

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 June 2023

Subject: Family Hubs

Cabinet Member: Cllr Laura Mayes Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

The Government has a manifesto pledge to champion family hubs, that offer support for families with children aged 0-19 (up to 25 with SEND), they are investing in developing the offer. Six South West Local Authorities have been awarded grant funding, but Wiltshire has not been selected for any additional funding to date.

However, Wiltshire Council has taken the decision to develop family hubs, redesigning existing services to improve access to Family Help and improve outcomes for children and families across the county. Wiltshire family hubs are intended to be operational from April 2024.

Proposal(s)

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve the commissioning of family hubs across Wiltshire from April 1st, 2024.
2. Approve that all services are commissioned externally through an open procurement, with a 5-year contract awarded to the successful provider, with the option to extend for up to a further 2 years.
3. Approve the Pathfinder project in Westbury and Warminster transferring into the new contract when it commences on 1st April 2024.
4. To delegate authority to approve and award a new contract, and take all necessary steps associated to the Corporate Director Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, and Corporate Director of People in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills.

Reason for Proposal(s)

To deliver a 0–19-year-old (up to 25 years for those with SEND) Family Hub Service across Wiltshire.

The Government has committed to championing family hubs, which are a way of bringing together existing family help services to improve access to services and connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help.

Family hubs bring together services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 for this young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core. They can include hub buildings and virtual offers, but the following principles are key to the family hub model:

- More **accessible**

- through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings, virtual offers, and outreach.

- Better **connected**

- family hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services, and providers (state, private, voluntary) – through co-location, data sharing, shared outcomes, and governance. Moving from services organised for under-fives to families with children of all ages reduces fragmentation (even though an emphasis on early years and the ‘Start for Life’ offer will remain).

- **Relationship-centred**

- practice in a family hub builds on family strengths and looks to improve family relationships to address underlying issues.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

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Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the proposal for family hubs to be delivered across Wiltshire.
2. It outlines the reasons why it is recommended that family hubs are commissioned across the county in accessible locations.
3. To delegate authority to approve and award a new contract and future extensions and all associated documents to the Corporate Director Resources & Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

4. The proposal is relevant to the following priorities and objectives laid down the Council's Business Plan¹:

The people of Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy, and enriched lives:

- We get the best start in life.
- We stay active.
- We are safe.
- We live well together.
- We ensure decisions are evidence-based.
- We have the right skills to prosper.
- We have vibrant, well-connected communities

5. To support the working themes in the council's business plan 2022 to 2032, commissioning priorities are to:
 - a) **Priority 1** - ensure services are in the right place at the right time.
 - b) **Priority 2** - ensure right people receive services in the right place i.e., increasing services delivered in the community and in people's homes.
 - c) **Priority 3** - ensure right service, right price

Background

¹ [Business plan - Wiltshire Council](#)

6. The Government has committed to championing family hubs, which are a way of joining organisations and information up locally and bringing existing family help services together to improve access to, and connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help.
7. Anna Freud Centre have been commissioned by central government to offer support and guidance to all Local Authorities. Over 20 webinars and focus groups have been attended by Wiltshire Council officers as well attendance at the National Family Hub Conference.
8. Currently Wiltshire has a children's centre service offer for 0–5-year-olds. The current contracts with The RISE and Spurgeons were extended by 12 months to allow the delivery of family hubs and are due to end on 31st March 2024.
9. There are 10 children's centre buildings across the county with services being delivered from these alongside delivery in a number of community venues as well as in family homes. Many courses are also delivered virtually on-line.
10. Evidence about the effectiveness of intervening early has been well documented by Graham Allen: "Early Intervention is both inherently better and inherently cheaper than late intervention"²; Michael Marmot "Early intervention is needed across the social gradient to support children and their families with mental health and behavioural issues, via integrated provision across Children's Services and schools,"³ and Frank Field: "overwhelming evidence that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in these crucial years that together matter more to children than money."⁴
11. Comprehensive community engagement and consultation has taken place to ensure these proposals are shaped by the voices of families and children across Wiltshire. There were 24 face to face events and an online survey.

Main Considerations for the Council

12. Considering the results of the consultation and engagement activity and the equalities impact assessment, decide if it is appropriate to offer family hubs across Wiltshire.
13. The national principles of family hubs are:
 - Accessible** – through a universal single point of access, a clear local family hub offer, recognised and understood by families, which includes hub buildings, virtual offers, and outreach.
 - Better connected** – family hubs harness the power of networks to drive progress on joining up professionals, services, and providers (state, private, voluntary and community) through co-location, integration, partnerships, data sharing, shared

² [Early Intervention: The Next Steps \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

³ [fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report-pdf.pdf \(instituteofhealthequity.org\)](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org)

⁴ [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\]](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/gwa/20110120090128/http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk/media/20254/poverty-report.pdf)
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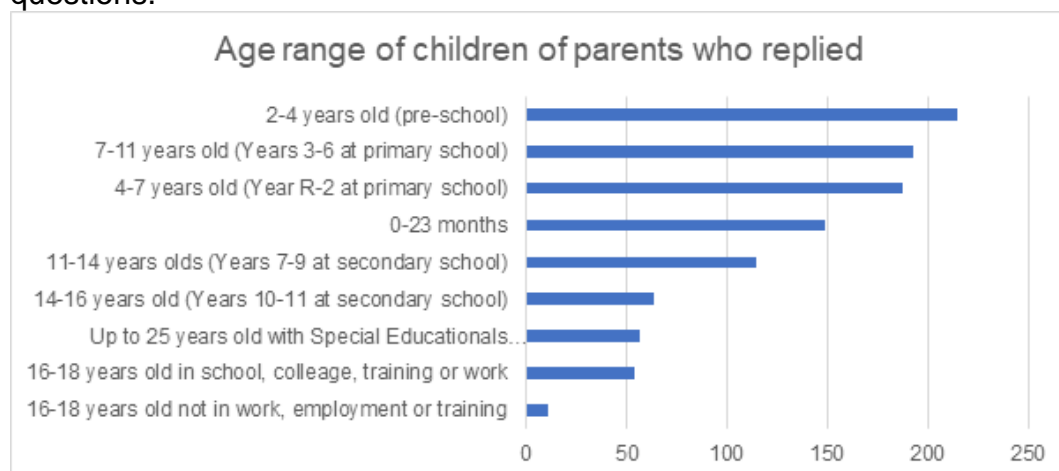
outcomes, and governance. Holistic, wraparound services support families with a wide range of needs, identify need early and consider the whole family. They reduce fragmentation, including between 0-5 services and those for families with older children and young people, and drive efficiency.

