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To  
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

9th August 2011

**Subject : abc Review of Day Care in Children's Centres – Consultation Process**

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### 1 Purpose of the Note

1.1. To inform Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee about the process and audience for the consultation in respect of changes to day care in Sure Start Children's Centres.

1.2. To further explore the reasons why one model of service delivery is being agreed in principle at the start of the consultation, whilst other service models could be suggested during the consultation and should be afforded equal weight.

### 2 Information/Background

2.1 On July 19<sup>th</sup> 2011, Cabinet received a report that outlined the Fundamental Service Review of day care in Sure Start Children's Centres.

A number of options were outlined in the Case for Change report. These include:

- 1) Continue to deliver the service in house but reducing the offer from full day care to part time sessional care for children aged 2 years and over;
- 2) Transfer the service, or part of it, to another provider in the Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) sector;
- 3) Stop delivering the service altogether;
- 4) A combination of the above.

Cabinet agree that the Project Team progresses the preferred model of service delivery as set out in the report (Option1) to the Detailed Design stage.

2.2 On 28th July, the Scrutiny Board 2 agreed that consultation sessions should be held in each of the Council's Children's Centres and that Scrutiny Board 2 members and ward councillors should be invited to attend those meetings. The aim is to get a comprehensive range of views from those likely to be affected by the proposed changes.

A report on the outcomes of the consultation will be brought to the Board for consideration, so that it can decide what recommendations it wants to make to the Cabinet.

2.3 Officers are currently working with each centre on the consultation arrangements, planning to have them take place in the 10 centres starting w/c 15<sup>th</sup> August.

Officers have planned a meeting with a group of parents on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August to enable them to consider the draft consultation document and to make any suggestions for improvement.

### **3 Consultation Process**

#### **3.1 Target audiences**

- Parents/carers who are current or past users of day care services in Children's Centres :
  - Full time
  - Part time
  - With child/ren under 2
- Prospective users of day care service
- Private, voluntary and independent day care providers
- Children's Centre Partnership Advisory Boards
- Key stakeholders including PCT, Children's Social Care, Job Centre Plus etc
- Staff who work in the nurseries in the Children's Centres
- Trade Unions

#### **3.2 Purpose of the consultation with parents**

- To raise the understanding of the preferred option and of the support available to parents to access alternative provision for their children;
- To seek view of parents and service providers about the likely impact of implementing the preferred option;
- To identify any support that parent/carers feel they would want from the Children's Centre
- To provide an opportunity for alternative proposals to be explored and shared with elected members.

#### **3.3 Consultation methods**

The consultation process will run for 90 days though the key consultation events will take place during August and September.

- Workshop sessions will be held in each of the Children's Centres for parents/carers, involving Scrutiny Board 2 Members and ward councillors. This will be an introductory presentation about the abc Review, the options that were considered and the rationale behind the preferred option. Parents will then be invited to make either a collective or individual response to the survey.
- Invitation to complete Survey Monkey questionnaires will be sent out to service users and partnership members
- The Survey will be uploaded onto the CCC Website
- Specific meetings with identified service providers / professionals, such as Social Care, PCT Strategic Leads, will be held
- Presentations at Children's Centre Partnership Advisory Boards will be delivered
- A consultation workshop with day care providers in the private, voluntary and independent sectors is planned for September

**The consultation list is not exhaustive and the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services gave a clear commitment at Cabinet to consider all submissions relating to this review.**

#### **4 Preferred method of delivery of day care in Children's Centres**

- 4.1 A review of day care in Children's Centres had been commissioned in order to create a more operationally and financially efficient day care offer from Sure Start Children's Centres, with a target saving of £1m.
- 4.2 The review was part of the Year 2 abc Fundamental Service Review programme and as such worked within the abc Fundamental Service Review Methodology framework, Following this framework requires the project team to generate a number of options, the potential implications of each option explored and the preferred option identified.
- 4.3 The overall remodelling of the service was driven not only by the need to operate more efficiently, but also by national and local policy direction, whereby resources are targeted at the most vulnerable children and families, ensuring early, timely and effective interventions.
- 4.4 Option 1 had key advantages over the other options that were considered and it was therefore presented to the Project Board, Transformation Programme Board and finally Cabinet for approval.
- 4.5 As part of the consultation on the preferred option, an additional question will be added that will invite parents and other stakeholders to identify other models that would meet service priorities and achieve the required saving of £1m.

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