

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	SUFFICIENCY OF EARLY YEARS PLACES IN MILLBROOK AND REDBRIDGE		
DATE OF DECISION:	15 AUGUST 2017		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
Not Applicable			
BRIEF SUMMARY			
To support sustainable local Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years providers and enable the new integrated 0-19 Family Hub model to develop from key premises to provide high quality early years education and early help family support to provide the best start for local children and their families in Millbrook and Redbridge.			
This report outlines the reasons for seeking to close the Council delivered Little Pickles pre-school and the available options for achieving timely closure while ensuring that children attending have access to suitable alternative early education placements.			
This half day pre-school is run by the Council as an element of the Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush (MRM) designated Children's Centre activity.			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	Due to the sufficiency of quality early years places in the locality and to enhance the MRM Children's Centre core offer it is recommended to commence public consultation on a proposal to close the direct Council run Little Pickles Pre-school.	
	(ii)	To delegate consideration of consultation responses and making a final decision on the potential closure (together with ancillary matters such as the timing of the implementation of the decision) to the Service Director Children and Families Services, so that families can be informed of the outcome and, where necessary, supported with their choices of securing alternative places with a new Early Years provider. Cabinet will note any decision to close provision will be subject to a minimum of a month's notice from the decision date.	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	There is sufficient quality early years places in the area provided by the PVI		

	sector as assessed by the Early Years team in line with the Local Authorities Early Years Sufficiency Duty and it is not a mandated requirement of the children's centre to directly deliver a pre-school. To enable delivery of more targeted early childhood and family support by the Children Centre and to develop integrated Family Hub operating capacity at Pickles Coppice with Public Health colleagues, it is therefore recommended that consultation is commenced on a proposal that the Little Pickles pre-school is closed next academic year. Subject to the outcome of the consultation and final decision, the timing of the closure will take into account dialogue with existing parent users, local providers and the early years support team and a minimum of one month's notice of closure of the provision (if agreed) will be provided.
2.	The resource capacity created by a change in provision would contribute to the operational development of the new 0-19 Family Hub model by best use of available premise space for key early help activity. To allow the sustainable growth of the PVI early years sector the MRM Children Centre is withdrawing activity from its current 'satellite' base in the FootSteps venue of Mason Moor Primary School this summer. This requires existing pre-school used space at Pickles Coppice to be made available to sustain core activity such as parenting group work and training. Alternative quality places (minimum 'Good' rated by Ofsted) from local PVI pre-schools are available for existing families in line with Council's Early Years policy and duties. Families could be supported and signposted to alternative local provision by Children Centre staff, including the new YMCA pre-school at the FootSteps venue which starts next term (September). Impacted pre-school staff can be re-deployed within Children's Centres and across the Council's other pre-schools within phase 3 proposed establishment.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
3.	Do nothing. This is not an appropriate option in view of the need to re-configure current Children's Centres core offer activity as part of the re-modelling development of 0-19 Family Hubs.
4.	Continue to deliver. This would limit the operating capacity of the Family Hub development and formal integration with Public Health activity at Pickles Coppice Centre. The new 30 hour early years entitlement in September 2017 could require the expansion of the pre-school, with associated further limits on operating space for activity and additional management and staff time to deliver.
5.	Commission an external provider to deliver. This is not required as there is sufficient sustainable and quality early years places provided by the PVI sector and could de-stabilise the local early year's market.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
6.	The pre-school is situated within one of the City's most deprived areas and is attended by local children, many of whom also access other Children's Centre services, whose need for high quality early years education is paramount to improving outcomes. The pre-school was originally started 3 years ago to meet the need for

