

Summary Sheet

Name of Committee and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 12 March 2018

Report Title:

Proposals for consultation on the implementation of the Early Help Strategy: Phase Two & Phase Three

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report:

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author

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Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

The Early Help Offer is an essential element of Rotherham's Improvement Plan. It is designed to meet the needs of children, young people and families swiftly, when problems first emerge and to prevent the escalation of issues and the requirement for more costly statutory intervention.

The Rotherham Early Help Offer was launched in January 2016 introducing new systems and processes and creating integrated locality teams from a range of previously separate services and professional disciplines.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) sets out the statutory requirement for Early Help services.

A review of Ofsted Inspection findings of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers suggests that, effective high-performing children's social care is always accompanied by a high quality Early Help Offer. (What do good early help services look like? RMBC (2016).

The successful implementation of Phase One of the Early Help Strategy has delivered £1.2 million in savings to date. This report is concerned with the permission to consult on the proposals for the implementation of Phase Two and Phase Three of the Early Help Strategy, which will deliver savings of around £500k over the next two financial years by redesigning services and introducing a borough wide Intervention Hub to deliver a more sustainable and cost efficient service in the future.

- Phase One of the Early Help Strategy introduced;

New governance through; the Children and Young people's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP), the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) the Member led Early Help Review Board, the partner led Early Help Steering Group and new systems and processes to ensure swift access to support through; the Request for Support, the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and the first phase of integration of previously separate professional disciplines and services into integrated Early Help locality teams.

- Phase Two of the Early Help Strategy (2016-19) describes;

"Phase Two will see a whole service delivery redesign; developing new job roles and more efficient and effective ways of working to embed a shared responsibility across the partnership for meeting the needs of families earlier. We will build on our achievements in phase one and refine our Early Help Offer through further integration and service redesign with our partners and stakeholders."

- Phase Three of the Early Help Strategy (2016-19) describes;

"Phase three will ensure that our early help offer is sustainable. The Council will work in partnership to explore the potential for all-age family integrated services and look at innovative ways to reshape our existing buildings and centres into all age delivery points in localities and communities. The local authority will review its staffing structures and seek to reduce our management capacity as the early Help offer becomes further embedded across the wider early help partnership."

This report provides; the Guiding Principles for the consultation on the proposals for the implementation of Phase Two and Phase Three of the Early Help Strategy (Appendix A), the approved savings considered at Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 14th December 2017 and the timeline for consultation and proposed implementation in February 2019.

Recommendations

1. That an extensive 90 day consultation period (60 day public and 30 day Staff) on the proposed implementation of Phase Two and Phase Three of the Early Help Strategy 2016-2019 be approved.
2. That the proposed timeline for consultation and implementation of the Early Help Strategy Phase Two and Phase Three, as set out at paragraph 6.1 of this report, be approved.
3. That a further report comes back to the Commissioner in October 2018 with recommendations following the consultation.

List of Appendices Included:

Appendix A – The Guiding Principles for the Early Help Whole Service Review

Appendix B – Equality Analysis

Appendix C – Building Proposals

Background Papers

Cabinet Report. Early Help Strategy: Phase Two, Whole Service Review: 10th July 2017.

Rotherham's Early Help Strategy: 2016-2019.

Rotherham Plan, A New Perspective 2025.

What do good early help services look Like? 2016.

The Children and Young People's Plan, 2016-2019.

Family Hubs, A Discussion Paper, The Children's Commissioner, 2016.

Rotherham: a Child-Centred Borough, Cabinet Report, June 6th 2016.

The Cost of Late Intervention, Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), 2016.

Childcare Act 2006.

RMBC Ofsted Monitoring Visit letter: 13th March 2017.

DfE Sure Start Children's Centre Statutory Guidance (April 2013).

Early Intervention: The Next Steps, 2011.

Working Together to Safeguard Children: 2015.

Ofsted Inspection Report, January 2018.

Review of the Youth Justice System in England & Wales. December 2016.

Education Inspections Act 2006.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 7 March 2018

Council Approval Required:

No

Exempt from the Press and Public:

No

Proposals for consultation on the implementation of the Early Help Strategy: Phase Two & Phase Three

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That an extensive 90 day consultation period (60 day public and 30 day Staff) on the proposed implementation of Phase Two and Phase Three of the Early Help Strategy 2016-2019 be approved.
- 1.2 That the proposed timeline for consultation and implementation of the Early Help Strategy Phase Two and Phase Three, as set out at paragraph 6.1 of this report, be approved.
- 1.3 That a further report comes back to the Commissioner in October 2018 with recommendations following the consultation.

