



General Functions Committee

23 June 2015

Title	Early Years Review
Report of	Nicola Francis – Family Services Director
Wards	The review effects all in-house children centres: Parkfield - West Hendon Newstead - East Finchley Stonegrove - Edgware The Hyde - West Hendon Wingfield - Colindale
Status	Public
Enclosures	Appendix 1 – Early Years Review Consultation Document Appendix 2 .1 – Current Early Years Structure Chart Appendix 2.2 – Proposed Early Years Structure Chart
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Summary

The report proposes changes to the Early Years Service within the Family Services Delivery Unit. Details of the proposed changes are set out in the main body of the report.

The Family Services Director led collective and individual consultations between 13 April and 13 May 2015. The restructure would affect more than 20 employees and therefore requires consideration by General Functions Committee.

Whilst the implementation date for this restructure is 1 September 2015, the committee is advised that transitional arrangements may be necessary to compensate for vacant positions, possible redundancies and handover of duties between current and future roles. The committee is asked to authorise the Family Services Director to take the necessary actions to implement transitional arrangements to ensure continuity of business.

Recommendations

- 1. That the General Functions Committee approve the proposed restructure of the council's Early Years Service, including the deletion of existing posts and the creation of new posts, as set out in Appendices 1 to 3 of this report.**
- 2. The Family Service Director be authorised to take all necessary actions to put in place transitional arrangements for the continuity of business.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The report concerns proposed changes to the establishment of the council. The report is presented as there are more than 20 posts in scope for the restructure and therefore the approval of General Functions Committee is required before the new proposals can be implemented.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The committee is asked to approve the proposed restructure which will have the effect of formally altering the council's establishment, specifically the Early Years Service. The proposed restructure addresses an identified need to develop the locality model and associated central support structures in order to further develop integrated working. This will support the council's objective to improve outcomes for Barnet's youngest and most disadvantaged children.
- 2.2 The proposed model would enable the required savings target to be achieved whilst providing the best service possible for what the council can afford, supported by having a more joined up approach for service delivery with key partners. In addition, the model allows efficiencies in management in order to minimise impact on front line staff and services. The committee is asked to consider whether the proposals, together with the underlying rationale and consultation are policy compliant and reasonable in the circumstances.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The following options were considered but are not recommended:
 - Do nothing: not an acceptable option as this would result in failure to deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and failure to deliver improved outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.
 - Delete a number of posts to meet the budget reductions without undertaking a restructure or developing new role profiles: this would result in a significant negative impact on service delivery, customer satisfaction and staff.

The committee is asked to note that the recommended restructure has been subject to consultation and amended in light of consultation responses

received (as detailed in Appendix 3). Further, to continue with the existing arrangements would result in the retention of the current structure, without:

- the benefit of the savings indicated;
- improvements to the support children receive to achieve positive outcomes in line with Ofsted frameworks; and
- the benefits expected from implementing a locality model for service delivery.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Should the committee approve the proposed Early Years Service organisational structure, the following will be implemented on 1 September 2015:

- new role profiles and evaluated grading confirmed
- new organisational structure implemented
- recruitment to vacant posts
- redundancy and dismissals.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Children's Centre locality model will deliver the core purpose that includes addressing issues of child poverty and supporting parents back into training and employment. This supports the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan to provide opportunity where people can further their quality of life. Through family support and outreach, the model will promote early identification and intervention. This will address emerging issues for children and families, whilst the universal offer with partners (in particular public and allied health services) will seek to deliver prevention. In addition, the model will seek to reduce referrals to specialist services through early help, enabling families to resolve issues and avoid escalation.

5.1.2 Integrated commissioning and delivery of services will support narrowing of the education and health gap for our youngest children and be part of delivering the council's priorities to:

- ensure a great start in life for every child so that young people are well prepared for adulthood;
- safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable children will continue to be effective and robust; and
- deliver a range of services that identify and address, at an early stage, any issues that may impede a successful childhood, provided through a well-trained, high quality workforce.

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

Finance

- 5.2.1 The proposals set out within this report can be contained within the relevant existing Early Years budget, including the savings required to deliver the requirements of the Council's MTFS.
- 5.2.2 The cost of implementing the proposed restructure will be funded by budget already agreed from the council's Transformation Reserve. Any redundancy costs will be met from existing council budgets.
- 5.2.3 The table below summarises the budget for Early Years and includes MTFS savings of £525,000 and £175,000 in 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively.