Relationship-centred – practice in a family hub focuses on building trusting and supportive relationships, emphasising continuity of care in the Start for Life offer. It builds on families’ strengths, drawing on and improving relationships, including building networks with peers to address underlying issues.

14. How we consulted:

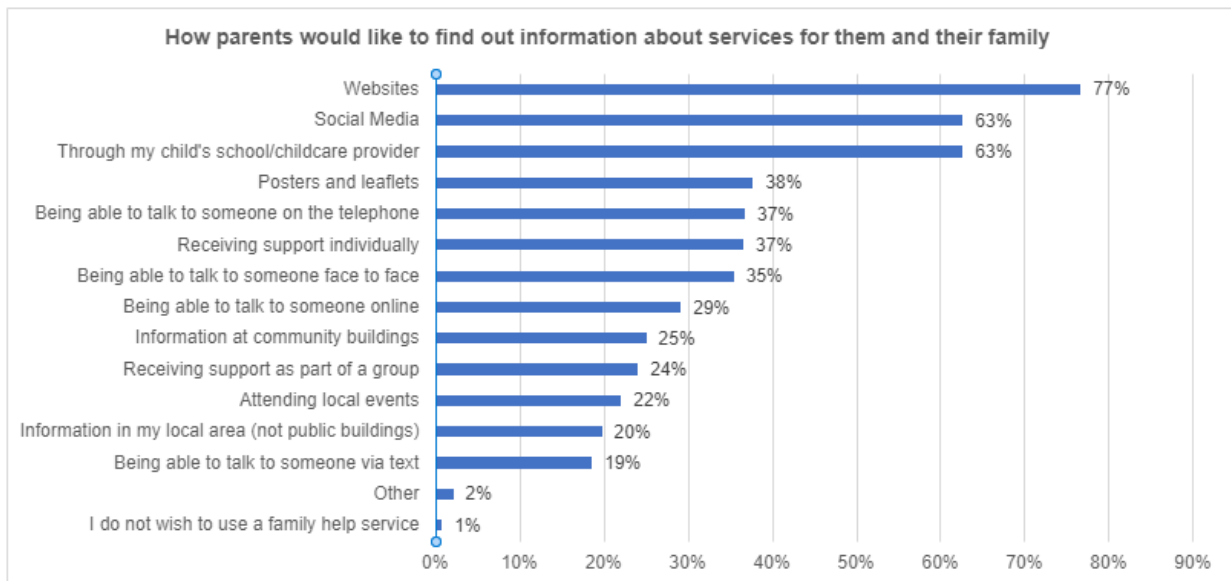
- a. An online survey was launched on the 10 January 2023 and closed at the beginning of April 2023. The survey was initially publicised with a press release and then regularly promoted via Facebook and through weekly electronic newsletters sent to over 600 Wiltshire schools and childcare providers. External partners, such as our children’s centre providers and the Wiltshire Parent Carer Council also promoted the survey on their websites. A total of 606 responses were received.
- b. 24 face-to-face consultation events were held in all community areas across the county and were advertised widely. There was very little uptake for these events, so the voices of families at school gates, in libraries, and leisure centres were also sought resulting in a further 192 parents and carers consulted.
- c. There are also continuing conversations with families from specific minority groups: Military, Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME), English as an Additional Language (EAL), Gypsy Romany Traveller and Boater communities, refugees, and carers to obtain the widest possible views of communities across Wiltshire.

15. Most parents/carers who replied to the survey had primary-school aged children 63% (381) and the second largest audience to respond were those with pre-school aged children 60% (364). 7% of responders were either pregnant or their partner was pregnant. It is important to note that some responders have children in more than one category, which can affect the number of responses to the consultation questions.

