

STATEMENT FROM Cllr Sally Davis Chair of EYCY PDS Panel.

The Panel undertook this review at the request of Council following the Budget meeting in February this year when an amendment regarding funding for Early Years services including Children's centres was passed.

The Panel agreed the work be undertaken by a Task & Finish Group working with Officers from Children's Services, this group really appreciated all involved in the research whether it be the various groups or individuals they met, all of whom were willing to talk through issues or explain the work they undertook within their organisation or as part of the service they delivered. I am sure many of the statements you will hear today will reflect the issues raised with us.

The Group were able to ask many questions & the honesty of the answers was really helpful.

At the EYCY PDS Panel meeting on October 14th the recommendations presented tonight were made by the majority of the Panel following much discussion, all Panel members realise the importance of the work carried out by those involved with children in various Early Years settings & how this stage is vital to a child's future development in all areas.

The Panel noted that there remain a number of questions over what services will be provided at the Children's Centres under the proposed new model, who will run the various Children's Centres, and to whom these services will be available.

Noting these continued uncertainties, the majority of the Panel agreed the following recommendations:

1. The design and commissioning principles set out in Appendix 4 of the report presented to EYCY PDS Panel on Oct 14th are adopted and applied to any future model of service delivery
2. That the approach to Play; Specialist Family Support and the Early Years Foundations Stage services are dealt with separately from Children's Centres
3. That any funding reductions for these services are considered separately in line with service models
4. To recommend a hub and spoke model as the basis for delivery of Children's Centre Services, whilst recognising that the number of hubs, and the level of service at the non-hub Children's Centres, will be dependent upon the scale of budget reductions, ultimately agreed by Council in February 2014
5. To retain all existing Children's Centre buildings
6. To further explore the potential of a commissioned model and / or integrated model with health services, acknowledging the need for further market testing of potential providers
7. To undertake a full cost/benefit analysis of any service changes
8. To propose that Cabinet reconsiders the overall Council budget to determine if alternative areas of saving can be identified. The reasons being: a) Information gained by the Task & Finish Group shows that early support to vulnerable people can lead to savings overall. There is concern that such

significant cuts could lead to more costly interventions by statutory services of the council at a later stage

b) A commitment by the Panel to recommend some changes to services to meet part of the potential savings if the Cabinet are prepared to do likewise.