experience detachment, serious behaviour problems, unnecessary A&E admissions, and stress.

They are at a much higher risk of alcohol and drug abuse, and domestic abuse because of the stress and attachment issues.

The children are less likely to be school ready, and less likely to integrate well in mainstream school. They are more likely to have additional needs at school, due to behavioural issues, development needs not met in early childhood, and speech or other issues that were not picked up early in life.

Children in these circumstances are more likely to come into contact with the Youth offending system and later in life the criminal justice system.

Sadly, the Joneses children are far more likely to require social care interventions, foster care and adoption.

£33,592

Annual cost of foster care placement with local authority foster carer

As the Joneses continue without support, their attachment issues continue, causing poor behaviour in the children, serious stress for the parents and health issues for the children who are under nourished.

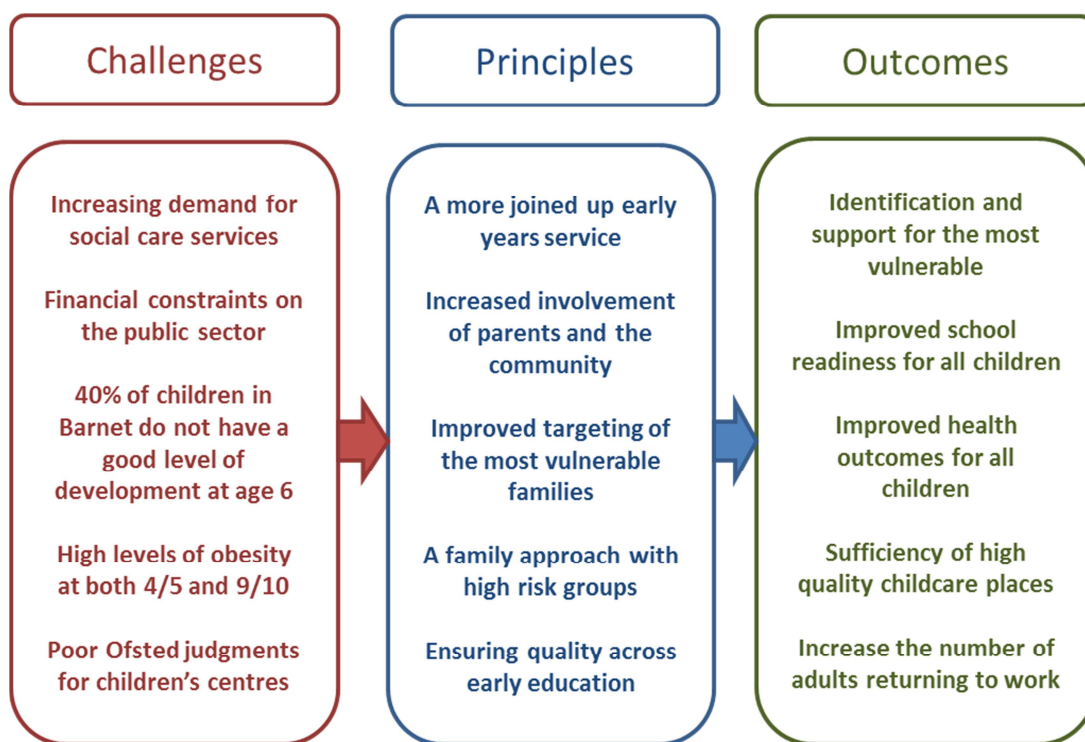
If the Joneses find their local children's centre, through referrals or online and printed information, they will have access to interventions that will help get them back on track. However, the further they go without support, the greater their issues become, making it harder to get back on track.

The greater the families issues become, the less likely they are to engage with the children's centre.