	<p>additional 2 year old places as then required by the government's new free 2 year old early years entitlement policy.</p> <p>The families already engaged with Sure Start MRM knew and trusted staff and felt comfortable to put their children in the pre-school whilst other providers increased their capacity.</p>
7.	<p>Children's Centres service activity does not mandate the direct delivery of early years places as the Council's Early Years sufficiency duty is met and provided for in the main by the private, voluntary and independent early years sector. Of the city's 14 Children's Centres only one other is running a pre-school in an area of identified shortfall (Central – Clovelly).</p>
8.	<p>SCC early years policy is that the Council is the provider of 'last resort' so as to develop a healthy market of sustainable private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers of high quality early years places.</p>
9.	<p>As part of developing the Early Help Children's Centres services into 0-19 Family Hubs with formal integration with Public Health activity, current premises used in the area are being rationalised with Pickles Coppice (Millbrook) and the Ashby Centre (North Shirley) to be the future two key operating 'hub' venues for the West locality. 'Satellite' premises used such as the 'FootSteps' community building at Mason Moor Primary school are being supported to find alternative users, such as by new PVI pre-school providers. These developments require the existing children centre activity, such as parent training and crèche provision that are currently delivered from these premises to be moved to our main bases.</p>
10.	<p>The pre-school currently has 20 children who attend; 18 attend the full five morning sessions and 2 attend four morning sessions.</p> <p>12 children will start Yr R in schools in September 2017.</p> <p>There are 5 children aged 3 years.</p> <p>There are 3 children aged 2 years old (2 attending for only four sessions a week): of these two year olds 2 children will be three years old in August or before.</p> <p>It is anticipated that there will be 7 children aged 3 years and 1 child aged 2 years (8 in total) needing places in September.</p>
11.	<p>The Early Years team have confirmed that there are sufficient places in the locality and as part of their detailed assessment of available sustainable childcare have provided the local Children Centre team with a list of early years providers with current vacancies which the team can use to support parent's access to (see table 1). A new pre-school to be run by YMCA has been commissioned by Early Years in the nearby 'FootSteps' premises of Mason Moor Primary School which is to commence from September 2017, subject to Ofsted. This new setting will further enhance parent's choices to access good quality local early years provision. The specification requires partnership working with the Children Centre and school to deliver local community activities and services. It will support the Children's Centres role in the delivery and co-ordination of the early identification of child and family need and swift access to joined-up services to help and to get a good start in life. The YMCA has a proven track record of delivering high quality services judged good or outstanding. Long term sustainability has been evidenced. It is a contractual condition of the award for the YMCA to fully participate in</p>

delivery of places for 2 year olds, and the new 30 hour agenda. It is registered for a maximum of 60 places and is open beyond just term time.

12.

Table 1. Provision in MRM area

PROVIDER NAME	Postcode	TYPE OF PROVISION	EY Number	OFSTED JUDGEMENT	MAX No. REGISTE RED FOR	Miles from Pickles	Distance (Minutes)
Trust Taplins	SO16 4XE	Nursery	280741	Outstanding	100	0.7	14
Busy Bee Millbrook	SO16 9JA	Extended Pre-school	415826	Good	36	0.6	13
Oasis	SO16 9RG	Extended Pre-school	466044	Good	60	0.9	19
Asquith David Lloyd	SO16 0XS	Nursery	319453	Outstanding	83	1.0	20
Sticky Fingers Redbridge	SO16 9BB	Extended Pre-school	427440	Good	26	0.7	15
Redbridge Pre-school	SO16 9RJ	Extended Pre-school	262068	Outstanding	24	0.9	18
Mansel Mini's Community Playgroup	SO16 9HZ	Extended Pre-school	131545	Good	35	0.6	12
Learningland Day Nursery	SO16 4QF	Nursery	131599	Good	45	0.7	15
Holy Family	SO16 9LP	Extended Pre-school	131537	Outstanding	40	0.5	10
Little Pickles	SO16 9QX	Sessional Pre-school	470899	Good	30	-	-
St Peters Pre-school	SO16 4BP	Extended Pre-school	131569	Requires improvement	30	0.5	11
Sticky Fingers Newlands	SO16 9QX	Extended Pre-school	450843	Outstanding	40	0.1	1
Sticky Fingers MP3	SO16 9RS	Extended Pre-school	462706	Good	40	0.2	5
Stephens Early Years Centre	SO16 4LG	Extended Pre-school	131571	Outstanding	46	1.1	22
Regents Park Community Pre-school	SO15 4PF	Extended Pre-school	131554	Inadequate	26	1.2	24
Shirley Warren	SO16 6AY	Maintained	116262	Good	52	0.9	19
The Co-operative	SO16 6AY	Nursery	297219	Good	100	0.9	19
YMCA Millbrook Pre-school	SO16 4AS	Extended Pre-school	New reg	New provision	60	0.8	16

Number of places vacant

MRM area	Number of places vacant			
	Autumn 2016	Spring 2017	Summer 2017	Autumn* 2017
2yr old	31	31	19	47
3 & 4 yr old	109	56	42	116

