

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 7 FEBRUARY 2018

UPDATE ON OPTIMISING THE USE OF CHILDREN'S CENTRE BUILDINGS

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families and the Assistant Director for Early Help and Partnerships have been invited to the meeting to update the Panel on Optimising the Use of Children's Centre Buildings.

Background

2. During 2016, a number of reports, scrutiny meetings and call-in procedures were considered by elected members as part of the decision making process on the future use and optimisation of Children's Centre Buildings in Worcestershire. The proposals included the transfer of 21 buildings to schools and other providers, and the continued use of 11 buildings for the provision of services by the Parenting and Family Support service (formerly known as Early Help services). The proposals formed part of wider discussions including the reduction in funding and redesign of early help services, the proposals relating to an integrated 0-19 prevention service (Starting Well) and the need for additional funded nursery places.
3. On 13th September 2016 the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families published his decision in respect of the buildings included in the formal consultation carried out during the summer of 2016, and on 1st December 2016 the formal transfer process began.
4. In March 2017, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel received the first progress update on the changes being made to the use of Children's Centre buildings (including the transfer of leases to schools and other providers) and progress towards sustaining Stay and Play provision in the county. As requested this report (and presentation) provides a further update including an progress of the transfer process, a summary of the provision at each centre and an update on the support for Stay and Play provision through the Parenting and Family Support contracts.

Leases held by the Parenting and Family Support providers (formerly Early Help)

5. Children's Centre Buildings leased to the Parenting and Family Support providers are listed in the table in Appendix 1 to this report. All leases were amended to reflect the end date of the varied contracts that is 31st March 2019.

6. Since the last update, Action for Children have decided that they no longer need the small outreach centre, Sunshine at The Grove, in Malvern and have surrendered the lease back to the Council. We are in discussion with the school, who previously expressed interest in using the facility to expand their nursery provision in response to identified need. Following a short consultation on this proposal a report from the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families will be presented to Cabinet outlining the proposed use.

Transfer of centres to schools/other providers

7. The project team managing the changes to leases at the remaining centres continues to meet weekly and comprises representatives from Children, Families and Communities (Vulnerable Children and Families commissioning team), Legal, and Place Partnership. This process of negotiating leases with schools, and dealing with routine and unexpected maintenance items, requires continuous oversight and management to avoid protracted negotiation periods where possible. The status of each transfer is noted in the table in Appendix 1 to this report. We continue to support the transition to ensure that the buildings are used to deliver early childhood services including the delivery of health services where this is appropriate.

8. The negotiation of leases is taking longer than was initially forecast in part due to delays as a result of the complexity of academy transfers both current and planned. Significant delays have also occurred due to the complexity of land ownership at a number of sites and unexpected repairs delaying transfers. In all cases there have been detailed discussions relating to the proposed leases as part of the transfer process.

Sustaining 'stay and play' provision

9. During the consultation on the future use of children's centre buildings, one of the main concerns of users was the continued availability of universal stay and play sessions. These sessions allow parents and carers of children under 5 to bring their children to play sessions and to meet with other parents and carers. They also provide peer support opportunities and support access to key information advice and guidance in relation to early childhood development. The thirty thousand pounds identified to support the sustainability of universal stay and play sessions has continued to be used to provide funding for the provision or updating of equipment, to support start up costs for parent led groups and for the training and guidance of staff and/or volunteers to run sessions. As can be seen from the summary in the appendix many of the children's centre buildings are still used to host universal stay and play sessions, and many sessions continue to run in other community venues.

10. Parenting and Family Support providers continue to recruit and train volunteers to work with parents within the community using a package called 'Parents First'. In South Worcestershire for example there are 25 qualified adult volunteers from a range of backgrounds and ages. On average each volunteer gives 16 hours of support each quarter. In Redditch and Bromsgrove 3 stay and play volunteers are in place, 6 peer supporters have been trained with a further course now underway and an additional 4 volunteers are working alongside the parenting team to learn facilitation skills etc. In Wyre Forest the provider has recruited 25 volunteers with a variety of roles including running universal stay and play sessions.