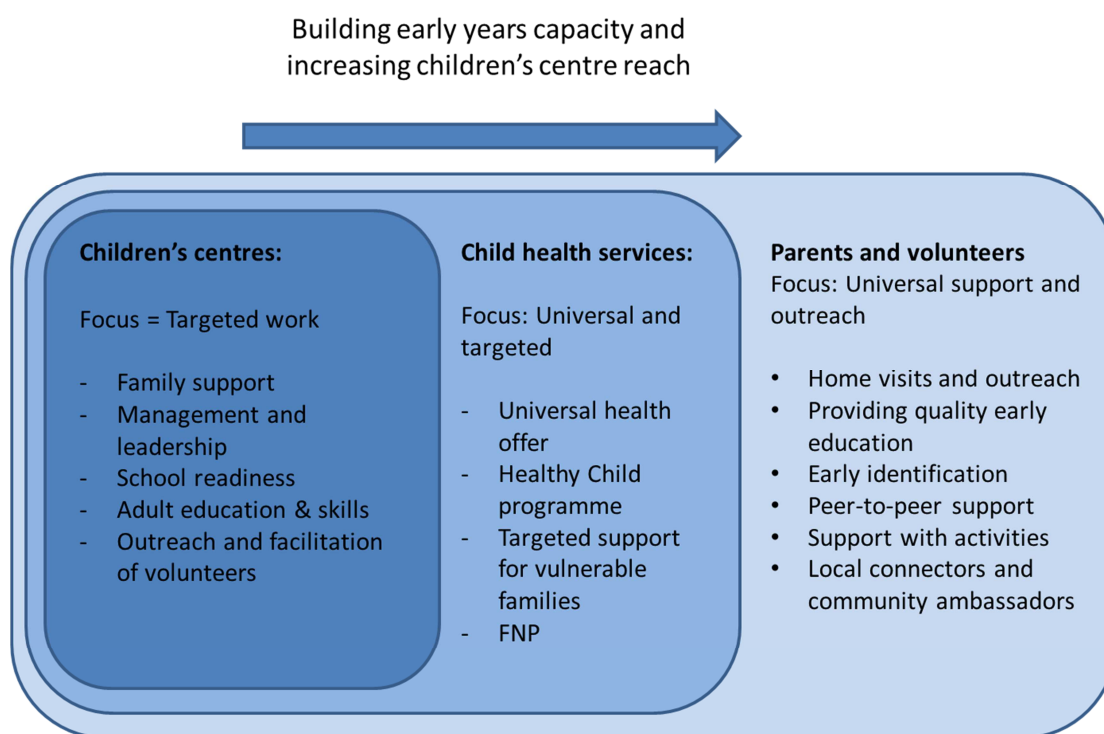


1.6 Proposed approach

- 1.6.1 This section outlines the implications of the Outline Business Case recommendations and will form the basis of the public consultation proposed to run from 24 June – 12 September 2014.
- 1.6.2 The outline business case made the argument for a new model of early years. The early years review has provided extensive analysis of early years services in Barnet and collected a range of evidence from across the country. This provides an ideal opportunity to develop a new model for early years, improving early intervention and developing a more cost effective service model that will improve life chances for children in Barnet.
- 1.6.3 The new model aims to bring together many parts of the system to provide a more coherent and strategically managed offer where resources can be more flexibly moved to the areas of greatest need.
- 1.6.4 In order to improve early years services we have to improve two elements. Firstly, the reach of our early years services and how we identify need and secondly, the standard of support we offer to families once we've identified their need.
- 1.6.5 The diagram below summarises the dominant challenges, proposed principles for a new early years model and the outcomes the new model is focussed on improving;



1.6.6 The new model for children’s centres will bring together many parts of the old system, ensuring a more cost effective, flexible and targeted children’s centre service. The diagram below illustrates how integration with health and increased community involvement will build capacity in children’s centres.



A locality model for children’s centres

1.6.7 A locality model will be developed. Rather than early years services being planned and delivered by 13 individual children’s centres, services will be joined up across the borough and organised across 3 localities (East/Central, West and South). In each locality there will be a range of delivery sites, some in the current children’s centres and others in a range of suitable venues across the area. This model allows the council to be more flexible about how staff work and how resources are used so we can adapt to the changing needs of the borough. The proposed model also focuses on the service offer being flexible to meet need. This will mean that the council will be more flexible about opening hours, locations of services and types of services to meet demand. The new Ofsted framework has recognised that managing children’s centres in clusters with central management is a new operating model and now allows the collective registration of a cluster of children’s centres. This ensures that all children’s centres are identifiable to parents, but that they are assessed based on the collective performance of the cluster.

A more targeted early years service

1.6.8 We need to target our resources at families who need the most support as early as we can, helping them deal with issues and support their child to grow and develop. There is a clear recognition that in order to effectively identify families, universal services are essential. In particular, the universality of the health visiting service needs to be maintained.