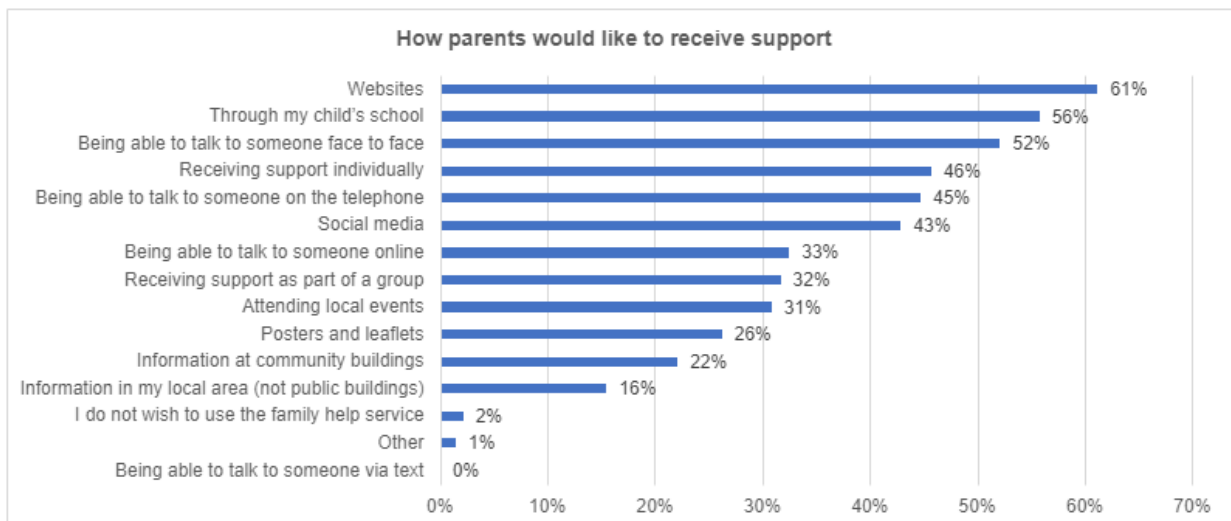


16. When asked how they would like to find out information about services for themselves and their family, the most popular answer was via a website 77% (465). Social Media and through the child’s educational establishment were joint

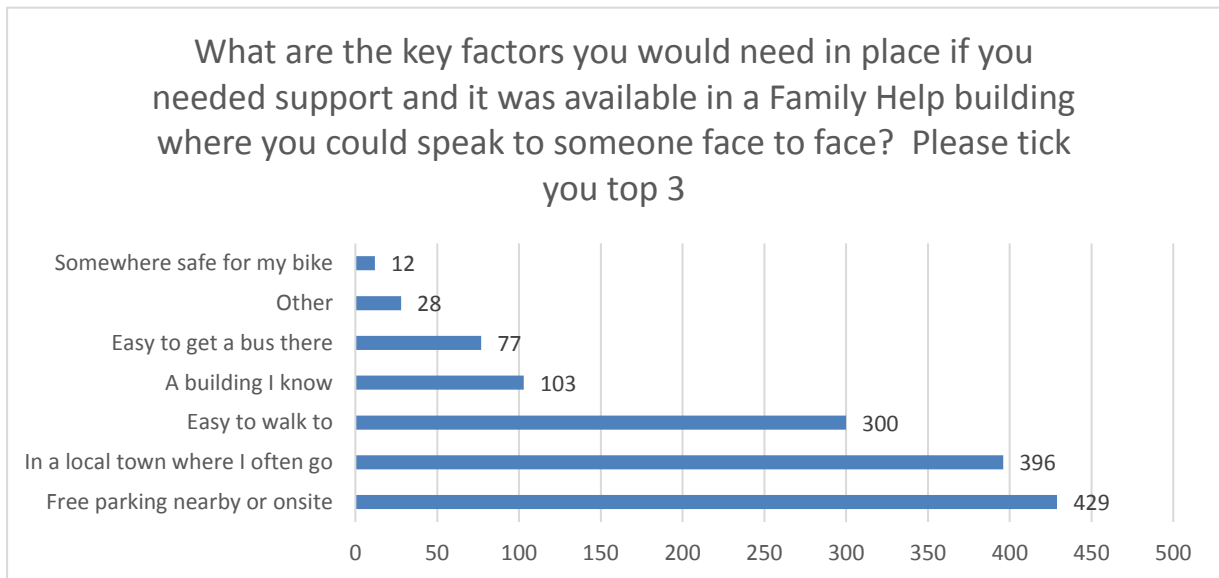
second choice 63% (380). Posters and leaflets 38% (229), Being able to talk to someone on the telephone 37% (223), Receiving support individually 37% (222) and being able to talk to someone face to face 35% (215) were close behind. Only 5 responders (1%) stated they did not wish to use a family help service.



17. When asked how they would like to receive support 61% (371) of responders would like to use a website or online offer, 56% (338) would like support through their child's school, and 52% (316) would like to talk to someone face to face. Receiving support individually 46% (277) and being able to talk to someone on the telephone 45% (271) are the next most popular responses. The survey allowed families to respond to more than one category. Only 2% (13) families said that they would not like to use the family help service.



18. Responders were asked to give their top three preferences on what they would like in place if they needed support, and it was available in a Family Help building where they could speak to someone face to face. The majority 71% (429) requested free parking on site. Second 65% (339) was that the building was in a local town where they often go and the third 50% (300) was that the building was easy to walk to. Less important was a building that the parent knew 17% (103) and that it was on a bus route 13% (77). 2% (12) requested safe bike storage.



19. Responders were asked to give their top three preferences on what was important when meeting someone face to face, the majority 86% (519) stated that a private space to talk was the most important and having a child-friendly play area to occupy their children was second 76% (458). Food and drink 30% (180) were given a higher priority to computer 7% (45) or phone 4% (24) access. 27 responders requested the following features in their top three as most important:

The quality of interaction with staff:

- They understand the issues I have and am experiencing.
- Knowledgeable friendly and approachable staff.
- Non-judgemental, experience.

The quality of the environment:

- Accessible toilet and good overall accessibility
- Quiet as I have Menière's Disease and background noise is a problem.

Other aspects:

- Flexibility on opening hours (after 3pm)
- Interpreter for deaf
- Enough time to talk through the issue
- Socializing with a group of parents
- SEN appropriate
- Appointment availability
- Free Wi-Fi to look at sites together
- To meet others that have the same problems.

20. Responders were asked to tick their top five services which they thought were the most important to have in a family help building. The majority wanted activities for children aged 0-5, 53% (324) with parenting support second 48% (290) and mental health support third 46% (281).

1	Activities for children 0-5	324
2	Parenting support	290
3	Mental health services	281
4	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities support and services	273
5	One to one family support from a professional	244

21. Responders preferred to access support between the hours of 5pm and 9pm 51% (308) and 47% (286) of responders requested access weekday mornings (9am-12pm.)

