

## Delegated Cabinet Member Key Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker and Portfolio area:</b>	Councillor Mushtaq: Cabinet Member Children and Young People
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	24 November 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Delivering Better Services for Families Through Family Hubs
<b>Report Author:</b>	Paula Healey: Head of Early Years (Education, Early Years and Skills)
<b>Ward (s):</b>	No requirement to consult ward members

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**Reason for the decision:**

We wish to consult on proposals to increase, improve and better coordinate our early family support offer to best suit the needs of Oldham families.

This will include the refurbishment of 7 'Family Hubs' across the borough, the delivery of services for families with children from a wide range of facilities within communities and the delivery of a comprehensive outreach and digital offer.

The new delivery model is in line with Oldham's corporate priorities and four focus areas set out in the Corporate Plan (2022-2027.) A proposal based upon the outcome of the consultation will be brought to Cabinet in early 2024.

**Summary:**

The roll out of the Sure Start programme in the early 2000s established 'designated' Children's Centres across the country. As part of that designation process, the buildings could only be used as children's centres and other services could not be delivered from them.

Since then the way families access services have changed significantly, especially since the

Pandemic.

The use of our 'designated' children's centres by families has reduced over time due to reductions and changes in the way Sure Start services were funded by Government and also due to changing patterns of demand from local families.

Some of the originally 'designated' children's centres are in aging buildings and all require significant investment to bring them up to the standard that we want for the children and families in Oldham.

In 2022 Oldham was provided with £3.6m of funding through the Department for Education's Family Hubs programme. This funding offers a real opportunity to transform our offer to families.

Part of that transformation will be the renovation of seven current buildings to become Family Hubs, providing services such as health clinics, ante and post-natal care, stay and play sessions and parenting support for families.

Alongside this, a wide range of services, support and activities for families with children will be delivered from a range of other council and community facilities including schools, community centres, libraries and lifelong learning centres.

This will be accompanied by increased outreach of family services into communities and a significantly improved digital offer to families.

By utilising our existing civic buildings such as libraries, leisure centres, Town Halls and outdoor spaces we are aiming to increase the access points for families.

We will also be working with our colleagues in primary and secondary schools to provide vital support that is best delivered in an educational setting to address educational underachievement, for example, early literacy sessions, speech and language and parenting support. Conversations with schools are already underway.

Utilising all these different types of buildings will help us to increase delivery through a network of

services that will work together in an integrated way in a local area.

To reshape our services to meet the changing needs of Oldham's families we need to reconsider the formal designation of those children's centres which are currently underused or unused, not fit for purpose or in need of significant investment.

By investing in our seven new family hubs and by delivering services and activities from better equipped and positioned council and community facilities we can review the current 'designated' children's centres and remove designation from those no longer used for that purpose. It is vital we review designations at this time to ensure we continue to meet the requirements set in the Childcare Act 2006.

The planned consultation, which will take place between November and January, will seek views on our plans to invest in Family Hubs, which buildings and locations we should also use to deliver services for families and the de-designation of some of our current designated children's centres.

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):***

The alternative is not to consult and retain the legacy arrangements for the delivery of early family support to the residents of Oldham. This is not recommended as it will not produce the improvements we wish to deliver.

**Recommendation(s):**

To consult on proposals to increase, improve and better coordinate our early family support offer to best suit the needs of families. A proposal based upon the outcome of the consultation will be brought to cabinet in early 2024.

**Implications:**

***What are the financial implications?***

None currently. A proposal based upon the outcome of the consultation will be brought to Cabinet in early 2024.

(Jamie Kelly, Senior Accountant)

***What are the procurement implications?***

None

***What are the legal implications?***

In the relevant section of the Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, so far as is reasonably practicable, the Council is required to make arrangements for sufficient provision to meet local need (the need of parents, prospective parents and young children in the Oldham borough). Therefore, any consultation must consider local need.

(Radhika Aggarwal: Principal Employment Solicitor).

***What are the Human Resources implications?***

The council's guidance on redesigning services will be followed and HR support sought throughout. This guidance includes the consultation period but there could also be statutory 12 weeks' notice periods to add in the event of any redundancies. In addition, there may potentially be redundancy costs of up to 30 weeks' pay for Oldham Council staff.

(Kathryn Pickford, HR Advisory Team Leader)

**Oldham Impact Assessment Completed (Including impact on Children and Young People)**

No. Will be completed alongside the post-consultation proposal that will come to Cabinet in early 2024.



<i>What are the <b>property</b> implications</i>	None currently. A proposal based upon the outcome of the consultation will be brought to Cabinet in early 2024.
<b>Risks:</b>	None currently. A proposal based upon the outcome of the consultation will be brought to Cabinet in early 2024.
<b>Co-operative Implications</b>	<p>The aim to facilitate joined up working across a wider range of place-based services is in line with the Council's commitment to support the development of co-operative services and thriving communities.</p> <p>(Amanda Richardson: Policy Manager)</p>
<b>Community cohesion disorder implications in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998</b>	None
<b>Environmental and Health &amp; Safety Implications</b>	None
<b>IT Implications</b>	None currently. A proposal based upon the outcome of the consultation will be brought to Cabinet in early 2024.

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No

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**Reason why this Is a Key Decision**

To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

The Key Decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **five working days** have elapsed from the publication date of the decision, i.e., before 04.12.2023, unless exempt from call-in.

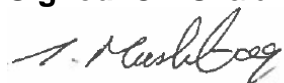
This item has been included on the Forward Plan under reference CHS-05-23.

**There are no background papers for this report**

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<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	Paula Healey
<b>Date:</b>	15 November 2023

**Signed:** Cllr Shaid Mushtaq



**Date:** 24 November 2023