

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

16th SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

ME & MY LEARNING/SURE START INTEGRATION AND FUTURE CUSTOMER SERVICES ARRANGEMENTS AT CHILDREN'S CENTRE'S

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To seek members approval to allocate £87,000 from the corporate priorities reserve towards integrating Me & My Learning with Sure Start Services and agreeing an interim model of Customer Service delivery at three children's centres in Melton Mowbray.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee recommend to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee a one-off allocation of £87,000 from the Corporate Priorities Reserve to be used to help integrate the Sure Start Service offer with Me & My Learning and specifically targeted to engage with those families who would benefit the most (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Members agree to continue to resource a customer services presence at The Cove, Fairmead & The Edge until 31st March 2016 and to instruct The Head of Communications to undertake a review of how the Council will deliver front facing customer services from 1st April 2016..
- 2.3 The Committee agree to the Council granting a licence to the Melton Vineyard to occupy part of the Cove and note that an income of £4,000 per annum will be generated. Members also note that the current lease with Leicestershire County Council will need amending to accommodate this request.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 Leicestershire County Council as previously reported to the Policy and Finance Committee has decided to manage the Melton Sure Start services directly since 1st April 2015. Melton Borough Council managed the services from 2008 until 31st March 2015.
- 3.2 Parents and children continue to access services at all three Children's Centre's in Melton Mowbray. The newly designed Sure Start offer does not focus as heavily on parents being able to manage money, seek employment, reduce dependency on benefits or help people reduce debts that they may owe to Melton Borough Council such as rent and council tax.
- 3.3 Currently there are 260 families with 0-5 year olds living in households dependent on benefits who are also in receipt of Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit. Around 180 live in or around our Neighbourhood Priority Areas.

- 3.4 The Council has also identified 900 residents in receipt of Council Tax Support whom we have yet to engage with through Me & My Learning the majority of whom currently do not work or are in part time work. Further analysis shows that 85% of these live in Melon Mowbray.

In relation to those living in the rural areas it is proposed to use an officer to target these individuals on a personal basis to try and get them to engage as we envisage that transport and access to IT will be a major barrier to them accessing services at Phoenix House.

- 3.5 A major part of the integration work will be to target these individuals and the use of the Sure Start Centre's as well as Phoenix House to deliver services and interventions. A key part will be working with families which we will need to address various financial, social and digital barriers in order to get them living more independently and move them closer to work.
- 3.6 Officers have worked with staff at Leicestershire County Council as well as internal staff to look at gaps in services delivery and targeting as part of the process. Areas that have been identified are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.7 As part of the process to integrate the voluntary and community sector in helping the Council deliver services that create more independence and develop stronger communities a number of local groups have also been engaged. Agreement has been reached with the Melton Vineyard to occupy a part of The Cove with the aim over the next quarter for them to be trained in delivering some front facing advice and signposting services which will mean people who use the centres will continue to get a seamless service. Officers will report back in January as to the progress of this trial.

Additionally discussions have taken place with Shout for Residents, Family Voices and John Fernley College looking at renting space, developing and delivering services. These discussions are at early stages and learning from working with the Melton Vineyard will be used to develop any agreed offers.

- 3.8 Customer Service Advisors have had a presence at the centres of which two thirds of the cost has been funded by LCC. This funding ends in September 2015. Since April 2015 Customer Services have been trialling alternative ways of delivering services at the centres.
- 3.9 The most successful of these models to date has been operating with a drop in service two days a week at the Fairmead Centres and keeping the other two centres open all day but using a mix of skilled advisors and apprentice/admin resources. However this model still leaves a strain on Customer Service resources from September when 2.2 posts are no longer funded.
- 3.10 A survey has been undertaken – and previously reported to CSA, to understand the existing customer demands however this is likely to change with the integration of M&ML and the occupation of the community groups in the centres.
- 3.11 Officers will consider community delivery options as part of the Council's recommendations for the future delivery of the Customer Service offer from 1st April 2016.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The proposal helps the Council to deliver the Corporate Plan objectives of creating independence, supporting vulnerable people and helping in the delivery of the Council's Transformation Programme.

4.2 In working with voluntary and community groups this will mean existing officer time will be required to focus on developing options and legal agreements where necessary.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 During 2014/15 as part of officers work on delivery of the Transformation programme and associated projects officers' salaries totalling £87k were recharged to the capital programme and funded from Capital Receipts. This therefore resulted in an underspend on the General Fund which was transferred into the Corporate Priorities reserve on this basis it could be used at a future point to support work around Me and My Learning. Officers are therefore seeking to use the majority of this funding to support the Sure Start and Me & My Learning Integration. The breakdown of how the expenditure is to be used is outlined in Appendix 1.

5.2 This funding is on the basis of a one-off allocation and doesn't represent an on-going commitment. It is expected that after the integration has taken place the project will be self-financing. However, if this isn't the case officers will need to come back to members with a growth item for consideration.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 No direct legal implication have been identified.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 All of the recommendations will contribute to reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and reducing re-offending.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out for the options in relation to recommended customer services offer from 1st April 2016.

9.0 RISKS


9.1 **Probability**



Very High A				
High B				
Significant C		3		
Low D			1,2	

Risk No.	Description
1	Members do not support the integration and targeting proposal.
2	Closing Customer Service front facing services at Centres from 1 st October place excess demand on Parkside.
3	Following the trial period additional resources from the council I is still required to maintain a customer service operating from the children's centre putting pressure on reducing funds
4	

Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	I Neg- ligible	II Marg- inal	III Critical	IV Catast- rophic



Impact

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 No Direct Implications have been identified.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Consultation has taken place with the Melton Vineyard, Shout for Residents, Family Voices, Leicestershire County Council and internal staff.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officer: Ronan Browne/Sarah-Jane O'Connor
 Date: 4th September 2015
 Appendices: Appendix A- Me & My Learning/Sure Start Integration

Background Papers: None

Reference: