

Children's Centre Remodelling

A summary overview of options

Context

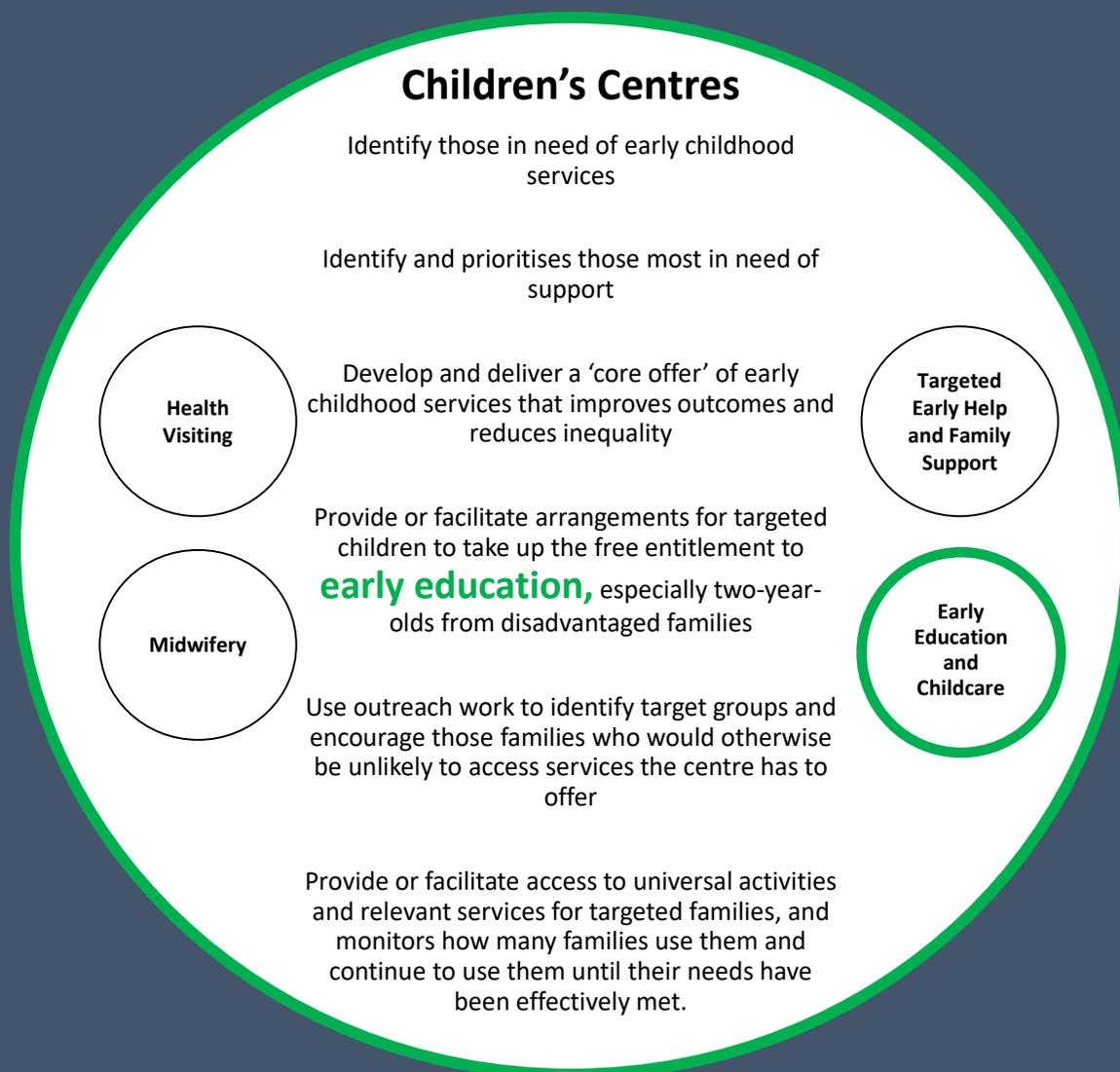
Statutory requirements and functions

Children's Centres

The Childcare Act 2006, and underpinned by Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance, which defines a Children's Centre a place or a group of places: which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way; through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and, at which activities for young children are provided.

Early Education and Childcare

The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on Early Education and Childcare, March 2017 requires SBC to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).