Summary

11. Overall the project of transferring Children's Centre buildings to a range of providers continues to be successful. All of the buildings continue to deliver early childhood services, in some cases increasing the range of activities on offer and/or increasing the number of nursery places available. In a small number of cases, progress on the transfers has been slow for the reasons outlined above but the project team continue to meet weekly in order to ensure that progress is maintained.

12. The next stage of the project will focus on ensuring that the proposals for individual buildings continue to be implemented, that barriers such as land ownership issues are addressed, and that where further changes in use occur these are properly consulted on.

13. In particular, during 2018 consideration will need to be given to the buildings currently leased to the Parenting and Family Support providers as plans for future delivery of the locality Early Help offer in Worcestershire post March 2019 and the Alternative Delivery Model implementation develop.

14. It is proposed that a position assessment of the Centre's is collated to include usage data, community capacity development options and multi-agency options for engaging and providing services and support to families. This information can be applied to inform decision making for 2019.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Summary of Children's Centre Buildings leased to the Parenting and Family Support providers

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

Worcestershire County Council 01905 763763
Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Alyson Grice/Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Officers,
Commercial and Change Directorate (01905 844962/844963)
Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) there are no further background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

- Agenda Report and Minutes of Cabinet: dated 16 June 2016 and 21 October 2016 available on the County Council Website [here](#)

- Agenda Report and Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board dated 1 July 2016 available on the County Council Website [here](#)
- Agenda Report and Minutes of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel dated 17 March 2016, 15 July 2016 and 13 March 2017 available on the County Council Website [here](#)
- Cabinet Member with Responsibility report and decision notice dates 13 September 2016 and available on the County Council Website [here](#)
- Children's Centre Statutory Guidance



Children Centre
Statutory Guidance.p

APPENDIX 1 – CENTRE BY CENTRE SUMMARY

32 Children's Centres buildings are within the scope of the project as listed below.

The Parenting and Family Support providers deliver services in and from 10 centres.

A further 11 centres are operated by schools and leases have either transferred or are in the final stages of being agreed and a small outreach centre has been returned to the school site.

7 centres are occupied via a lease or licence by childcare providers and negotiations are in progress with one further school who wish to expand their nursery into the centre recently vacated by the Parenting and Family Support provider.

Two centres remain wholly with the Council – in the first case the school has recently decided not to proceed with the transfer, in the second case the school have confirmed that they will be in a position to take on the lease after their academy transfer is complete.

All centres hold a range of information leaflets and posters outlining a range of support for families ranging from contact details for professionals, links to a range of useful websites (including Your Life Your Choice) and on topics relevant to under-5's.

All centres are visited at least annually in order to ensure that lease arrangements are adhered to and that buildings continue to deliver early childhood services. The first annual reviews took place in October 2017 and form the basis for the information in the activities column in the table below.

Activities and services being delivered at each centre and surrounding venues are detailed on the WCC website. Information available is regularly reviewed with Schools and Providers - <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/childrenscentres>

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
1	Pear Tree at Sidemoor – Bromsgrove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private full daycare setting (term time only) • Discussion groups for new parents • Child Health clinic • Birth and Beyond • Baby bistro • Stay and Play • Parenting courses including Family Links • Midwifery Clinic • Talking Walkin (speech and language support) <p>Family support is delivered from this base</p>	Lease held by the Parenting and Family Support provider (Redditch Borough Council)
2	Sunnyfields at Charford – Bromsgrove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is now a three form entry with 122 children accessing the nursery provision • Before and after school club • SEND group meets weekly • Family Learning • Parenting Courses including PEEP • Health Visitor clinic • Midwife ante natal clinic • Special needs group meetings • Talkin Walkin (speech and language support) • Batchley Project supports 18 children with targeted speech and language support • The nursery is now able to offer a 30 hour provision to working parents • Weekly drop in (coffee morning) for parents of young children • Kinship carers group 	Lease in final stages of being transferred to the school