2. Background

- 2.1 The publication of the Graham Allen report, Early Intervention: the next steps, (2011) and the subsequent creation of the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), has led to a growing body of evidence which makes the case for Early Intervention and prevention. The evidence shows that outcomes are better for children and young people if agencies intervene earlier; that working with the whole family is the most effective approach to achieving sustained outcomes and that effective Early Help yields cost benefits across public services including; adult social care, the criminal justice, health and welfare systems. The Cost of Late Intervention, EIF (2016).
- 2.2 The statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015), sets out the requirements for Early Help Services, stating;

Local areas should have a range of effective, evidence-based services in place to address assessed needs early. The Early Help offer should draw upon the local assessment of need and the latest evidence of the effectiveness of early help and early intervention programmes. In addition to high quality support in universal services, specific local early help services will typically include family and parenting programmes, assistance with health issues and help for problems relating to drugs, alcohol and domestic violence. Services may also focus on improving family functioning and building the family's own capability to solve problems; this should be done within a structured, evidence-based framework involving regular review to ensure that real progress is being made.

- 2.3 The guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) makes it clear that all local agencies should work together to support children and families. As such, a strong Early Help Offer can be a key enabler for integrated working at a neighbourhood level across all ages.
- 2.4 Rotherham's Early Help Offer was launched on the 18th January 2016. This followed a restructure in October 2015 when a new management team was established and a number of previously separate services and professional disciplines were brought together to form integrated, multi-disciplinary, Early Help Locality Teams.

2.5 The vision for Early Help in Rotherham was co-produced with partners and staff. The vision describes;

- “All agencies working together to ensure children, young people and families have their needs identified early so that they can receive swift access to targeted help and support.”

2.6 The Early Help Strategy is aligned to the Rotherham locality and neighbourhood based approach captured in;

The Rotherham Plan, A New Perspective 2025, the Building Stronger Communities Strategy, the work being undertaken through the Council's Thriving Neighbourhoods Programme Board, the Safer Rotherham Partnership Building Confident and Cohesive Communities work stream, South Yorkshire Police Neighbourhood Policing model and the principles of the Rotherham Place Plan Board, Rotherham Place Plan Delivery Team and the Rotherham Children and Young People Transformation Group.

2.7 The development of Rotherham's Early Help Offer and Strategy is intrinsically linked to the Children's Services improvement journey, the delivery of a three year savings and efficiencies programme to contribute to the Council's approved savings. Clear progress of improvements and impact can be tracked and evidenced since the launch of the Early Help Offer in January 2016.

2.8 In April 2016 an Ofsted Improvement Visit noted:

'All staff spoken to, while feeling the pain of change, are incredibly committed, enthusiastic and excited about the changes. All have seen the integration of teams and the Ofsted process as a learning experience and opportunity to improve the lives of children in Rotherham, which was heart-warming'. There is evidence staff have been and continue to be consulted on the transformation programme and while anxious about their jobs and what it means for them, remain on the whole positive.'

2.9 In February 2017, an Ofsted Monitoring visit noted:

- *The implementation of multi-disciplinary locality teams is leading to improved coordination of early help support to families by the local authority.*
- *There is much evidence of children's circumstances improving as a result of the early help being provided.*
- *There are also some positive examples of very timely intervention and support for families, who have an allocated worker within one of the locality teams.*

2.10 In the ten month period between the Inspection Visit and the Monitoring Visit the feedback from Ofsted notes the rapid and sustained progression of the Early Help workforce. There is a notable shift in the emphasis of the feedback from the '*commitment and anxieties of staff*' in the new locality teams, towards a focus on the positive impact and quality of the Early Help Offer.

2.11 The Ofsted Re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers report, published January 29th, 2018 noted;

- *Services to children in need of help and protection are now good.*
- *The early help offer has undergone considerable transformation so that there is now a shared strategic ownership and ambition with partners. The local authority, with its partners, revised and relaunched its new early help assessment, and has worked to support partners in completing these.*
- *Families benefit from a broad range of early help services, which are becoming more integrated with social care. This facilitates an improved and seamless delivery of services to children and their families.*
- *There is a wide range of accessible and good-quality early help services delivered through locality teams, youth services, children's centres and the troubled families offer. Early help locality teams are now co-located with social care and partners across the borough. This is improving communication and the delivery of responsive interventions and services in local communities. Resources and interventions delivered are informed by intelligence gathered from the top five issues identified from referrals to social care. For example, help is appropriately focused to provide parenting support and targeted help such as counselling, attachment based family therapy and multi-systemic therapy. Feedback from families, schools and partners of the local authority demonstrates that early help is making a difference, and that families feel supported at this lower level.*
- *Partner agencies are now undertaking assessments, demonstrating their growing confidence in the arrangements. Inspectors saw some very effective work with children and families.*
- *Partners have grown in confidence in completing early help assessments.*
- *Arrangements for stepping cases up to social care or down to early help are robust, and are supported through weekly management meetings.*