22. The face-to-face responses consisted of comments such as:

- “Website so everything in one place was a good idea. Wants parking and drink/food in venue”.
- “Would be happy to come into library for help. Would like to find more help online but wouldn’t know where to look- too many places. Uses library health centre soft play”.
- “Leisure centre is where I come for everything -nowhere else to go”.
- “Happy to access services in the library/campus”.

23. Other feedback included:

- Having a café / accessing drink was important to parents.
- Parents would like to see more services ‘under one roof’/ ‘in one place’.
- Parents want to access family help services via school.
- 1 parent felt a physical building is needed.
- All parents thought the idea of 0-19 was important.
- 3 parents wanted services during school holidays.
- All parents said a sensory room was important to them.
- 1 parent said the support received from children’s centres had saved her relationship.
- Parents would go to school for help.
- Parents suggested library as a place to go for family help services as ‘they are really helpful there’.

24. A virtual event was held with partners to seek their views about the way they could work together as part of a family hub. They commented on:

- The need for services to be more joined up and collaborative.
- Hub and spoke model.
- Help and support available on-line.
- Families like face-to-face sessions but also use texting.
- Offer support early so that a higher-level intervention is not required.
- Need something easily accessible for families.
- Cultural sensitivity needs to be a consideration.
- Relationships are important.
- Non-stigmatised groups could be offered at venues such as schools to make them more accessible.

25. An engagement event was held with the current children's centre service providers, and feedback included:

- Outreach is working well.
- EPEC (Empowering People Empowering Communities) parenting courses have great outcomes.
- Working Together agreements with health visiting and Family and Community Learning are really successful.

26. Parents have also commented:

- "I would use a website to find services".
- "Like the idea of it being a trusted source of info on the one platform".
- "I want a service for older children as that would change my life, the children's centre have been fantastic."
- "I wouldn't know where to look so one place online would be good."
- "I would happily use a community building such as a library/leisure centre".
- "Don't drive so I need to walk to services-need to be local".
- I think leisure centre is ideal for a family hub as leisure centre already has library, café, pre-school, The Hive, community hall."
- "I have 4 children, would access services here at library but would also ask for help at any of my children's schools."

Proposed Model

27. Online support

Most families are able to access support when and where they need it. Therefore, the first place for families to access support will be through an **accessible** digital platform offering information, advice, support, and self-help courses. A QR code will be placed around the community, in libraries, leisure centres, schools, early years settings, soft play, parks and coffee shops, etc. It will be highly visible in places that families visit and promoted online through the Council and partners, so that the platform can be easily accessible to as many people as possible. This is in response to feedback from families.

28. Navigators (Commissioned)

Online information can be confusing and is not ideal for everyone, especially for families who have English as an additional language or have additional needs. Therefore, there will be Making Every Contact Count (MECC) trained Navigators who will be the front facing element of the family hubs. These Navigators will support families to find the help they need. They will link with community resources, Strategic Partnership Engagement Managers, JobCentrePlus and the voluntary and community sector. A family will be either be signposted to where there is available support in the community or will be offered help via the Navigator. The Navigator will co-ordinate activity across their local area and be the point of contact for Family Keyworkers and teams in the Integrated Front Door.

The Navigators will be located in community buildings across the county every week where they will have a regular, visible presence so they are accessible to as many people as possible. Their role will also require them to be out in the community, and supporting families, so there will be specific times allocated to attendance at the hubs at the same times each week to ensure families are able to drop-in when they are there for help and support face to face.

They will work with all customer-facing staff and other colleagues to ensure a consistent offer is available for families at all times in the relevant community buildings, and the staff there will be trained to offer assistance and signposting to families. Navigators will be the central point of contact and will develop relationships in the community and with clusters of schools, early years providers and partners in the local area.

29. Parenting Courses (Commissioned)

Parenting courses will form a large part of the family hub offer as they are expected to be the first line of intervention and support for families. As a result, there will be a greater demand for these courses which will help families to develop their skills and support networks, enabling improved outcomes for families and children.

There are already a wide range of parenting courses available for families to access via the Wiltshire Council website, and these evidence-based courses will continue to be offered for children of all ages, and the link with Public Health Nursing offering Baby Steps will also remain.

The range of options below are designed to meet the needs of children from 0-16:

- Perinatal – Baby Steps - NSPCC
- Aged 0–1 Baby and Us – Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC)
- Aged 2-11 Being a Parent – Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC)
- Aged 11-16 STOP Parenting – Ministry of Parenting
- Time out for Parents (5–12-year-olds) – Care for the Family (SEND support)
- Reducing Parental Conflict courses

These courses will be kept under review during the length of the contract, and additional courses or programmes will be delivered as appropriate to respond to the needs of families and children.

30. Group Support (Commissioned)

Group work and courses around early learning, language development and healthy eating will be available throughout the communities. Courses and groups will be offered for the 5-19 age group where there is an identified need, but always in collaboration with existing providers.

These courses and groups will be kept under review during the length of the contract, and additional courses or programmes will be delivered as appropriate to respond to the needs of families and children.

31. Family Hub Practitioners (Commissioned)

One to One Family Hub Practitioners will offer focused support to a range of people and organisations, using an Early Support Assessment (ESA). They will support families to access relevant services and their work will consider the needs of the whole family. These practitioners will also contribute towards the Supporting Families outcomes (previously Troubled Families) and work very closely with the Navigator in each local area.

32. Family Key Workers (Wiltshire Council)

In support of the commissioned services above, Wiltshire Council Family Key Workers will continue to deliver support to those families with more complex needs. They will link very closely with the Navigators and Family Hub Practitioners to ensure a smooth transition for any families that will require additional support and will continue to work as part of the local area. Families being supported by these workers may need to be referred to specialist services if early interventions are unsuccessful, and they will continue to maintain very close links with statutory services.