Increasing the involvement of parents and communities in children's centres

1.6.9 We will design a model with parents and local communities that means they can be more involved in children's centres. It will give parents more influence and allow for more people to volunteer – supporting better services and giving local people the chance to develop their skills.

A more cost effective management structure

1.6.10 It has been identified that significant savings can be made from management costs by moving to the locality model and improving the organisation of service delivery.

Children's centres managed by a single organisation

1.6.11 Currently some children's centres are managed by the council, some by schools and one by the Barnet Pre-school Learning Alliance. In the new model a single organisation manage all of the centres as part of the new hub and spoke model. The recommendation is that the centres are managed in the first instance by the Council.

A family approach with higher risk groups

1.6.12 Early years and adult services need to work together closely with families where a parent has high risk needs to ensure the child's well-being and development is considered.

1.6.13 The new early years model will also be a simpler system to navigate, ensuring that the services on offer are clearer to parents and partners making it easier for families to access the support they need and for professionals to refer families to the right support.

Integration of health visitors and children's centres

1.6.14 Commissioning responsibility transfers to the local authority in October 2015. In preparation, the council will work with NHS England and the CCG to develop joint commissioning arrangements and develop the approach for improved integration.

Changes to children's centre buildings

1.6.15 As far as possible, the detailed plans for achieving the MTFs savings for 15/16 will focus on areas that minimise reductions to front-line service delivery. The Council's preferred approach to achieve savings is by:

- Reducing managements and support staff costs
- Reducing building costs (could require changes of location where the current building is expensive / unsuitable)
- Reducing opening hours

If savings cannot be achieved through the approaches above, the following opportunities could be taken. The Council's preferred approach is to minimise any of the following actions.

- Reducing family support to vulnerable families
- Reducing sessional work in children's centres
- Reducing support to standards in childcare settings

The public consultation will seek views on all of these options. It will also include specific proposals to change *opening hours* in the following three buildings

- St Margaret's Children's Centre, Margaret Road, New Barnet
- Hampden Way Children's Centre, Hampden Way, Southgate
- Stonegrove Children's Centre, St Peter's Community Hall, Stonegrove

The table below outlines the rationale for the changes – and what it will mean if this is your current children’s centre.

Children’s Centre building	Proposed changes	Rationale
St Margaret’s Children’s Centre, Margaret Road, New Barnet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in opening hours. The building will only be accessible when sessions are being provided. • The council will explore the use of more venues in the local area, including East Barnet library, to ensure services are delivered in accessible venues for the local community. • Potential reduction in hours of service delivery in the local area due to relative lack of deprivation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Margaret’s local area does not have a high level of deprivation. • There is limited space within the current building, which is primarily used as a Nursery school. • The building is one of the more expensive sites to deliver services from because of high lease costs.
Hampden Way Children’s Centre, Hampden Way, Southgate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in opening hours. The building will only be accessible when sessions are being provided. • Services will continue to be offered at Sweets Way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The space at Hampden Way is small and not as suitable as Sweets Way for delivering services. • We currently only deliver a few services at Hampden Way, specifically for 0-1 year olds. • Most services are currently offered at Sweets Way Community Centre. This site will continue to offer services.
Stonegrove Children’s Centre, St Peter’s Community Hall, Stonegrove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in opening hours. The building will only be accessible when sessions are being provided. • Provision will still be made available across the current site (and future community centre being developed as part of the regeneration site at Stonegrove), Edgware library & John Keebles church along with any other identified outreach venues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential change of need in the local area due to regeneration. • Reduced numbers accessing services due to Stonegrove regeneration. • Site will be closed as part of regeneration plans. A new venue will be available when the community centre opens in the Stonegrove regeneration site.

A full data pack with details for each of the centres can be found in Appendix B.

1.6.16 The development of the high level model outlined in the committee paper has already included engagement with children’s centre workers, health professionals and families. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2013 was especially thorough (available at http://www.barnet.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3308/childcare_sufficiency_assessment_2013_executive_summary) and was developed through

extensive consultation with over 1,000 parents along with front-line professionals. As such, this consultation does not need to focus on childcare.

1.6.17 It is recommended the council now commences a public consultation period from 24 June – 12 September 2014. The timing of the public consultation has been set to allow residents to influence the full business case, ensuring the council gets the most value from the process. This will build on the recommendations outlined as part of the outline business case (OBC), approved with minor amendments by Cabinet on 2 April 2014.