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 To ensure that the Early Help Service is able to respond to the increasing demands being placed upon Children's and Adults Social Care and the changing needs of children, young people and families, there is a need to further integrate the professional disciplines and job roles within the Early Help service to better reflect; whole family working, and to create better opportunities for staff development, progression and retention.
- 3.2 The proposals for Phase Two and Three of the Early Help Strategy will ensure that Early Help Practitioners and managers have the right skills mix to respond to the needs of families and that the workforce is supported with the right levels of management support and oversight.
- 3.3 The proposed re-designed services will also deliver an Early Help workforce with the skills and capacity to complement and support partners and stakeholders who share responsibility for meeting the needs of children and families across the borough.
- 3.4 The Early Help Offer is currently delivered through a mixed economy of universal, targeted and outreach work, with staff based in locality offices on a range of sites across the borough and delivery taking place in Youth Centres, Children's Centres, Schools and Community buildings. The Early Help Offer needs to be delivered in a way that strengthens partnership and neighbourhood working and is targeted appropriately to support Rotherham's most vulnerable children, young people and families.
- 3.5 The proposals to further integrate staff within the Early Help Locality Teams are informed by; the Guiding Principles, (Appendix A), that were co-produced with staff and agreed at the 10th July 2017 Cabinet Meeting, an analysis of workflow and demand since the Early Help Offer was launched in January 2016 and feedback from service users, Peer Reviews and Ofsted Monitoring and Inspection visits.
- 3.6 An analysis of performance data and feedback from Exit Surveys (completed by families after receiving an Early Help intervention) informs the rationale for the proposed distribution of resources and staff within the three geographical boundaries of North, South and Central. The redistribution of resources will maximise the opportunities to work more collaboratively with a wider range of RMBC services and key partner agencies including; Schools, Health, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
- 3.7 The proposed re-design will provide targeted, evidenced based interventions through a variety of delivery points and negotiated spaces, (Community buildings, Youth Centres and Children Centres) relevant to the diversity of the community and will be flexible enough to meet changing patterns of current and future demand, not fixed or bound to buildings that are no longer fit for purpose to deliver outstanding outcomes for children, young people and families in Rotherham.

- 3.8 The proposals include savings to be approved through the rationalisation of a range of properties. The buildings identified at 4.10 and 4.13 of this report are subject to the current operational property review being undertaken by the Asset Management Service and will be reported and tracked through the Asset Management Board.
- 3.9 Property related savings will be accounted for as part of the £1 million approved savings requirement, CCR2, which covers the corporate review of land and property, linked to service reviews and localities; (£1m over two years, 2017/18 and 2018/19 from reducing property).

4. Summary of options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 The following summary captures the key changes proposed.
- 4.2 The development of locality Family Hubs, (Early Help Team bases with staff co-located alongside RMBC services, social care and health partners) providing delivery points for a Children Centre Offer, a Youth Offer and the 0-19 Health Offer. The commitment to explore the development of Family Hubs is an objective within Phase Three of the Early Help Strategy and is informed by the rationale contained within; Family Hubs, A Discussion Paper, The Children's Commissioner, October 2016.
- 4.3 The introduction of a borough wide Intervention Hub. This will expand upon the current evidenced based programmes used by Early Help practitioners across the borough to achieve better and more sustained outcomes for children, young people and families in Rotherham.
- 4.4 An expansion of the Family Group Conferencing (FGC) and Edge of Care (EoC) provision to ensure that children and families receive high quality, cost effective interventions.
- 4.5 A reduction in the number of Heads of Service posts from four to three.
- 4.6 The creation of two Early Help Service Manager Posts to match the current structures within Children's Social Care and to offer better career development opportunities for M2 and M3 Managers.
- 4.7 Greater integration of the Youth Offending Team, bringing interventions into localities so that young offenders are integrated more effectively into their communities and enhancing the multi-agency response from Education, Schools and social care. This is in line with the recommendations of the Taylor Review of the Youth Justice System in England & Wales December 2016.
- 4.8 A proposed reduction in the number of registered Children Centres from 12 to 9, whilst ensuring the Children Centre Offer within the locality is retained by delivering universal and targeted services from a range of sites better suited to the needs of families. (Appendix C).