All courses and direct work with families will align with the Five to Thrive, trauma informed model and knowledge base, and will be proactively promoted. All staff engaging with families will also be Making Every Contact Count (MECC) trained ensuring that all families will receive a consistent high-quality service.

33. To maintain **better connected** services, the main administration hubs will be a venue for Birth Registration services and health visitor drop ins. These main hubs and the other spoke hubs will also be a venue for collaborative working with Strategic Engagement Managers and there will be opportunities to work with the voluntary and community sector, health colleagues, Job Centre Plus (JCP), Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), housing colleagues, and other partners.

34. **Buildings and Access Points**

The proposed access points for the family hubs are across the whole county and remain in the same community areas where the current children's centres are located. Areas of deprivation across the county will all be supported with access to a Navigator and a building in their local community.

Proposed Administration Hubs:

- County Hall
- Monkton Park
- Bourne Hill

Proposed Navigator locations:

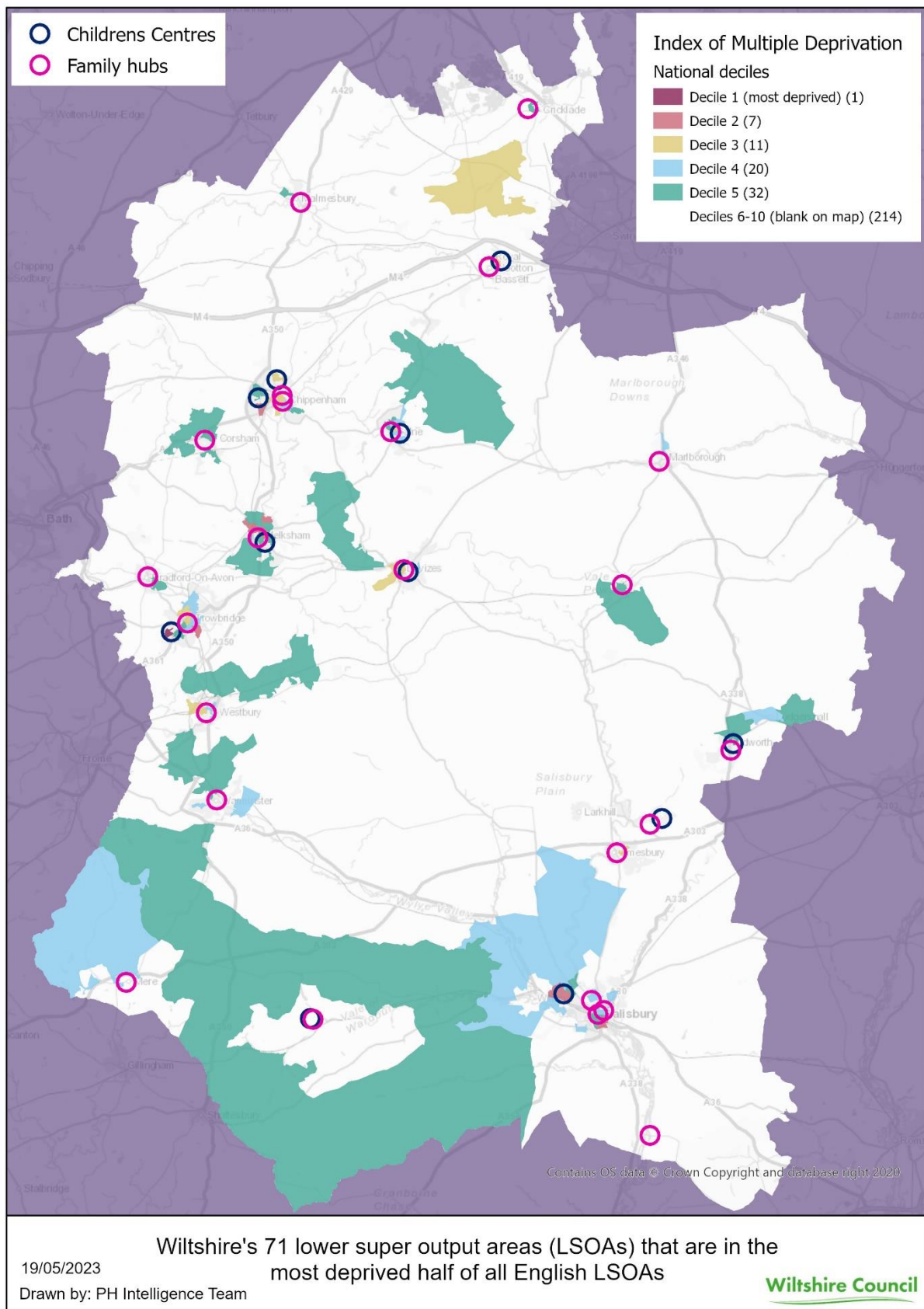
- Amesbury Library
- Bradford on Avon Library
- Bulford: The Beeches/Kiwi School
- Calne Library
- Chippenham Monkton Park and Library
- Corsham – Springfield Campus
- Cricklade Leisure Centre
- Devizes Library
- Downton Library
- Malmesbury Library
- Marlborough Library
- Melksham Community Campus
- Mere School/ Town Council, library
- Pewsey The Vale Community Campus
- Royal Wootton Bassett library
- Salisbury Library and Five Rivers Leisure Centre
- Tisbury Nadder Centre

- Tidworth Leisure Centre
- Trowbridge County Hall
- Warminster Library
- Westbury Community Project Hub

Courses and groups will be facilitated in:

- Libraries
- Leisure centres
- Campuses
- Schools
- Community buildings

35. The following map shows the areas of highest deprivation, along with the existing children's centres and proposed new family hubs across Wiltshire.