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
3	Tulip Tree at Catshill Bromsgrove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before and after school clubs • Speech and Language support • Base for school Family support Worker • School led Bromsgrove Learning Network for Excellent Teacher programme • Child protection meetings and case conferences • Targeted support for disadvantaged pupils • Governors meetings 	Lease with school for signature
4	Conkers at Hagley - Hagley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before and After School Club • Talking Walkin (speech and language support) • SEN provision • 121 work with children needing support in literacy and numeracy • Targeted small group work for pupils needing extra support • Lunch club • Kindergarten are hosting a series of "Positive Parenting" workshops and meetings 	Lease with school for final agreement
5	Sunshine at Pool Brook - Malvern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents-to-Be – monthly midwife sessions • Child Health Clinic – weekly run by Health Visitors • Twice monthly Speech and Language drop ins • Stay & Play activities • Introduction to Solids – monthly delivered by Community Nursery Nurse • Additional Needs group – monthly • Antenatal clinic – 4 times a week • Carers group for those permanently parenting someone else's child – monthly 	Lease held by the Parenting and Family Support provider (Action for Children)

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
		<p>delivered by Kinship Carer Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and advice provided by Information & Advice Workers • Parenting courses • Emergency food bank parcels and voucher distribution and vitamin sales <p>A list of 17 stay and play activities delivered elsewhere in the area is provided for information to families.</p> <p>Family Support is delivered from the centre</p>	
6	Sunshine at The Grove – Malvern	This outreach centre has been used as a base by the provider but this use has now ended and negotiations are underway with the school who wish to expand their nursery provision.	Lease surrendered by the Parenting and Family Support provider – negotiations with school underway
7	Riverboats at Upton - Upton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay & Play activities – some delivered by the school, others by outside providers • Health Visitor clinic, antenatal clinic, NCT breastfeeding support group year round • Pre-school including wraparound care and holiday club • Activities delivered by providers including Debutots, Hartbeebies, Creation Station and Baby Yoga <p>With the additional space the school are now able to offer an EIFS Family Support Worker a permanent base within school</p>	Lease with school for signature

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
8	Holly Trees at St Georges – Redditch	This is a small outreach site which has been transferred back to the school	N/A
9	Holly Trees at St Stephens – Redditch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time childcare setting –private provider. • Before and after school and Holiday club • Baby Bistro and Breast feeding support • Child health Clinic • Birth and Beyond • PEEP (supporting parents with child's learning) • Parenting courses (including Teen Triple P and Family Links) and clinic • Understanding your Child • Talking Teens • Midwife clinic • Volunteer Course • Stay and Play (a private company delivers the sessions overseen by the provider) • Talking Walk-in (speech and language support) <p>Family support is delivered in and from the centre</p>	Lease held by the Parenting and Family Support provider (Redditch Borough Council)
10	Oak Trees at St Lukes – Redditch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursery has 22 places and provides full day care term time only from 9.a.m until 3.p.m • There are 22 three and four year olds on register and 12 two year olds, four of whom are funded • A new before and after school club has started (September 2017) 	Lease held by Nursery provider

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
11	Oak Trees at Oakhill – Redditch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timetable of activities (parenting support, SEN and EAL drop ins and stay and play fun session) is developing and the afterschool club is running as usual 	Lease delayed due to queries from school on the original funding of the centre which are being addressed by the project team
12	Cherry Trees at Batchley Redditch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private childcare provider on campus Midwifery Clinic four mornings a week Speech and Language (Talking Walk-in) Health Visitors clinic Drop in for parents (EWO and psychology services) Parenting Courses including Triple P Stay and Play session After School Club Family Learning (HoW) 	Lease with the school for signature
13	Maple Trees at Tenacres - Redditch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare provision continues to be delivered from the centre. 	Nursery provider has licence to occupy and lease is with school for final agreement
14	Maple Trees at Roman Way - Redditch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New full daycare (including a before and after school club) provision run by private provider as the school decided not to take the lease of the centre. This runs year round. 	Nursery provider