4.9 DfE Sure Start Children's Centre Statutory Guidance (April 2013) states;

A children's centre should make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers and fathers) and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere.

The statutory definition of a children's centre states that;

Children's centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas.

4.10 The proposed Children Centres in scope are;

- Park View (Central Locality)
- Broom Valley (Central Locality)
- Wath Victoria (North Locality)

4.11 A proposed reduction in the number of Youth Centres and Early Help Team bases from eleven to six. (Appendix C).

4.12 The Statutory Guidance, Section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. States that;

It is therefore local authorities' duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, equality of access for all young people to the positive, preventative and early help they need to improve their well-being. This includes youth work and other services and activities that:

- a. Connect young people with their communities, enabling them to belong and contribute to society, including through volunteering, and supporting them to have a voice in decisions which affect their lives;
- b. Offer young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of sports, arts, music and other activities, through which they can develop a strong sense of belonging, socialise safely with their peers, enjoy social mixing, experience spending time with older people, and develop relationships with adults they trust;
- c. Support the personal and social development of young people through which they build the capabilities they need for learning, work, and the transition to adulthood – communication, confidence and agency, creativity, managing feelings, planning and problem solving, relationships and leadership, and resilience and determination;
- d. Improve young people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being;

- e. Help those young people at risk of dropping out of learning or not achieving their full potential to engage and attain in education or training; and
- f. Raise young people's aspirations, build their resilience, and inform their decisions – and thereby reducing teenage pregnancy, risky behaviours such as substance misuse, and involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.

4.13 The proposed Youth Centres and Team Bases in scope are;

- Herringthorpe (Central Locality)
- Treeton (South Locality)
- Kiveton (South Locality)
- Maltby Linx (South Locality)
- Swinton (North Locality)

5. Consultation

- 5.1 A robust 90 day consultation (60 day Public, followed by 30 day Staff) will involve meetings with all staff as well as formal communication via letter and the offer of individual support through Human Resources (HR) and Early Help managers. The consultation will involve the Trade Unions and will be delivered through a combination of public meetings, online surveys and use of existing fora, for example Children Centre Advisory Panel. This consultation will seek the views of; parents, young people, Members, partners, stakeholders, professionals and members of the community through a series of consultation events across the borough. There will also be a dedicated Twitter account #earlyhelpconsultation2018 and an email account earlyhelp.consultation@rotherham.gov.uk for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- 5.2 Consultation on the proposed Implementation of Phase Two and Three will be undertaken in line with the Vision and Objectives set out in the Early Help Strategy 2016-2019, the Co-produced Guiding Principles (Appendix A) and the Cabinet Report; Early Help Strategy, Phase Two, Whole Service Review: 10th July 2017.
- 5.3 The consultation process and co-production of Rotherham's Early Help Offer has been ongoing since November 2015. In developing Rotherham's Early Help Strategy 2016-19, a significant consultation was undertaken during Autumn and Winter 2016/17 with; children and young people, staff, Voluntary and Community Sector, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, Local Safeguarding Board, Safer Rotherham Partnership, Early Help Steering Group, Early Help Review Board, Department for Communities & Local Government, Troubled Families Unit, Sheffield City Council, Department for Education, Practice Improvement Partner (Lincolnshire County Council) and all Rotherham Ward and Parish Councillors.