1.6.18 The consultation will ask questions regarding:

- Outcomes from the early years services
- Children's centres and family support
- Health visiting and 0-5s child health
- Volunteering
- Achieving the MTFs savings

1.6.19 It will also include changes in regard to opening times and the use of building for the following centres; St Margaret's Nursery School, Hampden Way Nursery School and Stonegrove Community Centre.

1.6.20 The consultation will clearly set out the rationale for change, including demographic changes, a need for a more collaborative approach across the public sector and the financial pressures on local authorities.

1.6.21 The key aims of the public consultation are to;

- Give a clear rationale to the public about the changes being proposed following the early years review outline business case.
- Allow the public to feedback on the proposed model.
- Establish whether the public agree with the early years priorities and approach.
- Get detailed feedback from families and the wider community on what is most important to them about children's centres.
- Get detailed feedback from staff and key stakeholders on how the detail of the new early years model should operate.
- Establish how parents / community groups would like to be more involved in the early years agenda e.g. through volunteering.
- Identify whether particular groups are adversely impacted by the changes and whether mitigating measures can be taken to address this impact.

1.6.22 The consultation document will include a structured set of questions along with the opportunity for free response and set out the areas that the public can influence and others that are limited by statute or previous decisions of the council. The questions focus on whether the public support the model and questions which inform the detailed design, such as information on opening hours, sessions and the location of service delivery.

1.6.23 The consultation will include engagement with the following key stakeholders;

Consultation	Key target audiences and areas for engagement – Children’s Centres	Methods of consultation / communication with targeted audiences
Public and other stakeholders	Families with young children in Barnet (uses of both targeted and universal services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Barnet online portal • Insert in Barnet First • Press release • Workshops – targeted groups • Workshops – front-line practitioners • Word of mouth – front line staff • Citizen’s Panel • Existing forums – staff meetings
	Specific groups, in particular those with a disability or a child with a disability, receive targeted support or have low levels of engagement with children’s centres	
	Local community groups and organisations	
	Childcare / providers of Early Education	
Staff	Early Years and childcare support team	
	Children’s Centre Managers and staff	
	Health staff, including Health Visitors and Community Midwives	
	Family Services and Early Intervention staff	
Schools	School head teachers, governors and staff	

1.6.24 The consultation document will include clear links to the statutory duties of local authorities when providing children’s centres as well as more detailed information and data that have informed the proposals, and will inform the development of the detailed business case.

1.6.25 The consultation process will ensure that feedback from the public and wider stakeholders will be effectively fed back into the decision making process, as well as all those involved in the process.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 As set out in the report above, and in the outline business case, there is a strong case for continued investment in the early years. The review also found a range of opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Consultation on these proposals will allow a range of views to inform and improve the full business case.

2.2 Local government is facing significant cuts in funding which will require a fundamental change to the way services are delivered by 2020. The medium term financial strategy sets

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 The outline business case (appendix A) outlines a range of options considered and not recommended.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Following approval of these recommendations, consultation will commence. The results of this will inform the full business case to be presented to the Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee on 15 September for final approval

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.1.1 Following the full business case, if approved, there will be a range of resource implications including finance, staffing, property and sustainability. The full business case will return to the relevant committee for approval once completed and these resource implications will be clearly outlined.

5.1.2 The section below outlines the impact of developing the Full Business Case and potential impact of implementation.

5.1.3 The table below outlines the 2013/14 budget and funding source for early year's services.

Service	Budget (2013/14)	Funding Source
A. Children's Centres and Family Support		
Children's Centres	£4.3m	Family Services budget
Children's Centres support	£210k	Family Services budget
Parenting Programmes	£35k	Family Services budget
Health Visitors	£3.8m	Public Health England
Family Nurse Partnership	£300k	Public Health
Community Midwives	£1.5m	CCG
Healthy Children's Centres	£275k	Public Health
Speech and Language Therapy	£80k	CCG / Family Services budget
Total	£10.5m	
B. Childcare		
Free eligibility for 3&4 year olds	£15m	DSG
Free eligibility for 2 year olds	£3.2m	DSG
Early Years Vulnerable Fund	£200k	DSG
Support offered to childcare	£900k	Family Services budget
Total	£19.3m	
Total (A+B)	£29.8m	

5.1.4 The public sector spend is eclipsed by private spend on childcare – the early years economy in Barnet is likely to exceed £100m when this is taken into account.