36. If the proposed family hub model is approved the current children's centre buildings will no longer be required after April 2024, in line with the end of the current contract. Family hubs will replace the current children's centre model, offering family help services for families of children aged 0–19-year-olds (up to 25 for SEND), instead of support for just 0–5-year-olds. Consideration will be given to

what the existing children's centre buildings could be used for going forward. It is important to note there are grant conditions on the buildings as they were built using funding from central government. Furthermore, they are all on school sites and any future use will need to be for children.

There is already a need for more early years childcare provision, and there will be growing demand following the recent Budget announcement to increase eligibility for children under the age of 2. Therefore, some of the buildings could be used to expand childcare. Other uses could include Resource Bases, Alternative Provision, District Specialist Centres as well as other options.

Work will continue to identify alternative uses for these buildings if the family hub model is approved, and proposals will be discussed and agreed at the relevant time after consultation with stakeholders. Decisions relating to any future use of these buildings will be made in line with the local authority governance processes, and approval will be sought through the Asset Management Gateway group.

The current children's centre buildings are:

- Bulford Children's Centre (located at Kiwi School)
- Calne Children's Centre (located at Priestley School)
- Chippenham: Spring Rise Children's Centre (located at Frogwell School)
- Chippenham: The Oaks Children's Centre (located outside of St Paul's School)
- Devizes Children's Centre (located at Southbroom Infants School)
- Melksham – Canberra Children's Centre (located in Spa Road next to Youth Centre)
- Royal Wootton Bassett Children's Centre (located on Longleaze School)
- Salisbury – Little Folly Children's Centre (located outside of Woodlands School)
- Tidworth – Windmill Hill Children's Centre (located outside of Clarendon Infant School)
- Trowbridge Studley Green Children's Centre (located at Studley Green School)

37. Pathfinder – Westbury and Warminster

The work of the Family Help Pathfinder in Warminster and Westbury will inform the implementation of family hubs. This work has been based on the proposed family hub model submitted to the DfE in our funding bid in December 2021, so there are not any significant changes that are likely to be required. The pathfinder is expected to transfer into the main contract when it starts in April 2024 as part of the countywide family hubs. We will continue to work with Oxford Brookes Institute of Public Care (IPC) who are evaluating our approach and incorporate any learning and recommendation into annual contract reviews.

Current learning will feed into the new family hub commissioned model starting in April 2024, and the contract will allow an annual review of services to ensure it remains future focussed and responsive to any changing needs. The successful provider is expected to be agile and adaptable.

38. Market Engagement & Indicative Tender Timetable – Market engagement has taken place in May and another event will be held in June. The indicative tender timetable is set out below:

Stage	Dates
Invitation to Tender (ITT) Issued	20/07/2023
Deadline for Tenderers to submit clarification questions	12 noon 20/09/2023
Tender Return Deadline	12 noon 04/10/2023
Evaluation and Approvals	October 2023
10-day standstill period	November 2023
Contract Award Notification	End November 2023
Service commencement date	01/04/2024

Options

- 39. There are a range of options that have been considered regarding delivery of the new service. These include options of an in-house model or a wholly commissioned service. A mixed model has also been considered, where some services are delivered inhouse and some are commissioned externally.
- 40. Options for the online offer and the website holding the community information for Early Help will also need to be considered but will not be covered in this paper. It is expected that this decision will be reported and agreed through the multi-agency Families and Children’s Transformation (FACT) Board, as there are much wider implications for this service.

The options considered are as follows, and the benefits and risks associated with the various options are set out in the table below.

Option 1

Commission all services together from an external provider.

Option 2

Commission all services separately from an external provider.

Option 3

Commission some services from an external provider and deliver some services inhouse.

Option 4

Deliver all services inhouse.

Option 5

Do Nothing

Table of Options – Benefits and Risks

	Benefits	Risks
Option 1 Commission all services together from an external provider	Consistency for all services across all areas of the county	The size of the contract could limit some smaller providers from bidding on their own
	The voluntary or community sector is able to bid for additional funding to support family hub work outside of the contract. Other organisations have the opportunity to seek additional investment when required.	ICT – can external providers use Liquidlogic for casework, and will systems talk to each other inside and outside the Council
	Staff costs are generally more favourable than Local Authority structure, and more value for money is possible.	All of the risk will be with one provider who may not have all the skills and experience required to operate a wide-ranging contract
	Performance monitoring and contract management only required for one contract	Provider may not be able to recruit and retain enough staff to deliver all services
	Clear expectations and accountability with specification and contractual arrangement	
	Parental reviews show they prefer working with an organisation outside the local authority	
	Greater agility of workforce, and greater ability to adopt new ways of working faster	
	Additional social value can be realised including the use of volunteers and experts by experience	
Option 2 Commission all services separately from external providers	Providers are able to deliver services which best reflect their strengths, skills, and experience	More providers to manage performance and contract monitoring
	Specifics of each lot will make them attractive to more providers	ICT – can external providers use Liquidlogic for casework, and will systems talk to each other inside and outside the Council
	The voluntary or community sector is able to bid for additional funding to support family hub work outside of the contract. Other organisations have the opportunity to seek additional investment when required.	Risk of communication challenges as more than one provider involved in service delivery
	Staff costs are generally more favourable than Local Authority structure, and more value for money is possible	Risk of inconsistent delivery as more than one provider involved

