

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Call-in of Cabinet Decision 13 November, 2013 Forward Plan Reference E2593.

Re-structuring of the Early Years, Children's Centre and Early Help (0 - 11 years) Services 2014 - 2016

1 Context – The Council's Budget Meeting 19 February, 2013

At the Council budget meeting on 19 February, 2013 Council was asked to agree an overall saving of £2.3m from 2013-2016 to the Early Years and Children's Centre Service.

The profile of the proposed savings was as follows:

2013-14	£273,000
2014-15	£228,000
2015-16	£1,834,000

An amendment was agreed deferring the implementation of the budget reductions until 2014-15, leaving the revised savings profile as follows:

2013-14	£0
2014-15	£501,000
2015-16	£1,834,000

It was further agreed that:

the Early Years and Children's Centre savings in Years 2 and 3 are still subject to a detailed plan and would require a Budget vote in future years and that officers be instructed to provide a report to the Early Years, Children and Youth (EYCY) PDS Panel to allow further consideration of the implications of these savings and for potential alternative options to be reviewed.

2 Recommendations arising from the Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 14 October, 2013

As a result of the Council decision, the EYCY PDS Panel considered the matter and subsequently established a Task and Finish Group which produced recommendations for consideration by the full Panel.

The following recommendations were made:

1. The design and commissioning principles set out in Appendix 4 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

3 Minority Report of the Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

However, the extent of the concerns about the process adopted by the Panel also led to the production of a Minority Report by one member of the Panel which was published with the Cabinet papers.

This Minority Report recommended the following:

That Cabinet:

- a) Asks the EYCY PDS Panel to consider the implications of the proposed Early Years and Children's Centre savings and review potential alternative options with a report back to the December meeting of Cabinet identifying the following:
 - (i) The detailed implications of the proposed savings for frontline services under the proposed 38% cut to the budget of Children's Centres;
 - (ii) The potential for management and efficiency savings that would have no effect on frontline services;
 - (iii) A recommended model for the future of Children's Centre services based on management and efficiency savings; and
 - (iv) In light of (iii), a request to Cabinet that, should the recommended model be undeliverable within the proposed budget for Early Years and Children's Centres, resources are identified from elsewhere in order to offset the proposed savings target.

4 Officer Recommendations to the Cabinet Meeting on 13 November, 2013

The Cabinet, at its meeting on 13 November, 2013 was recommended, in the officer report before it, to:

- Note that the Early Years, Children & Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel had a number of questions, in particular which 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.
- Consider the recommendations as proposed by the EYC&Y Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel made at their meeting on 14th October 2013 and formulate their views from their recommendations which are laid out in Appendix 2; as well as considering the recommendations laid out in the Minority Report in Appendix 7.

5 The Cabinet Decision 13 November, 2013

The Cabinet heard contributions from parents, members of the public, volunteers, the Chair of the EYCY PDS Panel, the author of the Minority Report and other councillors, following which, the Cabinet decided:

- 1) To NOTE that the Early Years, Children & Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel had a number of questions, in particular which 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;
- (2) To NOTE the issues raised in the Minority Report; and
- (3) To FORMULATE their response to the Panel's recommendations and to the Minority Report.

6 The Call-in

This decision is called-in on the grounds that the Cabinet has failed to respond adequately to either the recommendations of the EYCY PDS Panel or the recommendations contained in the Minority Report.

Specifically:

The Cabinet has not answered the questions raised by the EYCY PDS Panel including which services will be provided under the proposed new model, who will run the various Children's Centres and to whom these services will be available;

The Cabinet has not formulated any response either to the recommendations of the Early Years, Children and Youth PDS Panel or to the Minority Report

The Cabinet has provided no timetable for formulating such a response; and

The Cabinet has given no indication about whether it is prepared to reconsider its overall budget to identify alternative areas of saving, as recommended by both the EYCY PDS Panel and the Minority Report.

7 Call-in Signatories

Cllr Liz Hardman – Lead Signatory

Additional signatures received by the deadline are listed on the next page

Signatures

1. Liz Hardman – Lead signatory
2. Michael Evans
3. Eleanor Jackson
4. Robin Moss
5. Vic Pritchard
6. Rob Appleyard
7. Barry Macrae
8. Pete Edwards
9. Francine Haeberling
10. Martin Veal
11. Colin Barrett
12. John Bull
13. Alan Hale
14. Liz Richardson
15. Anthony Clarke
16. Patrick Anketell-Jones
17. David Veale
18. Bryan Chalker
19. Dave Laming
20. Les Kew
21. June Player