Context: Summary review findings

Children's Centres

- Capacity to provide key functions diminished overtime
- Model has evolved to be primarily concerned with the provision of early learning and childcare
- Core functions and offer maintained but spread thinly and unevenly across the range of centres and associated localities
- Capacity to identify and target those most in need of support is limited

Early Learning and Childcare

- Directly delivered offer being provided at cost to the Council
- Directly delivered offer provided in areas with surplus capacity
- Directly delivered offer provided in areas with sufficient capacity to meet requirements and need in the absence of directly provided provision
- Operational management required to provide management and coordination for both early learning and childcare offer and management and leadership of Children's Centres

Context: Case for change

Children's Centres

- The need to consolidate limited resources to enable children's centre sufficiency
- The need to enable key children's centre functions to be fulfilled and focused on core Children's Centre requirements
- The recognition that resources and associated approach needs to enable and ensure the coordination and targeting of early childhood services at the most vulnerable

Early Learning and Childcare

- The need to ensure Council resources are not deployed for the provision of early learning and childcare unless there is a clear and agreed business case for doing so
- The need to ensure that the sufficiency of early learning and childcare offer is maintained without the Council necessarily providing the service itself
- The need to continue to enable the provider market to maintain the offer so it may meet need and address gaps

Context: Options for change

Children's Centres

- Reduce the current number of centres in order to consolidate offer and enable increase in identification and targeting of support for those most in need
- Align revised model to early help strategy development in general and the creation of family hubs in particular

Early Learning and Childcare

- Discontinue the provision of directly delivered services where data and local intelligence indicates sufficiency levels can be maintained without it and / or;
- Enable the wider economy of providers to take up provision in areas of need
- Work towards ensuring any continuation of directly delivered provision is cost neutral and / or transferred to the market to provide

Recommendation to Cabinet

Authorise a 6 week consultation on options for change to the Council's Children's Centres, including proposals to reduce the number of buildings and reduce the amount of childcare provision being directly provided by the Council

A renewed approach to Children's Centres

Prevention and Early Help: The early childhood component of a revised Early Help Strategy

Wider network of child development and family support

- Schools
- Health
- Children's Social Care
- Early education and childcare providers
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Faith Groups
- Charities

Children's Centre Family Support

- Located within retained centre/s but working across locality
- Working in collaboration with other family support related practitioners across the partnership to support vulnerable families and to enable them to access the support they need

Children's Centre Outreach

- Located within retained centre/s but working across locality
- Working in collaboration with other outreach related practitioners across the partnership to identify and enable vulnerable families to access the support they need

Children's Centre Coordination

- Located within retained centre/s but working across locality
- Assessing need and working with early childhood service partners to develop and coordinate offer
- Managing and developing an early childhood partnership
- Enable the deliver of the offer via community locations
- Provide management oversight of any maintained early education and childcare

A revised approach to the directly delivery of early education and childcare

- Maintained delivery where there is a clear business case for doing so
- Discontinuation where evidence indicates provision is being offered in areas with a surplus of supply
- Discontinuation where evidence suggests the wider economy of providers can meet demand currently met by the Council
- Consult with the wider economy of providers to enable external capacity to be developed as required to meet need.