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
15	Woodlands at Woodrow - Redditch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay and play sessions • Parenting groups 	The school has confirmed its commitment to taking on the lease of the children's centre and will draw up a plan for the transition post the delayed academy transfer on 1 st April 18
16	Buttercup at Fairfield Primary, Worcester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily antenatal clinics • Weekly baby health visitor clinic • Twice weekly Early Years Health Checks (health Visitors) • Weekly Speech and Language clinics • Twice monthly Speech and Language drop-in sessions • Birth & Beyond (delivered bi-monthly with Midwives & Health Services) • Weekly Stay & Play group (run by volunteers) • Weekly Mum & Baby group with use of sensory play • Information and advice workers available to speak to parents as and when they phone/come to the centre • Parenting courses <p>Family support is run from the centre</p>	Lease is held by the Parenting and Family Support provider (Action for Children)
17	Saffron at Stanley Rd Primary – Worcester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Health Clinic – run weekly by Health Visitors • Child Health Checks – run weekly by Health Visitors • Antenatal Clinic – 3 times a week 	Lease is held by the Parenting and Family Support provider (Action for Children)

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay & Play – 3 groups a week in term time, run by volunteers/other providers • Twice monthly Speech and Language drop ins • Postnatal Clinic – weekly • Parenting courses 	
18	Tudor Way at Dines Green Primary – Worcester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting courses • Adult Learning sessions • Young Parents group – run by Family Nurse Partnership • Speech and Language appointments twice monthly • Birth Choices course – run weekly by Worcestershire Antenatal • Well-being course for mums with Post Natal Depression/low mental health – run by Becoming Families • Stay & Play groups • School holiday activities • Information and Advice Workers available to speak to parents as and when they phone/attend the centre • English class – run weekly by Manor Park Church • Dental Hygiene sessions – run by CDWS in partnership with Wrigleys • CAB appointments weekly • Child Health Clinic – run weekly by Health Visitors • Antenatal clinics 3 days a week • Birth & Beyond sessions • Distributor of food bank vouchers and part of the Food Share Food Cloud scheme with Tesco – donated food is given to local families <p>Family support delivered from the centre</p>	Lease is held by the Parenting and Family Support provider (Action for Children)

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
19	Lavender at Oasis – Worcester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery provision that was previously being delivered at a local community centre has re-located to the children's centre • 2/3/4 year old funded sessions are offered term time only. • Fortis have recently refurbished the unused onsite caretaker's house for use as a community venue. The school are keen for this to be used as much as possible and will only be charging minimum fees for use • Midwives were delivering an antenatal clinic at the site but have recently relocated 	Lease is held by the school
20	Bluebell at Perry Wood - Worcester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly child health clinics delivered by health visitors • Family learning delivered by Libraries and Learning <p>The transfer has been delayed due to legal queries and discussions between the school and the EFA. This seemed to be progressing well but we have recently (January 2018) been advised by the Headteacher (who has recently joined the school) that they do not plan to take on the lease. Discussions are underway with the school.</p>	To be determined, due to recent decision by school
21	Blossom Vale at Abbey Park First School – Pershore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Solids – run monthly • Twice monthly Speech and Language drop ins • School holiday activities/one-off events • Additional needs group – run monthly with guest speakers • Parenting courses • Information and Advice Workers available to speak to parents when they call/attend the centre <p>Family support is delivered from the centre</p>	Lease held by Parenting and Family Support provider (Action for Children)