- 5.4 In 2014 a public consultation took place to understand demand in relation to the Council's Children Centre Offer. The findings of the consultation were considered by Cabinet on 18th June 2014. The major concern raised during this consultation was that additional travel would be required as a result of closing centre buildings and this might reduce the number of families accessing the Children Centres. The report further noted that local authorities are not required to provide a Centre building in walking distance. However, they are required to provide access to services locally. There is a need to undertake a new public consultation due to the period of time that has passed since 2014, and also to ensure that the public understand the local offer in the context of the current Early Help Offer, which did not exist in 2014.
- 5.5 In addition, opportunities will be made available throughout the consultation period to visit Children Centres in Lincolnshire as part of the Practice Improvement Partner arrangement to inform the final recommendations.
- 5.6 In March 2016, a Youth Service Consultation took place involving all existing centres, all schools, uniformed provision, the Voluntary and Community Sector, the Youth Cabinet and a bespoke YouTube consultation video was produced supported by a social media campaign on Twitter (#TheBigYouthConversation). 897 young people responded to the consultation and findings were shared with the Early Help Review Board and Early Help Steering Group. The majority of young people who responded did not visit Council youth centres. However, more than 60% of young respondents felt that it was 'very important' or 'important' to keep Youth Centres in Rotherham.
- 5.7 Throughout November and December 2016, the Early Help Senior Leadership Team undertook a series of staff and partner engagement events, creating opportunities through 'structured conversations' to further shape the development of the Early Help Offer in Rotherham.
- 5.8 In March 2017 the extended Early Help Management Team attended a workshop on Phase Two of the Early Help Strategy and to co-produce the Guiding Principles (Appendix A).
- 5.9 It is proposed that formal consultation on the final proposals for the new service delivery model, service structure and job roles will commence in April 2018 and run for 90 days.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 The table below sets out a high level timeline for the new structure to be in place from February 2019 Trade Unions have been updated monthly as a Standing Item at the Children and Young People Services Trade Union Meeting.

1.	Cabinet Report: Early Help Strategy: Phase Two & Phase Three implementation.	12 th March 2018
2.	Public consultation (60 days) Staff 30 days (90 days inclusive)	9 th April – 6 th July 2018
3.	Cabinet Report: Early Help Strategy: Phase Two & Phase Three implementation.	October 2018
4.	New structure implementation.	February 2019

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 Children's Services budgets remain under pressure due to increasing demand resulting in a forecast outturn overspend for 2017/18. The Early Help Service has helped to partially mitigate this position through stringent vacancy controls and robust budget monitoring processes. Further management actions to reduce the budget pressure are being developed by the Directorate.
- 7.2 The Early Help service achieved savings of £501k in 2016/17 and £421k in 2017/18.
- 7.3 The Budget and Council Tax 2018-19 report approved by Cabinet on 19th February and to be considered by Council on 28th February includes further savings from the implementation of the Early Help Strategy. £205k part-year savings are included in the 2018/19 budget and full-year savings of £380k are included in the 2019/20 budget (both savings figures include the £30k saving related to the troubled families programme). On the basis of the timetable in paragraph 6.1 above, these savings will be realised in full from February 2019 and it is anticipated that £59k of the £205k saving will be achieved in 2018/19. The remaining £146k will be met from continued vacancy savings from the current Early Help staffing structure.
- 7.4 The full year savings to be achieved in 2019/20 from the Early Help strategy phases 2 & 3 are £498k. This covers the £380k further saving as referred to in Paragraph 7.3 and provides £118k towards previously agreed savings from a corporate review of land and property, linked to service reviews and localities.
- 7.5 Any delays to the timetable set out in this report would have a further impact on the timescale of delivery of the savings proposed. The financial impact of any delay in the implementation of this review would be found from other savings and efficiencies from within the service, e.g. vacancy management.

