

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 3rd August 2024 (for single Member decision)	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3559
TITLE:	Bath West Children's Centre Service Insourcing	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Please list all the appendices here, clearly indicating any which are exempt and the reasons for exemption		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Bath West Children's Centre Service is a key part of the Early Help offer for Bath and North East Somerset and is currently provided by a commissioned external organisation (Action for Children). The contract expires at the end of March 2025 and it is recommended to in-source this service from 1st April 2025, to be delivered by the Council delivered Bright Start Children's Centre Services.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Council Member is asked to;

- 2.1 Give approval to in-source the Bath West Children's Centre Service from 1st April 2025

3 THE REPORT

3.1 Background:

The Bath West Children's Centre Service is a key part of the Early Help offer for Bath and North East Somerset and aligns with the Council's internal Children's Centre services and Connecting Families Team to provide targeted early help for children and their parent/carers who are at risk of experiencing poor social, developmental and emotional outcomes.

The contract expires at the end of March 2025 and it is recommended at this time to in-source the service, to be delivered as part of the Council delivered Bright Start

Children's Centre Services from 1st April 2025. Bright Start provides children's centre services across the rest of B&NES, in the following three areas:

- Bath East
- Keynsham and Chew Valley
- Somer Valley

3.2 Process

A full options appraisal was undertaken in Spring 2024, to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of four potential scenarios for the future of the Bath West service:

1. De-commission the Bath West Service (remove the service from the Bath West area)
2. Re-commission the existing model of delivery (re-commission with current service specification to be delivered by an external provider)
3. Review and Redesign Model of Delivery (re-commission the service in Bath West with a redesigned service specification to be delivered by an external provider)
4. In source the service (to be delivered as part of Bright Start Children's Centre Services)

The first two options were discounted, due to the need and demand for a service in the Bath West area, the changing needs of the population and a desire to continue to align the Bath West service and the children's centre service delivered across the rest of B&NES.

A working group met to look in more detail at options 3 and 4, taking into consideration the information gathered through the SWOT analysis exercise and how well each option could ensure provision of a children's centre service for the Bath West area that:

- Is sustainable in the longer term and makes a planned and affordable contribution to the Council's financial plan.
- Provides value for money and makes efficient use of commissioning resources.
- Meets the early help/targeted support needs of families with children aged 5 and under, as identified in the Early Help Needs Assessment (2024)
- Facilitates partnership working with wider partners.
- Can continue to align with the Council run Bright Start Children's Centre Services (which cover Bath East, Somer Valley and Keynsham and Chew Valley) and work in partnership to provide a consistent children's centre offer and practice across B&NES within one access and referral pathway.
- Is strategically aligned as part of the wider universal, early help and social care system to provide a coherent and coordinated targeted support offer to families.

3.3 Rationale

The basis for the preferred option is:

- A children's centre service delivered by one provider across the whole of B&NES will ensure a consistent offer for families and a more straightforward pathway for partner agencies.

- A children's centre service delivered by the Council will help ensure the ability of the service to work flexibly to meet changing needs in the population and emerging Council priorities.
- A children's centre service delivered by the Council across the whole of B&NES will be more easily able to provide cover between areas as required and enable access to buildings, management, and administrative resources.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Community Engagement

The Early Help Quality Assurance Framework includes consulting with volunteers and practitioners delivering early help to ensure that support is accessible, effective and informed by service users. Engagement and consultation with service providers is a key part of the contract management process for all early help targeted support providers. Quarterly monitoring includes information on referrals, referral sources, outcomes achieved, case studies and feedback from service users. Additionally, early help services complete an annual review of participation standards, to show how service users are consulted and how their views contribute to service development.

The Bath West Children's Centre service will continue to actively engage with local residents through their recruitment for volunteers, links with local businesses and fundraising activities.

4.2 Equality Issues

The current and future service is and will be accessible and responsive to the needs of all children and young people and their families who are at risk of experiencing poor outcomes irrespective of gender, sexuality, disability, age, ethnic origin or cultural and religious beliefs. The service will ensure that fair access, diversity and inclusion is embedded within the culture of the service and this is monitored through the Early Help Quality Assurance Framework. See below re: Equality Impact Assessment.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 In-sourcing the Bath West children's centre service is expected to make some efficiency savings, in terms of:

- Reducing management overheads and building rental costs
 - Consolidating management and administration of the service
- Reducing demand on commissioned resources

5.2 There will be resource needed from HR, IT and finance to carry out the process of in-sourcing the service, including TUPE of staff, and on-going resource from these departments to support ongoing service delivery. Note: these resources have been identified with key colleagues fully involved in the options appraisal process.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks related to the issue and recommendations have been fully assessed, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance. The risks associated with the transfer are predominantly assessed as low and can be effectively managed through clear communication and robust project management.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed in June 2024. This assessment has not found any adverse equalities implications. (See EQIA below)



BWCC EQIA
June24.docx

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

All B&NES Council services are required to work in line with the Corporate Strategy, which includes key actions for addressing climate change.

In-sourcing the Bath West service will allow staff to use existing Council buildings and share resources, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of the service.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Please see report (section 3, above) for details of the other options considered for the future delivery of the Bath West Children's Centre Service.

10 CONSULTATION

The recommendation to in-source the Bath West Children's Centre service from 1st April 2025 has been considered and agreed by the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Public Health and Prevention, Director of Children's Services and Education, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources and Children's Services teams.

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	