

CABINET MEMBER DECISION

DATE OF DECISION – 5 JULY 2022

RELOCATION OF KIDDERMINSTER BASED SUPERVISED FAMILY TIME SERVICE

Relevant Cabinet Member

Councillor Andy Roberts

Relevant Chief Officer

Director of Children's Services

Local Members

Councillors Tony Muir and Nathan Desmond

Recommendations

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families is recommended to approve:**
 - (a) **the relocation of supervised family time from the current location of Radford Avenue Sure Start Children's Centre (SSCC), Kidderminster to the sites of Treetops SSCC, Woodbury Road, Kidderminster and St Oswald's SSCC, Sion Avenue, Kidderminster to address concerns around safety and security at the Radford Avenue SSCC site, and to move from an old building with maintenance issues, to modern purpose-built facilities with access to safe outdoor space; and**
 - (b) **Authorising the Director of Children's Services and Strategic Director for Commercial and Change to implement the proposed changes to the service and consequent property transactions.**

Background

2. At its meeting on 16 June 2016, Cabinet approved plans for delivering effective prevention services for children and young people within certain financial parameters as set out in the report to that meeting. The plans were subject to consultation on change of use for those children's centre buildings where there was likely to be a significant change. Where consultation was required the Cabinet Member with Responsibility was delegated authority to take the final decision on the use of Children's Centre buildings having regard to the outcome of that consultation and equality impact analyses.
3. Worcestershire Children First currently utilises the SSCC site of Radford Ave, Kidderminster for Supervised Family Time. It is a detached single storey building that is located within 5-minute walk of Kidderminster town centre. The property has 2

good sized family contact rooms and one smaller one. The rear of the property has a small courtyard area (used as a playground).

4. Radford Avenue is located next to a public park. The property is in a 'fair' condition however there have been various roof leaks. The cost of repairing the roof has been investigated and proved cost prohibitive and there is also a problem with damp in the property. In addition, security issues have been raised due to the public park which backs onto the rear courtyard of the building. The rear area can no longer be used by staff or families. As a result of this the Team Manager has requested that an alternative location for Kidderminster family contact be sought, with the facility to accommodate large family groups, which Radford Avenue is not equipped to do.

4. Suitable accommodation has been identified in a vacant space at Treetops SSCC. A feasibility report has been completed and the identified space would provide three good sized family contact rooms with the flexibility to open two of the rooms out into one large room suitable for larger family groups – which is an identified need of the service. The site is within Birchen Coppice school grounds and the contact suite will have access to safe outdoor space and includes child friendly toilet facilities and a kitchen area. The Treetops site has been identified by the team manager as being in an area of need.

5. In addition, there is space available at St Oswald's SSCC which would provide one large contact room suitable for large family groups and a smaller room suitable for babies and toddlers. The site also has access to secure outdoor space. St Oswald's is in a different area of Kidderminster from Treetops, offering families flexibility of choice as to the easiest site for them to visit.

6. A statutory consultation exercise, as the Council considered appropriate, – see Appendix 1 - was carried out with children, families and staff who use the Radford Avenue site to obtain their viewpoint on the proposed move of the Supervised Family Time service to the Treetops and St Oswald's locations. The results of the consultation are found in Appendix 2. There were a total of 19 responses to the survey. Despite results identifying the location of the proposed sites as less favourable than Radford Avenue, 16 of the respondents were in favour of the proposed move, two uncertain and one was against the proposed move.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

7. The Council has a duty under the Childcare Act 2006 (as amended) to improve the well-being of young children in its area and reduce inequalities between them in respect of that well-being. It must secure that 'early childhood services' are provided in an integrated manner calculated to facilitate access to them and maximise their benefit to parents and young children. The Council's arrangements must include as far as reasonably practicable sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need and consideration of whether early childhood services should be provided through them.

8. The move of Supervised Family Time from Radford Avenue SSCC was identified as a significant change in the services provided through the Children Centre, resulting in the vacating of the building. Before anything is done that would result in a relevant children's centre ceasing to be a children's centre the local authority is required to conduct such consultation as it thinks is appropriate. Thereby statutory consultation on the proposed move has taken place.

9. Radford Avenue is subject to SSCC funding and therefore permission to dispose of the site following vacation by Worcestershire Children First would need to be sought from the DfE. Disposal of the site could be subject to SSCC clawback. Permission to dispose of the site would be sought on the basis it is no longer suitable to deliver SSCC services due to security issues. During this process the business case along with improvements to Treetops have been scrutinised and approved the council's Corporate Landlord Board, which includes and review by the Financial Services.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

10. The Joint Impact Assessment screening did not identify any potential considerations requiring further assessment during implementation.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Consultation Document
- Appendix 2 – Consultation Results
- Appendix 3 – Screening report

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children's Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.