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Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) 14 December 2017

Item 8 – Supplementary Information - Budget Response to Children's Centre Inquiry
(Recommendations 6&7)

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Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 14 December 2017

Subject: Financial Health Monitoring Children's Services Supplementary information - Children's Centre Budget response to recommendations 6&7

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. In October 2017 the Scrutiny Board agreed its inquiry report into Childrens Centres. This report made a number of recommendations, two of which specifically relate to Childrens Centre budgets as follows:

Recommendation 6 Desired Outcome – To secure the future financial sustainability of all Children's Centres in Leeds.

Recommendation 6 – That the Director of Children and Families explores how further funding reductions can be prevented in order to support the continued sustainability and prosperity of all Leeds Children's Centres by:

- a) working in collaboration with partner organisations to secure sufficient funding which will support continued integrated practice.
- b) working in collaboration with the Director of Resources and Housing to attain sufficient Local Authority funding in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework
- c) bringing a detailed report regarding Children's Centre funding proposals for 2018/19 to the Scrutiny Board in December 2017.

Recommendation 7 Desired Outcome – To promote financial planning, the building of aspirations and delivery of longer term programmes.

Recommendation 7 – That the Director of Children and Families provides additional stability by supporting the planning of services in the longer term and by investigating the

feasibility of budget allocation to all Children's Centres that extends beyond the current 12 month annual settlement. The outcome of this investigation to be reported to this Scrutiny Board in December 2017.

2. Since the publication of the agenda the following information has been provided by the Director of Children and Families in response to these specific recommendations:
 - a. Leeds Children's Centres continue to meet the delivery requirements of Public Health and CCG partners in terms of services commissioned around healthy eating, breastfeeding, HENRY parenting training and ante natal training courses across the city.

The directorate's budget strategy is to protect frontline services and the 2018/19 Initial Budget Proposals do not include a significant change to the funding of these services. There is a proposed reduction in public health funding which will require some realignment of budgets in order to manage this pressure. This could be met by a reduction in the delivery of a small number of universal services

- - b. The Children's Centres have begun a market research programme to expand its market share of fee paying, working parents. This will ensure greater sustainability of the early learning and childcare business model for Leeds city council, reducing the base budget over the coming three years.
 - c. The directorate shares the aspirations of the recommendations but the Council operates on an annual budget cycle and only approves detailed directorate budgets on a year by year basis. In addition, the Council does not have certainty of the government funding settlement beyond 2019/20 so whilst the intention will be to retain all of the current centres it would be difficult to provide additional guarantees around future funding.

Recommendations

3. Members are asked to:
 - a. Consider the response of the Director of Children and Families to recommendations 6 and 7 of the Children's Centre Scrutiny Inquiry Report and make further recommendations as deemed appropriate.

Background documents - None¹

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.