Option 4: Maintenance of current arrangements

Rationale

Children's Centres

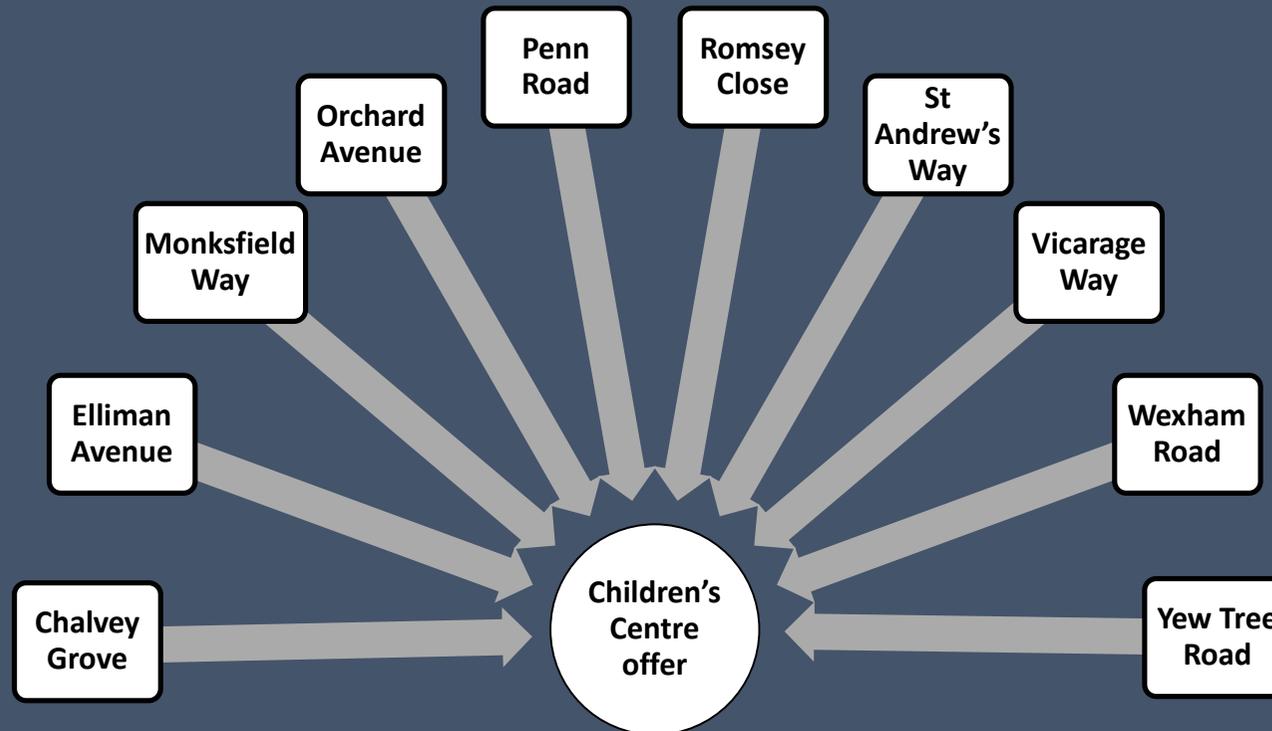
Maintains broad range of 'touch-points' to provide communities in Slough with access to coordinated early childhood services

Enables existing, physical capacity to be maintained in order to house key partnership activity including health visiting and midwifery

Aligns with current locality approach applied in Slough and creates the 0-5 footprint for the developing early help strategy

Early Education and Childcare

Maintains directly delivered early education and childcare in areas where sufficiency data and intelligence suggests it is required.



Risks

Children's Centres

Maintains major disparity between the provision of early education and childcare and delivery against Children's Centre requirements.

Inability to meet statutory requirements concerning the effective targeting of those most in need of support.

Inability to deliver required efficiencies.

Early education and childcare

Negative impact on best value through the ongoing use of Council resources for non business critical purposes.

Mitigation

Children's Centres

Strengthening of existing model to improve targeting of services.

Early education and childcare

Development of business model to make it more cost effective

Option 1: 3 Centre Option (recommended)

Rationale

Children's Centres

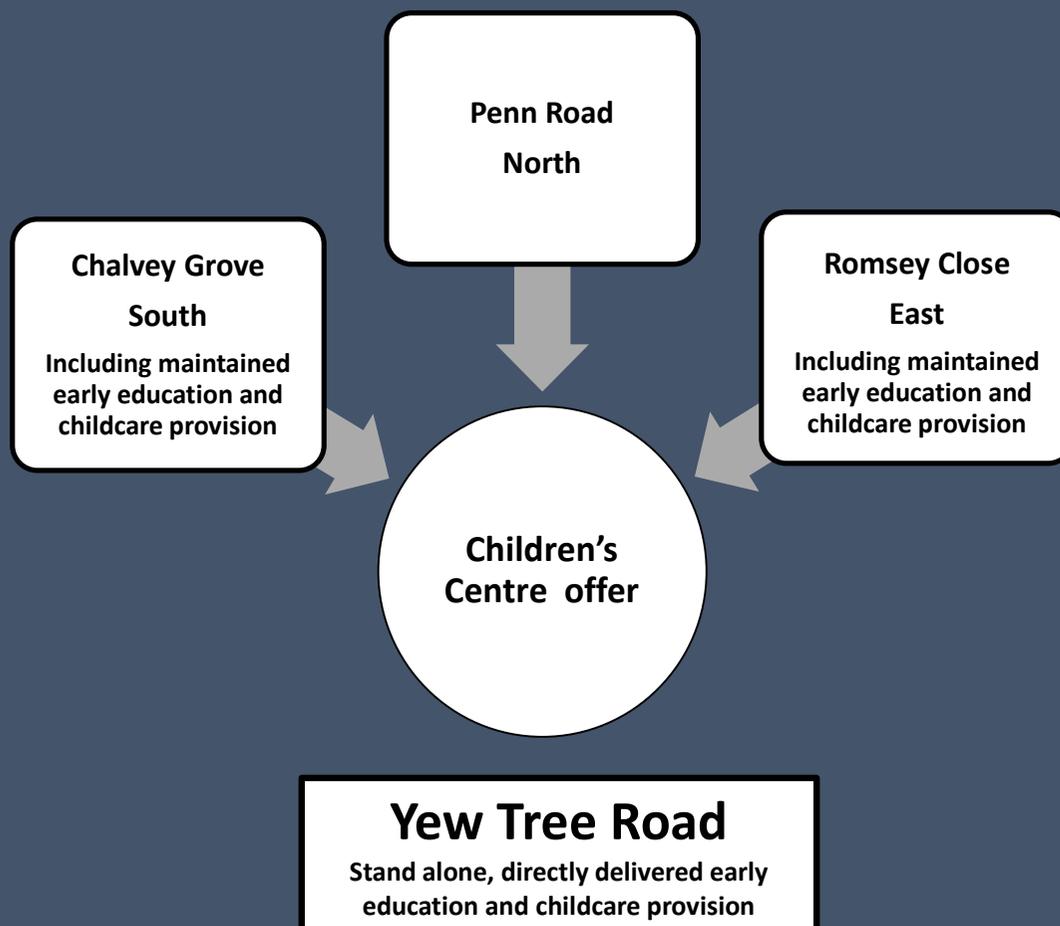
Creates a range of physical 'touch-points' to provide communities in Slough with access to coordinated early childhood services