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
22	Applevale at Broadway - Broadway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The onsite playschool continues to operate term-time only • Stay & Play session is run weekly by the playschool, and the Health Visitors attend once a month • Occasional use for family meetings • The playschool have decided not to take on the rest of the centre and discussions are underway with the school 	To be confirmed. Licence held by the playgroup.
23	Orchard and Spring Vale – Evesham Nursery School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evesham Nursery School has taken on the lease for the centre and with a successful capital funding bid have made alterations to the building to create a free-flow environment throughout the building • The children's centre part of the building now accommodates 2 year olds 	Lease held by Evesham Nursery school
24	Wands at Westlands First Schools – Droitwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Learning – weekly in term time, delivered by Libraries & Learning • Family Learning – one-off sessions eg. First Aid delivered by other providers • Stay & Play groups – 3 groups delivered by other providers • Additional Needs group – once a month • Introduction to Solids – once a month • Foodbank collection point • Fortis events eg. pop-up shop, job club • Children's Spanish class – run by Kidslingo • Parenting courses • School holiday activities • Child Health Clinic – weekly run by Health Visitors • Twice monthly Speech and Language drop ins • Antenatal clinic – 5 times a week <p>Family support is delivered from the centre</p>	Lease held by Parenting and Family Support provider (Action for Children)

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
25	Greenwood at Wychbold First School – Droitwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This small centre (office and meeting space only) has been to the school to meet basic need and for multi-agency use for meetings. 	Lease with school for signature
26	Half Crown Wood at St Bartholomews, Stourport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base for Short Breaks Worcester (Barnardo's service) Speech and Language drop in Health Visitor drop in clinic Together Time group runs alongside the health clinic and provides Information, Advice and Guidance and promotes the Parenting Support service PEEP group Parenting sessions by appointment Birth and Beyond which is a four week programme facilitated by Barnardo's workers with support from health HENRY courses Time for Baby group Breastfeeding support group with a Best Buddy volunteer and a paid health support worker. Clothes Swap Shop Information, Advice and Guidance 	Lease held by Parenting and Family Support provider (Barnardo's)
27	Half Crown Wood at Stourport Primary, Stourport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The centre is used to offer a school run, 16 place childcare provision for two year olds. Parents can access full day or morning and afternoon sessions. This provision is offered five days a week, term time only 	Lease with school for agreement

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
28	Brookside at Comberton, Kidderminster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midwife clinic four times a week • Breastfeeding support group with a Best Buddy volunteer and a paid health support worker • Health Visitor drop in clinic • Together Time group runs alongside the health clinic and provides Information, Advice and Guidance and promotes the Parenting Support service • Birth and Beyond which is a four week programme facilitated by Barnardo's workers with support from health • Parenting sessions by appointment • HENRY courses • Time for Baby group • Babies Here, What Next? Group • Saturday morning Forest school sessions • Clothes Swap Shop • Information, Advice and Guidance <p>The centre is also a base for family support workers.</p> <p>Despite lengthy discussions it was not possible to reach agreement on sharing the building with the school.</p>	Lease held by Parenting and Family Support provider (Barnardo's)
29	Rainbow at St Marys - Kidderminster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full child daycare • Stay and Play (Three times a week) • HENRY courses • Talking Walk in (Speech and Language service) • Healthy Lifestyle courses such as cooking • Space available for babies has increased 	Nursery provider holds the lease for the nursery and operates the remainder of the building.

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
30	Chestnut at Franche - Kidderminster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Children's Centre building is being used for full day care for children up to three years old. It is offered five days a week, all year round. • There are additional activities offered in the converted school house which includes four stay and play sessions and baby massage. • Tots Splashtime is also offered at the onsite swimming pool. • Speech and Language and Health Visitor developmental checks onsite 	Lease with school for signature
31	Riverside at Bewdley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare provision is available three and a half days a week for two, three and four year olds. • Before and after school wrap around care • Speech and language sessions are held one afternoon a month. • Core group meetings are held within the centre along with some contact sessions for pupils who are looked after children • Triple P parenting sessions are delivered by the Parenting and Family Support provider • Wyre Forest Childminders have used the centre for a first aid course. <p>The school are also holding the "Achievement for All" training and meetings within the centre.</p>	Lease with school for agreement

	Centre	Summary of activities and services delivered in the centre	Current leaseholder arrangements
32	Treetops at Birchen Coppice - Kidderminster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day care provision delivered by YMCA • Occasional use by adult learning • Speech and language drop-ins 	YMCA hold the lease for the nursery and final negotiations underway re transfer to academy