Summary of Early Years budget;

Summary table on budget

Budget	Finances £
Current total	4.33m
Base budget reduction	0.7m
Outcome total budget	3.63m

Staffing

- 5.2.4 The proposals include the deletion and creation of a number of new posts, as detailed in the consultation document attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.2.5 Should the recommendations be approved, the proposals will be implemented in accordance with the council's Managing Organisational Change Policy.
- 5.2.6 One of the objectives of the implementation of the proposal is to minimise the number of redundancies. At this stage of the process, there are four staff (3.5 full time equivalents, or 'FTE') at risk of redundancy.
- 5.2.7 The consultation document located in Appendix 1 originated to open consultation and now details the outcome of the consultation process. This document was provided under section 188 to the council's recognised trade unions prior to consultation opening on the 13 April 2015.
- 5.2.8 The council provided information over and above requirements when opening consultation and continued to do so throughout consultation, providing information and responding to trade union and employee queries.

5.2.9 The reasons for the proposed redundancies are as defined in the consultation document. This document was provided to the trade unions on the 7 April 2015, in advance of consultation being opened.

5.2.10 The timetable of events has also been issued in the various briefings and communications throughout the process.

5.2.11 The council's Managing Organisational Change Policy was sent to all staff and the trade unions detailing the proposed method of calculating the amount of any redundancy payments to be made (over and above the statutory redundancy payment) to employees who may be made redundant.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 In accordance with Appendix A to the Responsibility for Functions section of Barnet Council's Constitution the General Functions Committee has responsibility for decisions related to the pay and terms and conditions of employment for staff, together with consideration of reports on restructure in line with HR regulations.

5.3.2 The consultation process with staff is required in accordance with section 188 of the Trades Union and Labour Relations Consolidation Act 1972.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 Risks associated with this decision are as follows:

- The council not being able to fill all vacant roles within the new structure resulting in reduced service delivery and / or the need to rely on agency staff, leading to budgetary pressures.
- Suitable candidates may not be recruited at the required level for the new management structure in a timely fashion resulting in delays in the future design and implementation phases.
- The Childcare element of the locality model does not achieve 'cost neutrality.'

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the public sector equalities duty which requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

5.5.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

5.5.3 After close of consultation a detailed Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in respect of staff who had been identified as at risk. The result of this was that no issues relating to the council's responsibility under the Equalities Act 2010 were identified. The analysis and results have not been included in this document to avoid identifying the four individuals concerned.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 The requirements of the new service offer and restructure were set out in briefings to the recognised trade unions and staff in March 2015.

5.6.2 The trade unions were informed on 26 February and on the 11 March of the dates of the Early Years consultation, both verbally and in writing. Formal consultation with the unions commenced on 13 April 2015 and concluded on 13 May 2015.

5.6.3 The key objectives for the consultation were to ensure those employees and their representatives:

- were fully informed about the proposals;
- understood what the implications of the proposals were for them;
- had the opportunity to contribute their views and ideas; and
- were properly consulted about the proposals.

5.6.4 This included ensuring that:

- the employees concerned were treated in a fair and equitable way;
- advance notice of the proposed change was given to the employees concerned as soon as possible;
- the need for redundancy was minimised;
- redeployment opportunities were maximised;
- information was accessible to all employees; and
- communications were clear and timely.

5.6.5 There were a number of feedback routes for employees including one to one meetings, larger briefings, trade union responses, email and frequently asked questions (FAQs).

5.6.6 The consultation took place by means of various meetings on the launch date of the consultation with recognised trade unions and affected staff as follows:

- Collective union consultation: Family Services Director, accompanied by Project and HR leads, met with trade union representatives to present the proposals, answer any of their immediate questions and outline opportunities for further feedback and discussion on the proposed new structure.

- Collective staff consultation: Family Services Director, accompanied by current senior managers in Early Years roles, and the HR Lead presented the proposals to the affected council staff who were invited to a consultation launch meeting and given the opportunity to ask and have answered any immediate questions. In addition, the opening consultation document was circulated to all affected staff on the launch date.
- Individual consultation: Line managers met with individual employees who were directly affected on a one to one basis to inform them of the proposed impact on their post and address any immediate concerns.

5.7 Responding to consultation

5.7.1 Individual staff were invited to submit their own responses following the launch of the consultation to enquiries.ey@barnet.gov.uk.

5.7.2 All comments were collated, reviewed and responded to as part of the overall consultation process and circulated weekly to the trade unions and employees through the FAQs document via the EY network.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Approved Early Years Review Business Case dated 10 October 2014.