Enables physical capacity to maintain the housing and coordination of key partnership activity including health visiting and midwifery

Aligns with current locality approach applied in Slough and creates the 0-5 footprint for the developing early help strategy

Early Education and Childcare

Maintains directly delivered early education and childcare in areas where sufficiency data and intelligence suggests it is required and there is no alternative to doing so in the short to midterm to maintain sufficiency



Risks

Children's Centres

Inability to manage negative impact of significant reduction in scale affecting family access to locality based services.
Negative impact on existing partner usage of premises.
Risk in not meeting statutory requirements for the provision of children's centres.

Early education and childcare

Inability to manage loss of directly managed capacity, particularly in Monksfield Way and Penn Road areas.
Risk of not meeting statutory requirements for the securing of sufficient childcare.

Mitigation

Children's Centres

Implementation of new model and associated, dedicated capacity to develop a coordinated network of family support access points aligned to early help strategy

Early education and childcare

Engagement with the market to enable increased offer where required and phasing of change to enable transition to be effectively managed with minimal impact

Option 2: 2 Centre Option

Rationale

Children's Centres

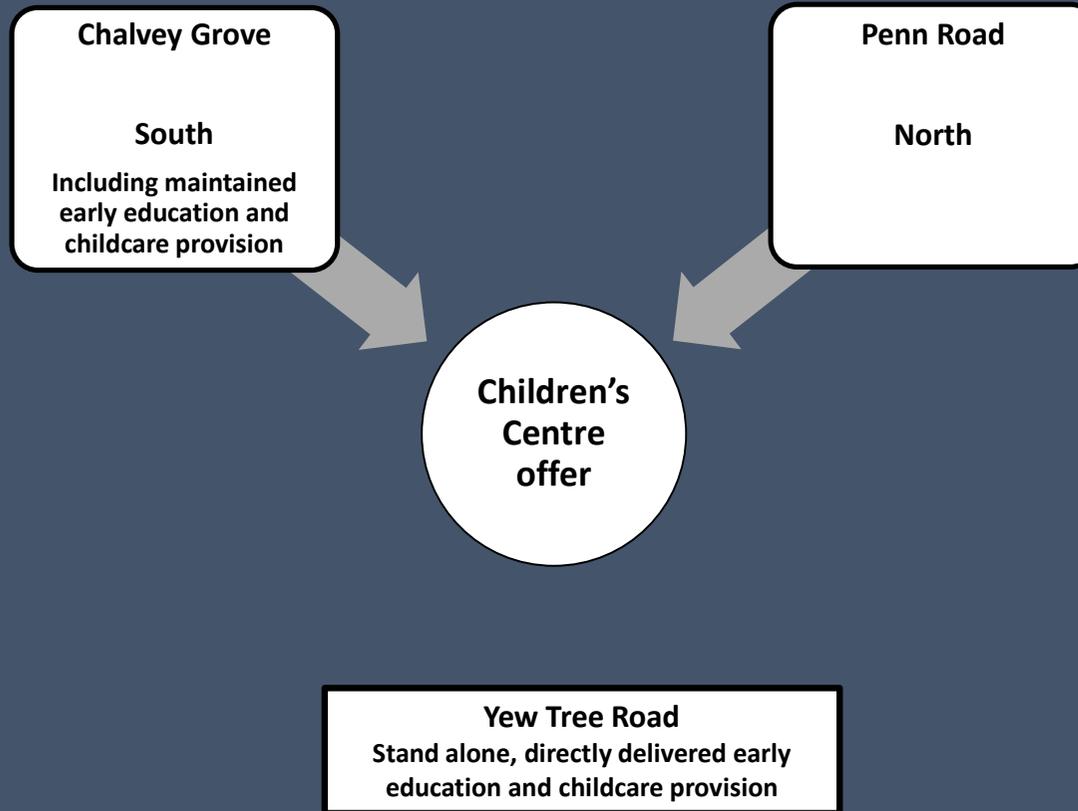
Creates a number of physical 'touch-points' to provide communities in Slough with access to coordinated early childhood services

