



Leicester
City Council

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FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

**Children and Young People Scrutiny
Cabinet**

**7 December 2010
13 December 2010**

Re-organisation of the Childrens Information Service

Report of the Strategic Director, Children

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Following the announcement of the Spending Review on 20 October 2010 the City Council has been exploring alternative service delivery options to enable front line services to be protected and continue to operate within a reduced financial envelope. As part of this exercise a review of the Childrens Information Service has been undertaken and an alternative delivery model is now proposed that will provide for a more cost efficient locality based service whilst protecting core statutory data management requirements.
- 1.2. This report outlines the nature of the Childrens Information Service and seeks comment upon a revised service delivery model and approval for the commencement of appropriate HR procedures to bring about this change in delivery model.
- 1.3. This matter is being brought forward now as the lease on the current operations base at 12 Bishops Street expires on 3 July 2011 and in order to effect the necessary efficiency savings an early decision is necessary on the proposed future service delivery model.

2. Recommendations (or OPTIONS)

- 2.1 Scrutiny is invited to comment upon the proposed service delivery model.
- 2.2 Cabinet is recommended to approve the new service delivery model detailed in the accompanying report, authorise the immediate decommissioning of the current operations base at 12 Bishops Street and the commencement of appropriate HR procedures to implement the new delivery model.

3. Summary

- 3.1 Duty to provide information: The Children's Act 1989 gave local authorities the duty to provide information to parents and carers regarding childcare and this was revised in the Childcare Act of 2004 to include information regarding all children's services provision. The Childcare Act 2006 broadened this scope to further include all services for families.

- 3.2 The Children's Information Service discharges our statutory duties under the above legislation and currently provides a number of key functions for parents and carers in the city. These are:
- a. Face to face contact with parents through the shop in Bishop Street and at events such as Adult Learning Enrolment evenings;
 - b. The maintenance of a Family Information Directory website <http://families.leicester.gov.uk> . This is linked to the national website and itself provides two main functions:
 - i. an enhanced childcare directory which has details of childcare providers, their Ofsted outcomes, vacancies, place availability, costs and contact details.
 - ii. The Family Services Directory which provides details of out of school hours activities for all age groups including holiday and evening provision. The directory includes nature of the activity, contact details, times, availability and costs.
- Local service information is collected, checked and collated by the Childrens Information Service and uploaded to the website.
- c. The development and provision of materials to promote the website, access to childcare, access to working tax credits and the brokerage service.
- 3.3 Provision of advice and guidance: In addition to the above the Children's Information Service also provides a brokerage service. This is provided to parents or carers who are finding it difficult to secure child care and find that this is hindering their return to work. (Parents or carers may find it difficult to secure the childcare because of the number of children they have, the specific needs of the child or their own needs.)
- 3.4 Proposed new delivery model: This report proposes a new delivery model that splits the functions between the collection, cleaning, collation and distribution of information about provision and the face to face contact with parents including brokerage services. The face by face element will largely be delivered through Children's Centres and existing Children's centre staffing.
- 3.5 Move towards locality provision: Central to this revised service model is ensuring face to face contact in localities where parents can access the support locally. This requires a movement of face to face activity away from the current service base at 12 Bishops Street to our 23 Childrens Centres across the City. Within their respective children's centre parents can then be supported by existing Childrens Centres staff to access the information from the directory if that is what is required; they would also be able to discuss what is available locally. However with the provision of enhanced information across Leicester they could consider activities nearer to their place of work. If required they could then be supported further via a brokerage officer.
- 3.6 Capture and maintenance of high quality data: The maintenance of high quality Childrens Services data remains critical and it is proposed that this is undertaken in the central Knowledge Information Management Customer Access (KIMCA) Service within the current

Planning and Commissioning Division. This would ensure access to high quality data by members of the public direct, brokerage officers, local childrens centre staff and other corporate and partner services.

- 3.7 Details of the proposed service model is given in Section 4 below.
- 3.8 Service efficiencies and savings: Implementation of this redesigned service model will bring services closer to those that need to access them and support the development of locality working. If a prompt decision is taken to re-engineer the service in accordance with the recommendations within this report it is estimated that savings of approximately £200,000 can be effected in the longer term operating costs of the Service.