5.1.5 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) includes savings in the Family Services Budget of £500k and £700k in 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively, linked to further reconfiguration of early year's services. This 15/16 saving will be achieved through the development of the new commission for early years. The Full Business Case will identify the detail of how the MTFS savings will be achieved and identify any further resource implications as part of the implementation.

5.2 Legal and Constitutional References

5.2.1 The Childcare Act 2006 sets out the statutory duties for local authorities in relation to childcare and children's centres. The following sections are particular relevant:

Section 1 – duty to improve the well-being of young children and reduce inequalities.

Section 3 – duty to make arrangements to secure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated manner to facilitate access and

maximise benefits to young children and their parents.

Section 4 – duty on commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus to work together with local authorities in their arrangements for improving the well-being of young children and securing integrated early childhood services.

Section 5A – arrangements to be made to ensure sufficient children’s centres to meet local need.

Section 5C – duty to ensure each children’s centre is within the remit of an advisory board.

Section 5D – duty to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children’s centre provision in their area.

5.2.2 Statutory guidance in relation to children’s centres was published in April 2013. This confirms that there is a presumption against closure of children’s centres and when consulting on significant changes, everyone who could be affected should be consulted, including local families, users of the centres, children’s centre staff, advisory board members and service providers. Particular attention should be given to ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in the consultation. Decisions following consultation should be announced publicly and give reasons for the decision.

5.2.3 There is a statutory duty to consult. As a matter of public law consultation must be carried out fairly. In general, a consultation can only be considered as proper consultation if:

- Comments are genuinely invited at the formative stage;
- The consultation documents include sufficient reasons for the proposal to allow those being consulted to be properly informed and to give an informed response;
- There is adequate time given to the consultees to consider the proposals; and
- There is a mechanism for feeding back the comments and those comments are conscientiously taken into account by the decision maker / decision making body when making a final decision.

5.2.4 When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of all relevant considerations; including importantly the duty to give due regards to the public law equality duties and in particular any potential differential and/or adverse impact. The Council must also have regard to and weigh up all countervailing factors, including financial resources, which in the context of the function being exercised; it is proper and reasonable for the Council to consider.

5.2.5 The guidance confirms that children’s centres should have a named health visitor and access to a named social worker as a minimum. The guidance recommends that children’s centres are commissioned as part of local authorities’ wider early intervention strategy and strategy for turning around the lives of troubled families.

5.2.6 Children’s centres are subject to Ofsted inspection. From April 2013, inspections are organised according to how local authorities deliver their

children's centres. If centres are grouped and share leadership and management, they will be inspected together.

5.2.7 Each children's centre must have an advisory board, however centres clustered together can share a board. The board must include representatives from each children's centre within its remit, the local authority and parents and prospective parents in the area. Other representatives should be included on the board as set out in the guidance.

5.2.8 This report is compliant with the Council constitution

5.3 Risk Management

5.3.1 Risks associated with the delivery of this project will be managed and reported in accordance with the corporate risk and project management processes and will also be reported through existing democratic processes.

5.3.2 The current provision through Children's Centres is established in its current format. The new commission for early years will involve significant changes to the current service and risks disruption to the established service. A robust implementation plan will be developed to ensure this does not happen.

5.3.3 Failing to deliver a new commission for early years risks not achieving the most cost effective model for early years and missing an opportunity to take advantage of the opportunities for improved working across the local authorities and partners. The new model will also ensure we focus resource on targeting and supporting the most vulnerable families in the borough.

5.4 Equalities and Diversity

5.4.1 The Council and all other organisations exercising public functions are required under the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and those without; promote good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnership with regard to eliminating discrimination.

5.4.2 An equalities impact assessment for the Outline Business Case found no adverse impacts. As the full business case develops the detail of the proposals and consultation is undertaken the equalities impact assessment will be reviewed and updated.

5.4.3 A key strategic aim of the new commission for early years is to improve the targeting of the most vulnerable families in the borough. This approach is to ensure we focus resources on those who most require support. This is an

attempt to reduce inequality, by targeting the most vulnerable at an early age, with a key objective to reduce inequality in educational attainment and health and wellbeing.

5.5 Consultation and Engagement

5.5.1 This report recommends the commencement of a consultation exercise, detailed in paragraphs 1.7.17 to 1.7.25.