

# Draft Scoping Document

Name of Review/Project: Early Years Provision in South Derbyshire

## Terms of reference:

Definition of early years provision:

“Generally refers to provision for under-fives, but can refer to provision for children up to 7. Early Years settings include nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups, childminding networks, portage services and Sure Start children's centres.”

## Please provide details of relevant Corporate Plan Themes and Priorities:

The review will address the following themes and priorities:

- Sustainable Growth and Opportunity - Theme 1
- Lifestyle Choices - Theme 3
- Value for Money - Theme 4

## Key Issues and Aim(s) of the Review

### Key Issues:

Sure Start Children's Centres within the District have recently been subject to cuts in County Council funding, leading to a significant reduction of provision. There is anecdotal evidence that the cuts have had a disproportionate impact on Centres within South Derbyshire in comparison to others within the County.

There is also evidence that other providers are also subject to a reduction of funding. This suggests that a variety of early years provision in South Derbyshire is under threat.

There is a significant body of evidence to show that effective early years provision has a positive impact on the future life chances of young children. It is arguable that the Council has a duty of care to review the impact of funding cuts on the District. It is also arguable that it is best placed to take a lead in developing a strategy for working with providers to provide an optimum level of early years provision within South Derbyshire.

### Aims:

To review early years provision in South Derbyshire and inform the Council and

residents whether there is parity of provision both within the District and across Derbyshire as a whole.

To develop a strategy for working in partnership with external providers (e.g. the County Council, voluntary organisations, private providers), for the delivery of an optimum level of early years provision within South Derbyshire.

To make recommendations for the most effective use of District Council resources.

#### Why should the review take place now?

A reduction in funding to Children's Centres has already occurred and provision has already been scaled back. Residents are concerned about the impact of the cuts and are looking to the District Council to exercise community leadership in protecting the best interests of families with young children. A review is necessary now to ensure that South Derbyshire has been treated equitably and to take immediate actions to rectify any shortfall.

#### Potential outcome/s

To provide assurance to the Council and residents that early years provision in the District has parity with the County of Derbyshire.

To make recommendations for the most effective use of District Council resources.

To develop a strategy for working in partnership with external providers (e.g. the County Council, voluntary organisations, private providers) for delivering an optimum level of early years provision within South Derbyshire.

#### What will not be included:

#### Risks:

#### Members undertaking the Review (if a sub-group is to be used):

#### Possible co-options:

Which policy committee(s) does it relate to?

Key stakeholders/ consultees:

Potential contributors and research required:

Potential visits:

Are there any Budgetary Implications?

Officer support required:

Period for Review:  
Start date:  
Approximate meeting dates:  
Proposed completion date:  
Report date(s) to committees:

Publicity (e.g. of recommendations)

Date Scoping Document Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Prioritising Topics For Scrutiny**

### Corporate Plan themes and priorities

The Peer Review included a recommendation to assess potential scrutiny review areas against the corporate priorities. Further information on these priorities is available in the Corporate Plan, which can be accessed via the following link:

[http://harvey/corporate/organisationaldevelopment/policy/corporate\\_plan/corporate\\_plan0914](http://harvey/corporate/organisationaldevelopment/policy/corporate_plan/corporate_plan0914)

The Corporate Plan themes and priorities are:

- Sustainable Growth and Opportunity - Theme 1
- Safe and Secure - Theme 2
- Lifestyle Choices - Theme 3
- Value for Money - Theme 4

### Other issues to be considered when selecting reviews:

#### 1. General questions at the outset:

- Does the review meet any of the Council's priorities?
- does this issue have a potential impact for one or more section(s) of the population?
- is the issue strategic and significant?
- is there a clear objective for scrutinising this topic?
- is there evidence to support the need for scrutiny?
- what do we hope to achieve?
- what are the likely benefits to the council and its customers?
- are you likely to achieve a desired outcome?
- what are the potential risks?
- are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?
- is the Scrutiny activity timely?

#### 2. Public interest

- issue identified by Members through surgeries and other contact with constituents
- user dissatisfaction with service (e.g. complaints)
- market surveys/citizens panels
- issue covered in local media

#### 3. Internal council priority

- council corporate priority area
- high level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure)
- pattern of budgetary overspends
- poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking)

#### 4. External Factors

- central government priority area
- new government guidance or legislation
- issues raised by External Audit Management Letters/External audit reports
- key reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue

#### 5. Criteria to reject items

- review area does not meet any of the Council's priorities
- being examined elsewhere - e.g. by a policy committee, working group, officer group, other body
- issue dealt with less than 2 years ago
- new legislation or guidance expected within the next year
- no scope for scrutiny to add value/ make a difference, or
- the objective cannot be achieved in the specified timescale.