8. Procurement Implications

- 8.1 The options being considered outline a partnership approach to delivery of services and changing roles for staff within that. The implication for this is that current contracted services will have existing service specifications that will not reflect the requirements of the new way of working. Therefore it will be necessary as part of the process of the implementation of the agreed delivery model (following consultation and service review process) to co-produce new service specifications that reflect the alternative approach and this will need to inform the procurement approach required. Market development should be considered to ensure a transparent approach but will also encourage innovation and fulfil the obligations of the Social Value Act (2012).
- 8.2 It is also advisable to continue to consider the benefits of delivering some of the current Council delivered services through other providers. It is reasonable to consider this option as part of the implementation of the Early Help Strategy whilst taking account of the following:
- The cost of change from current arrangements and transition arrangements.
 - The financial gain in the long-term.
 - The advantages of flexibility of contracted services in that the delivery model can be altered over time through the service specification in response to changing demand.
- 8.3 By considering this, the Council can demonstrate it has fully considered Best Value in its determination of whether to maintain current service delivery or to consider the need to procure in a different way through a formal tender process. This may also need to be factored into any plans regarding future tendering activity.
- 8.4 The Council, in adopting this approach, can ensure that the agreed model has responded to the current implications of utilisation and demand of the services and develops options that are flexible enough to respond to changing demands without the requirement for complete system redesign. In doing so, the council along with stakeholders, can demonstrate that Best Value has been achieved, whilst also ensuring best outcomes in line with statutory responsibilities (including children's legislation and procurement regulations) and proactively and effectively meeting the needs of local Children, young people and families.
- 8.5 The Service will work with the Procurement Team to identify all associated risks and implications for contracts associated with the action detailed in this report.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 It is imperative that in considering the proposals set out in this report regard is given to the need to comply with the Council's statutory duties in this area. In particular this includes the duties under the Education Act 1996, around securing sufficient educational leisure time activities and facilities for the improvement of the well-being of young persons, and the duties under Childcare Act 2006 to ensure there are sufficient Children's Centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need.
- 9.2 There is a specific statutory duty placed on local authorities under section 5D of the Childcare Act 2006, to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children's centre provision in their area. Statutory guidance makes it clear that this would include:
- Making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through a children's centre and/or how they are delivered, including significant changes to services provided through linked sites; and
 - Closing a children's centre; or reducing the services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a children's centre.
- 9.3 In addition, as a matter of public law, any proposal to close a facility or significantly change a service will require a reasonable period of engagement and consultation with those affected by such a proposal.
- 9.4 Therefore, a robust consultation exercise on the proposals for the Early Help services is required with staff, service users and other stakeholders. The purpose of the consultation is to gather the views and preferences of those consulted on the proposals and suggested implementation, and to understand whether there are any possible unintended consequences of the proposals. The product of the consultation will then help to inform final proposals. This is properly identified and catered for in the proposed consultation exercise set out in paragraph 5.1 above.
- 9.5 In addition to the legal requirements for robust consultation, the Council must ensure it complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Under Section 1 of that Act the Council must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. In addition under Section 149 of the Equality Act, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.6 In dealing with this duty, the Council must have due regard in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different to the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant characteristic to participate in public life or any other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

9.7 Protected characteristics include disability, age, race, sex, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity and sexual orientation.

10. Human Resources (HR) Implications

10.1 The changes proposed are likely to involve considerable change, both in relation to individual roles and their redesign and also in relation to staffing structures.

10.2 Any staff placed at risk as a result of the changes will be given full support in terms of redeployment. Equally, staff will be supported in relation to the changing nature of their roles and the move to more generic duties and responsibilities.

11. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

11.1 The implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults are captured in the Equality Analysis.

11.2 Whilst the recommendations propose some building closures the local Youth or Children Centre Offer (Places to go and things to do) will be delivered from a different site in the locality or from the existing site through a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

11.3 The Early Help Service directly contributes to a number of the Council's key strategies and objectives:

11.3.1 The Rotherham Plan. A New Perspective 2025;

“Contributing to this is a refreshed Early Help programme, which involves partners working together to ensure children, young people and families have their needs identified early so that they can receive swift access to targeted help and support.”

11.3.2 A Child Friendly Borough;

Six principles that will enable children to thrive:

- A focus on the rights and voice of the child
- keeping children safe and healthy
- Ensuring children reach their potential
- An inclusive borough
- Harnessing the resources of communities
- A sense of place.

11.3.3 The Children and Young People's Plan, 2016-2019;

The three main strategic outcomes to be achieved for children, young people and their families in Rotherham are:

- Children and young people are healthy and safe from harm
- Children and young people start school ready to learn for life
- Children, young people and their families are ready for the world of work

12. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

12.1 Decision makers are directed to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's duty to promote equality and diversity in all the work it does and services it delivers. An Equality Analysis, (Appendix B) has been undertaken to inform and support the whole service review. This will be updated following the proposed consultation exercise.

13. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

13.1 Key partners, stakeholders, service users and staff have been engaged in the development of the Rotherham Early Help Offer since October 2015 and will continue to be engaged as part of the 90 day consultation process.

14. Risks and Mitigation

14.1 The Council will need to consider emerging risks, but these are likely to be specific to individuals and their employment status. The overriding risks are not following statutory processes, the potential negative impact on performance and quality during the review period and implementation stage and reputational damage as a result of a reduction in buildings and services across the borough. Officers will work closely with HR and the communications team to mitigate any risks normally associated with a Whole Service Review and restructure through Legal, Financial and HR compliance.

15. Accountable Officers

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
David McWilliams, Assistant Director – Early Hel

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Mick Wildman	31.01.2018
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Neil Concannon	17.01.2018
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	Karen Middlebrook	22.01.2018
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Theresa Caswell	16.01.2018

Report Author: David McWilliams, Assistant Director – Early Help

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