Enables physical capacity to maintain the housing and coordination of key partnership activity including health visiting and midwifery

Aligns with current locality approach applied in Slough and creates the 0-5 footprint for the developing early help strategy

Early Education and Childcare

Maintains directly delivered early education and childcare in areas where sufficiency data and intelligence suggests it is required and there is no alternative to doing so in the short to midterm to maintain sufficiency



Risks

Children's Centres

Inability to manage negative impact of significant reduction in scale affecting family access to locality based services. Impact on existing partner usage of premises. Risk in not meeting statutory requirements for the provision of children's centres.

Early education and childcare

Management of loss of directly managed capacity, particularly in Monksfield Way, Romsey Close and Penn Road areas. Risk of not meeting statutory requirements for the securing of sufficient childcare.

Mitigation

Children's Centres

Implementation of new model and associated, dedicated capacity to develop a coordinated network of family support access points aligned to early help strategy

Early education and childcare

Engagement with the market to enable increased offer where required and phasing of change to enable transition to be effectively managed with minimal impact

Option 3: 1 Centre Option

Rationale

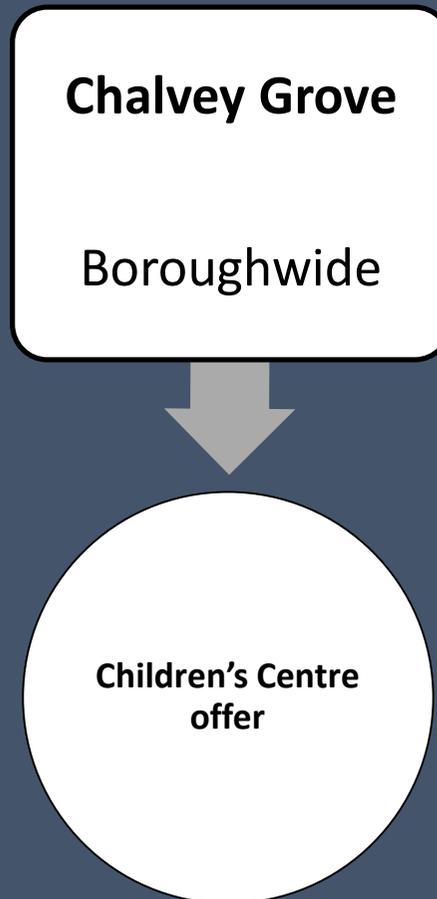
Children's Centres

Creates one central coordination point for early childhood services

Moves swiftly to proposed new way of working to focus on coordination of community offer as opposed to direct delivery from existing locations

Early Education and Childcare

Moves to a model whereby the direct delivery of early education and childcare is located within the external economy of providers with the Council providing support and advice to enable the market to develop and meet need



Risks

Children's Centres

Inability to manage negative impact of major reduction in scale affecting family access to locality based services
Impact on existing partner usage of premises.

Inability to meet statutory requirements re: the provision of children's centres.

Early education and childcare

Inability to manage the loss of directly managed capacity and avoid critical impact on sufficiency, particularly in areas where data suggests there is a deficiency of places.

Inability to meet statutory requirements for the securing of sufficient childcare.

Mitigation

Children's Centres

Implementation of new model to develop a coordinated network of family support access points aligned to early help strategy

Early education and childcare

Engagement with the market to enable increased offer where required and phasing of change to enable transition to be effectively managed with minimal impact

Implementation

6 week consultation with residents and other key stakeholders in order to:

- Ensure all concerned understand what is being proposed and why
- Obtain views on the presented options
- Obtain views on potential alternatives to the presented options

Implementation

- Process outcomes of consultation
- Collate findings
- Use findings to inform final recommendations for change
- Present final recommendations for change to Cabinet for consideration in the Spring