Autumn 2017 * predicated figures

13.	<p>The wider Early Help management team and Early Years Team have contributed and shaped the reports rationale and recommendation. Children and Families senior managers have endorsed the recommendation. Education & Skills and Social Care Cabinet Members were briefed in April and their requested clarification points on reducing communication risk have been included. The Senior Leadership Team agreed the recommendation on 24 May 2017 with further required actions to provide greater clarity on key rationale for closing and assurances that Cabinet Member was in full agreement and that a clear corporate communication plan around pre decision consultation and in the event of closure, post decision communication with families and providers was implemented.</p>
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RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

14.	<p>There is no significant service saving, however, the closure would support the effectiveness and efficiency of the local Children Centre team to operate core service activity. Existing staff who run the pre-school will be re-assigned Children’s Centres duties or re-deployed to the Council’s other direct run early year’s settings in other areas of the city of identified childcare need.</p>
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15.	<p>Southampton City Council currently receives £54,000 Early Education funding for eligible two year olds, three year olds and four year olds based on current occupancy rate of 20 children per year. This will reduce as the numbers of children attending little Pickles falls in September. Savings have been identified as part of the 0-19 Integrated Service to offset this reduction in income by an overall reduction in FTE, a reduction in the use of agency staff and for the provision of traded services.</p>
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16.	<p>Little Pickles is currently staffed by 7 (4.22 fte) members of staff. 2.08 FTE’s are seconded from their substantial posts within Sure Start West, and if the proposals are approved, will return to these roles.</p> <p>The remaining 2.14 FTE’s, subject to staff consultation in line with the planned phase 3 proposals would be re-deployed to vacant roles within the Council’s three direct delivery pre-school and nurseries (Little Clovelly – Central Children Centre & Startpoint’s Northam & Sholing) with operational management integrated within the Early Years Startpoint team. Currently staff vacancy cover is provided by agency staff at these settings which the re-deployment of permanent staff would reduce the necessity and cost for. Additional staff also provides the option to expand the Little Clovelly provision to meet local demand and the new 30 hour entitlement.</p>
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Property/Other

17.	<p>There are no property implications arising as the current setting is on lease from Solent NHS trust and will be utilised by the Sure Start Children’s Centre it currently shares the facility with.</p>
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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

18.	<p>The recommendations are in accordance with the Statutory guidance for local authorities on the provision of Children’s Centres and early education and childcare as set out in s.2 and s.5 of the Childcare Act 2016.</p>
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Other Legal Implications:	
19.	The requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in preparing these proposals and a full environmental and equality impact assessment carried out and reviewed throughout the development of the proposals.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
20.	<p>There are three key risks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timely closure post consultation and decision. 2. Local availability of quality alternative early years places. 3. Re-assignment of duties and re-deployment options for existing pre-school staff. <p>How we propose to manage them</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A minimum of one month's notice to be provided to parents. 2. Parents will be signposted and supported to access available local quality early places. Early Years team have provided up to date list of current local providers vacancies and new pre-school will be starting next term at nearby 'Footsteps' premises. 3. Existing staff would initially be given duties to deliver local play/crèche/parenting support sessions and subject to phase 3 consultation some would be re-deployed to the Councils remaining direct delivery pre-school provision.
21.	A clear consultation and communication plan has been developed. Pending the public consultation outcome with existing parent users and a formal decision to proceed, written notice will be provided to parents and support and signposting will be provided to families to secure quality local alternative provision. Impacted staff have been informed of the recommendation and phase 3 consultation has set out formal proposals and options, with interim arrangements agreed as operationally required. The independent chair (from a local Early Years Provider) of the West Early Childhood Advisory Board is aware and supportive of the recommendation and the full Board, which includes a range of agencies and local ward councillors, will be consulted as part of the decision making process.. The Communications team have also been alerted to the issue and will be needed to provide advice to ensure that all communications are corporately approved to reduce the risk of community and political confusion or misunderstanding due to the sensitivities of the timing of the proposed decision.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
22.	Recommendations are in accordance with Council's Policy Framework Plans; specifically: Southampton Children and Young People Strategy 2017-2020 and Education Strategy 2017 – 2020.
KEY DECISION?	N/A
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Millbrook & Redbridge
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	

Appendices	
1.	None
Documents In Members' Rooms	
1.	ESIA
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	YES
Privacy Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents	
Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	