	Clear expectations and accountability with specification and contractual arrangement	
	Parental reviews show they prefer working with a voluntary sector organisation	
	Greater agility of workforce, and greater ability to adopt new ways of working faster	
	Additional social value can be realised including the use of volunteers and experts by experience	
	Risks are spread across multiple providers	
Option 3 Commission some services from an external provider and deliver some services inhouse.	Clear contract management of commissioned services with external provider, and inhouse service	Risk of inconsistent delivery as more than one provider involved
	Shared risk across organisations	Risk of communication challenges as more than one provider involved in service delivery
	Ability to share best practice from across the various providers of services and sectors including the Council	Risk of a loss of value for money as local authority salaries and benefits are often greater than external providers
	Liquidlogic ICT could allow greater access to information between services and better integration	ICT – can external providers use Liquidlogic for casework, and will systems talk to each other inside and outside the Council
	Shared Training could be delivered across all organisations	2 providers to manage performance and contract monitoring
	Parental reviews show they prefer working with a voluntary sector organisation	
	Service Providers are able to deliver services which best reflect their strengths, skills, and experience	
	The voluntary sector is able to bid for additional funding to support family hub work outside of the contract enhancing value for money.	
	Staff costs are more favourable than Local Authority structure, and more value for money is possible from external elements.	
	Additional social value can be realised including the use of	

	volunteers and experts by experience	
Option 4 Bring family hubs inhouse	Control over recruitment and the entire service delivery model	Current external staff may not wish to transfer to Local Authority, creating a disruption to the service for a significant period of time
	Greater alignment with Support and Safeguarding Service (SaSS) and Family Key Workers, both part of the same service.	The Local Authority will hold all of the risk.
	Clearer oversight and management structure	Less agile processes within the local authority to adopt and adapt to new service design and implementation
	Liquidlogic ICT would allow greater access to information between services	No contractual arrangements
		Unable to bid for additional funding
		Reduced support for vulnerable families and children in the community, is likely to increase the impact of specialist services as a result of the higher staff costs of the local authority
		There may not be the skills required within the local authority to deliver all elements of the service
		Need to implement a clear and robust Service Level Agreement and an expectation that performance would be monitored and improved throughout the agreement
Option 5 Do Nothing	Saving of over £2 million as no service would be commissioned to replace children's centres	More children are likely to need to come into the care of the local authority
		Long term costs would be likely to increase as a result of more children in care
		Poorer outcomes for families and children if they are not supported early

41. Evaluation of Options

The above options have all be evaluated, and the score has determined the final model that is being proposed. The evaluation has been carried out by the following people to ensure a wide range of views are considered:

- Head of Children in Care & Young People

- Service Manager for Integrated Front Door
- Head of Finance – Children & Education
- Public Health Strategist
- Head of Commissioning
- FACT Programme Lead

The criteria below have been used to score the 3 shortlisted options from the list above:

No.	Evaluation Element	Weighting
1	Delivering positive outcomes for children and young people	25%
2	Ease of project delivery/implementation	10%
3	Speed of project delivery/implementation	10%
4	Early Help expertise and experience	15%
5	Workforce & HR	12.5%
6	Value for Money / Finances	12.5%
7	IT	5%
8	Procurement	5%
9	Legal	5%
		100%

Shortlisted Options

Option 1

Commission all services together from an external provider

Option 3

Commission some services from an external provider and deliver some services inhouse.

Option 4

Deliver all services inhouse.

Options 2 and 5 were excluded for the following reasons:

- Option 2
 - Increased risk of communication and contract management challenges with multiple providers
 - Increased risk of inconsistent service delivery with multiple providers
- Option 5
 - The risk of not having an early help model was considered unviable, due to increased statutory intervention, increased costs, and poorer outcomes for families

No.	Evaluation Element	In house	External	Mix
1	Delivering positive outcomes for children and young people	500	475	600
2	Ease of project delivery/implementation	140	210	190
3	Speed of project delivery/implementation	110	220	170
4	Early Help expertise and experience	300	285	345
5	Workforce & HR	138	188	238

6	Value for Money / Finances	125	238	250
7	IT	105	70	85
8	Procurement	110	65	85
9	Legal	95	70	85
	Total Score	1623	1820	2048
	Preference	3	2	1

The result of the evaluation is detailed above and demonstrates that the mixed model has scored highest, with an external model second and the inhouse model was third. Therefore, the recommended option is a mixed model (**Option 3**)

Family Hub Budget

42. Central government has provided funding for 75 Local Authorities to roll out 'Best Start for Life', 12 more authorities received transformation funding, and a further five local authorities have received funding to lead on innovation. Wiltshire was not awarded any funding through this process.
43. There could still be further funding available for Local Authorities who have not been offered anything in the previous funding rounds, but there have not been any announcements to date. Wiltshire Council intends to submit further applications to develop the family hub model as and when they become available.
44. The family hub model is expected to be delivered with the current annual children's centre budget of £3 million, plus existing costs of family key worker time and the existing parenting courses.
45. Sites for developing the QR code and associated signage will need to be agreed with property users such as school leaders and there are a range of options from adhesive stickers to standalone signs. A bid is in draft to the Transformation Board to pump prime these and other introductory cost pressures. Estimates are currently in the region of £0.05million to £0.1million, and this will be a one-off cost.
46. No buildings will be leased to providers as part of this contract, although we do expect the Provider and partners to use the available community and Council buildings to support multi-agency working and improve communication and information sharing.
47. Alternative use for the 10 current children's centre buildings will be made in line with the local authority governance processes, and any approval will be sought through the Asset Management Gateway group. Future planned arrangements for these buildings, include passing back to the school or, repurposing as early years provision or other child related options will be considered if the family hub proposals are approved – the costs and income streams of all sites are negligible.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

48. A paper will be presented to Children's Select Committee on 6th June.

Safeguarding Implications

49. Safeguarding and protecting those at risk will be a priority for family hubs and there will be strong processes in place to ensure that providers identify those at risk of harm and / or exploitation and those concerns will be reported appropriately.
50. Across Wiltshire Council there are strong established relationships cross cutting children's and adult's safeguarding, housing, and public health to ensure that any risks, concerns, or incidents are escalated in line with Council protocols and procedures.
51. The successful provider will be expected to have robust safeguarding policies, processes, and procedures in place to ensure that children and young people are kept safe in line with Council and statutory standards.
52. Contracts also ensure that any issues relating to child protection are identified and appropriate referral made to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Public Health Implications

53. Public Health will continue to contribute £0.6million to the family hub contract.
54. Family hubs will be a critical partner in delivering the national Healthy Child Programme, an evidenced-based programme of prevention and support for families and children 0-19 years (up to 25 years for those with SEND).
55. The family hubs will work closely with Local Authority funded Public Health Nursing Services and the contracts for both services have been aligned and will reflect similar expectations from providers, along with close working relationships.