4. Report

- 4.1. Nature of current provision: The current service spans the base at 12 Bishop Street, the FID website and a brokerage service, underpinned by the collection of data on childcare and out of school activities. The CIS comprises eight posts, of which five are occupied by permanent staff and three by agency personnel, at a total staffing cost of £242,600. The annual non-staffing costs are £138,300 (including £37,000 for Bishop Street and £80,000 for marketing), making a total annual cost of £380,900.
- 4.2 Nature of proposed service delivery model: The proposed service model would move the front-facing service away from the Bishop Street shop-based service, and out into Childrens Centres in the localities. The bulk of face to face contact work would be undertaken by existing Children's Centre staff who would be able to access information via the FID website; when required further targeted assistance would be provided via the work of two brokerage officers. A re-modelled centrally based team in KIMCA would be retained to manage the FID system and the associated ONE system and to ensure the on-going currency of the FID website and other materials. In summary this alternative delivery model would comprise five staff at an annual cost of £146,100 , plus £34,800 for promotion of childcare and systems costs. The total annual cost would be £180,900.
- 4.3 Potential savings: The total cost to deliver the re-engineered service would be £180,900. The proposed model would therefore achieve an annual saving of £200,000 compared to the current model.
- 4.4 Clearly the above changes could not be effected without terminating the lease on the current operations base (due 3 July 2011) and impacting on staff currently in post. The current proposal would require a reduction of 3 fte and potential severance costs of £60,000 should no suitable alternative positions be found through redeployment. The impact of change might however in part be mitigated through the termination of the three agency staff who are currently covering positions within the current structure.
- 4.5 If Cabinet are minded to support this proposal then clearly appropriate HR advice will be sought and appropriate procedures will be followed. Every endeavour will be sought to ensure staff are "slotted" or supported to apply for positions in the new service including, where appropriate, interview skills training and advice on skills development and acquisition.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

This report sets out proposals to reorganise the Children's Information Service. The proposed new model is estimated to save £202,400 per year, once fully in place and after any initial severance or redeployment costs. The service is currently funded from the Council's General Fund budget and the General Surestart Grant. The latter will become part of the non-ring fenced Early Intervention Grant from April 2011, and therefore all the savings would effectively contribute to managing the significant reductions in Council funding following the national Spending Review.

- Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, Investing in Children, ext. 29 7750

5.2. Legal Implications

1. There are a number of statutory provisions that govern the duty of the Council to provide information:

- Schedule 2, Part 1 para 1(2) Children Act 1989 - duty to provide information about services

- Section 12 Children Act 2004 - duty to maintain information databases of children in order to facilitate the 'duty of cooperation' between agencies to (i) promote the well being of children and (ii) safeguard and promote their welfare

- Section 12 Childcare Act 2006 - duty to provide information, advice and assistance on (a) the provision of childcare in the area of the local authority; (b) any other services or facilities, or any publications, which may be of benefit to parents or prospective parents in their area; (c) any other services or facilities, or any publications, which may be of benefit to children or young persons in their area.

2. The Employment Law considerations that flow from the re-organisation will be the subject of more specific legal advice.

- Kamal Adatia, Barrister, ext. 29 7044

5.3. Climate Change Implications (Contact Climate Change Environment team on 29-6776 for guidance)

The proposals set out in this paper will not have any significant climate change implications however, transferring services from Bishop Street into the Children's Centres is likely to reduce the travel requirements of those accessing the services and so may result in a small reduction in carbon emissions from transport - this will not have a significant impact on the Council's climate change targets.

- Helen Lansdown, Senior Environmental Consultant - Sustainable Procurement, ext. 29 6770

6. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/ NO	Paragraph/References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Entire report seeks to ensure the continued delivery of a statutory service to vulnerable low income families.
Policy	Yes	Entire report proposes an alternative method of discharging statutory duties under the Children's Act 1989 and Childcare Act 2004.
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	Entire report recommends a redesign of the CIS to improve front line access for vulnerable low-income families seeking information on childcare provision and other children and family services.
Corporate Parenting	No	
Health Inequalities Impact	Yes	The provision of children and families information via Childrens Centre and Brokerage Officers will support greater service integration and the promotion of advice and guidance in connection with health and well being.

7. Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
1. Service re-design will not achieve required savings or result in service improvement.	L	M	Commence decommissioning and service re-design process as quickly as possible. Ensure brokerage service deployed in accordance with needs reported by Childrens Centre and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
2. Alternative face to face advice model will prove inadequate.	L	M	Ensure Childrens Centre staff are suitably trained upon and have access to the FID.

3. Brokerage model will be unable to meet demand.	L	M	Ensure the brokerage service is targeted at communities and population cohorts in greatest need.
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8. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

8.1. None.

9. Consultations

9.1. No consultations have been undertaken with staff about this proposed change to service delivery model. A decision to progress this model will require the initiation of formal organisational review processes with respective staff and their Trades Unions.

10. Report Author

10.1. Trevor Pringle

Divisional Director, Planning & Commissioning

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