Procurement Implications

56. A compliant procurement process will be followed in line with Public Contract Regulations 2015.
57. A 5-year contract awarded to the successful provider, with the option to extend for up to a further 2 years. This will allow for certainty for the Provider and the Local Authority as the new family hub model is embedded, as services are expected to adapt through the lifetime of the contract, especially during the early years. This will ensure that as new learning emerges, and the needs of families and children change, continuity with the same Provider will allow for much smoother transition and development of services.
58. The procurement process will be designed and delivered, in conjunction with the Commercial and Procurement team.
59. Consideration to social value implications will be informed through our socially responsible procurement policy and will be taken into consideration when developing the specification for the service.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

60. An equalities impact of the proposed decision is low against all criteria on the Equalities Risk Criteria Table and, therefore, a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

61. It is anticipated that the energy consumption and associated emissions will be effectively managed as part of this contract.

62. It is expected that travel by families will be reduced as more people choose to use the online information and support, and also access the virtual training available.

Workforce Implications

63. This proposal mainly relates to the elements that will be commissioned externally. There is no impact expected for any staff employed by Wiltshire Council.

64. There is a consultation underway with the current providers regarding any TUPE implications.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

65. Family hubs offer a new and innovative service to support families with early help. Without an effective early help offer there will be:

- increased demand on intensive and more costly services
- less co-ordinated services
- increased pressure on schools, health visiting and preschools.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

66. There will be an initial cost implication to set up the signage related to the QR codes. As this is such a programme of change with such far reaching benefits, a request is in draft to the Transformation Board to fund this, based on future cost avoidance.

67. There is a risk that there will be a limited market of providers for this type of service. This will be managed with good market engagement and further conversations and engagement with providers.

68. Risk of concern from the public about the proposed model. This has been mitigated through a comprehensive consultation and engagement process, which has informed the proposed family hub model as outlined earlier in the paper.

69. There is a risk about the future use of the current children's centre buildings. The alternative use of the buildings will be fully explored, and the positive future use of these buildings will be shared and promoted. Families expressed the view that community buildings would better meet their needs, especially for those with older children, and the move to these will enable much greater access for families.

70. Although Children's Centre services will no longer be delivered from these buildings, alternative uses will be limited to services for children, in line with the central government grant funding that enabled them to be delivered originally. Therefore, all future uses must be related to children and families services.

Financial Implications

71. The financial risk of a 5 years + 2 contract will be offset with robust contractual arrangements and contract management.
72. The total cost of the family hub model includes repurposing the childrens centre budget to commission external services, retaining the current budget for parenting courses and accessing the existing family key worker staff in families and children.
73. Longer term, it is anticipated that the services provided via the family hub will help to reduce the pressures felt within the statutory SEN and childrens social care systems and will avoid future costs in this area which, have been exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic on children, young people, and their families.

Legal Implications

74. Any award of contract will be conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in Part 10 of the Council's Constitution, the SPH Manual and the Public Contract Regulations (2015). Legal Services will need to be engaged throughout this process, with the relevant legal and procurement advice sought.
75. Wiltshire Council's Legal Services will draft robust legal documentation for this matter. Legal Services will need to be consulted to review the final documentation before execution.

Conclusion

76. Families were very clear during the consultation about what they wanted from any early help offer. This included an online offer for support, longer opening hours, well trained and accessible staff, services for older children and young people, services delivered in places they already use, and more services in one place. (Further details are included in points 14 to 26 of the paper). These views have shaped the proposed model of family hubs and demonstrate a wide range of benefits to families.
77. These include an online offer which allows families to help themselves, and even complete some courses online. It will align with the new Public Health Nursing Services contract and link services together better, as well as delivering a better trained workforce which works closely with partners. Support will also be available for all families of children aged between 0 to 19 (or up to 25 for children and young people with SEND), and more services will be available in one place.
78. The proposed model is an improvement on the current service, providing twice as many buildings across the county to access help, advice, and support. By having family hubs in community buildings, there will also be longer opening hours for families to access services and support, and as they are already using these buildings it will also be more convenient, making families more likely to engage with the support available.
79. One of the limitations of the current model of support is that it is only available for families of children under five and there is the need to transfer between services and make new connections and relationships as part of the transition after the age

of five. The new family hub will eliminate this with the service supporting families with older children as well, providing far more consistency, with workers supporting across all ages. Teams will also link closely with schools and early years settings which families already attend in each local area, improving connections with families and professional alike.

80. Overall, the new family hub offer is responding to the needs of families and will improve access to services and support through an online offer, and by the family hubs being located in community buildings where families are already attending. This will improve engagement, ultimately leading to more positive outcomes for children and families and preventing the need for intervention by statutory services.

Elizabeth Saunders (Interim Director - Procurement and Commissioning)

Report Authors:

Gary Binstead, Head of Service - Commissioning, gary.binstead@wiltshire.gov.uk,
Lucy-Anne Bryant, Commissioning Manager – Children’s and Families Commissioning
Lucy-Anne.Bryant@wiltshire.gov.uk

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